

His work: Bring cultures together

Continued from Page 1

"I never believed in fate, but I see much affecting my life now that I didn't do anything to change that. I'm becoming a believer. It seems as though so much of what I did was preparing me for a career, a whole new life of doing what I'm doing now," Michlin said.

What Michlin is doing now, the basis of his ecumenical work, is being on call to speak on behalf of the Ecumenical Institute for Jewish-Christian Studies. He has been doing this for five years, since the institute was founded in Southfield.

When he speaks in churches or to church groups, he uses our similarities. "The Jew is the mother, the Christian is the daughter of our religions. We might disagree but we're still relatives," he said. "I talk about Judaism, poetry, beliefs, customs, holidays."

Of IJIS talks with Arab groups, he says, "We're Semitic cousins. We all came from Abraham. Nobody can disagree with that, so again I put emphasis on our similarities."

"Talk, dialogue, education will solve at least 90 percent of our problems."

Michlin is a graduate of Northern High School in Detroit and earned a degree in chemistry at Detroit Institute of Technology. He worked for his father's business, Michlin Chemical Corp., in Detroit, until the business was sold 1981.

He has been a resident of Farmington Hills for 31 years, served on several Farmington Township committees, and was active in the incorporation of township to city.

He works now as a financial planner, setting his own hours, to al-

low all the time he needs "for my career in ecumenicalism," he said.

The lifelong path that brought him to that career began when his father signed him up as a member of B'nai B'rith, in 1946.

"I found the Anti-Defamation League (an organization under the B'nai B'rith umbrella) and just settled here. I was involved in all of its aspects — prejudice, quotas, discrimination, all of that," he said.

WHAT PUT the ecumenical career in full motion was a trip to Israel, sponsored by the Ecumenical Institute for Jewish-Christian Studies, and co-ordinated by its director, the Rev. James Lyon.

"My wife, Florence, was not too excited about a trip to Israel when she learned we would be going with five ministers," he said.

"But I was born to go on that trip," he said. "The tourists were a mix of Jews, Protestants and Catholics."

"All of my work with the Anti-Defamation League had been preparing me for that trip. I know what I was going to do for the rest of my life. It was all pointing to why I was born, what I was meant to do."

Michlin was nominated for the Heart of Gold award by Jeannie Weiner, a Farmington Hills resident probably best known here for her work with Soviet Jewry. She's now a member of the Arab and Jewish Friends.

"I connect them all," he said. "I work like crazy using every connection I've got. B'nai B'rith gave me the training. I use a lot of techniques the Anti-Defamation League uses. And it works. It worked a miracle last month."



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Operation Cover-up

Harrison High School students Becki Rounds, a freshman (left), and Michelle Feldman, a sophomore, sort through blankets, coats and hats that were donated for Operation Cover-up. There is a dropbox in the school office where people can donate such items. Cover-up organizer Darlene Feldman of Farmington Hills said Friday she is desperate need

of more blankets to give to the homeless of Detroit. "The publicity died down, it's still cold, and I'm out of blankets," she said. She encourages schools, like Harrison, and other churches and groups to contact her at 851-9027 with blanket donations. She will pick them up, and use them on her visits to the city.

Network promotes healthy workstyles

Today, more than ever before, people are aware that a sound body is a strong mind.

Health Development Network of Botsford General Hospital in Farmington Hills is a "partnering" after productivity by teaming up with area businesses and sponsoring educational health programs for employees.

"Businesses participate in the courses in order to encourage healthy lifestyles," said Margo Gorchow, HDN executive director.

"When employees are healthy, sick days and health-benefit costs decrease, while productivity and morale increase."

Foodland Distributors of Livonia launched a year-long partnership with HDN on Jan. 11, with a four-day informal registration session.

Foodland employees were given the opportunity to sign up for three courses: The Smokeless System,

Weight No More and Fitness for

Health.

Foodland, a distributor for 92 supermarkets in southeastern Michigan, encouraged its employees by supplying juice, apples and bananas during registration. A contest to guess how many calories were in a jar of peanuts was held, with the grand prize winner receiving free admittance to one of the three pro-

grams and a wellness T-shirt. Employees who successfully complete a class will receive incentive money from Foodland congratulating them for their achievement.

"THROUGH THE partnership, Foodland is showing its sincere commitment to its employees' well-being," said Jude Kutzler, Foodland's manager of safety and loss prevention. "There are about 30 people signed up for each class right now and as success stories are made, I anticipate more and more will join."

HDN was formed in 1981, when Botsford Hospital officials recognized a need for increased community educational programs. HDN developed website programs, like the partnership with Foodland, to promote the importance of healthy workers.

Other HDN classes offered to businesses and the community include stress management, nutrition education, heart and back care, blood pressure management, child birth education, diabetes and cholesterol management.

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