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(F1C)

## Handicapped join entrepreneur set

By Beth Sundria  
staff writer

Having a handicap used to mean being unemployed, but today's handicapped people aren't willing to wait around for jobs to come to them. Many are beginning their own businesses.

To help them get started, the Handicapper Small Business Association has planned a conference for today through Saturday at the Holiday Inn-Livonia West at Six Mile and I-275.

"Handicappers can do many things and have learned to adapt to situations. If given a chance they will do extremely well. They are used to putting in the extra effort in order to succeed," said Joy Schmidt, president of Joy Schmidt and Associates of Southfield and secretary of the Handicapper Small Business Association.

Schmidt said the conference is a way to help people understand what it takes to get involved in business. The conference will kick off "Invest in Abilities" week, Oct. 1-8, which has been designated by Gov. James Blanchard to help handicapped individuals find employment.

Seminar topics will include choosing a business, getting started in business, franchising, marketing, financing and recordkeeping.

With an association membership of 250, conference organizers are hoping for a turnout of 200. All members have handicaps.

THE ASSOCIATION is a two-year-old statewide organization that has staged two previous conferences, but none as large as this one. To be a member, individuals must be handicapped and in business.

Schmidt, who has severe tunnel vision and is legally blind, has been running her own business for five years. Joy Schmidt and Associates is a financial consulting firm. Schmidt is also a professional speaker and will be speaking at the conference.

Other speakers include corporate executives, representatives from government agencies and business owners. Workers who provide ser-



DUANE BURLESON/staff photographer

Joy Schmidt, owner of her own business and secretary of the Handicapper Small Business Association, will speak on business financing at the group's conference to be held today through Saturday at the Holiday Inn at Six Mile and I-275, Livonia.

vice to the handicapped will also be attending.

Schmidt has suffered vision problems since birth. She earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from Walsh College, a master's degree in business administration from the

University of Detroit and then entered the business world.

Schmidt said association members have a variety of handicaps and a variety of degrees of education and training. Some members have been handicapped all their lives; others

became handicapped through illness or accident.

Business owner Suzanne Michael suffered a stroke, which left her paralyzed on one side and unable to walk. With therapy, she learned to walk again and has re-entered the

business world as owner of the Personnel Data Report Corp. of Troy.

HER COMPANY handles executive recruiting, but she said it has been difficult to help other handicappers through her firm.

"Most handicappers are on disability (insurance) or Social Security. They have to have something to bring in enough money to make it

Please turn to Page 2

## Accident arbitration: alternative to lawsuits

By Janice Brunson  
staff writer

Brian, an 18-year-old who is repeating for a second time his senior year of high school, had just turned 17 when he suffered closed-head injuries in an auto accident during the summer of 1987.

After four weeks of hospitalization and months of physical and speech therapy, Brian now seems physically fit and is pleasantly animated when he talks. His I.Q. measures in the same high range as before the accident.

But, his parents say, he is brain damaged and they fear for his future — whether he will be employable or able to maintain relationships.

Since the accident, his sense of judgment seems impaired. Once a quiet boy, he was suspended from school twice last school year and ar-

**Under accident arbitration, a judge hears testimony from both parties and fixes liability, based on the testimony of one party or the other, or a combination of the two.**

rested by police three times. He is unable to remember simple things. Worse, say his parents, his self-esteem has plummeted.

"While Brian appears normal, he isn't. He knows he's different," his mother said.

When the accident occurred, Bry-

an was riding with his best friend who turned left on a red light. The car was hit broadside by a drunk driver.

Both drivers share legal responsibility for Brian's condition, but their insurance carriers are in dispute over the degree of responsibility.

The carriers maintain Bryan's problems were present before the accident, caused by occasional marijuana use and marital discord between his parents.

Bryan's parents say the accident caused permanent change for the worse.

A FINAL settlement is still pending. An alternative to court proceedings in cases like Brian's will soon be available to Michigan residents, according to JoAnn Esterreicher of Arbitration Forums in Troy.

Please turn to Page 3

## Ann Arbor lures developers

By Beth Sundria  
staff writer

With many areas of metropolitan Detroit saturated with development, area developers have set their sights on neighboring Ann Arbor.

"Ann Arbor is a very vibrant, interesting, exciting market," said Eric Yale Lutz, chief executive officer of Eric Yale Lutz and Associates, a Birmingham-based development firm.

Lutz's firm is one of many that have projects built or planned in Ann Arbor. It owns office buildings, an auto mall and a self-storage facility in Ann Arbor. The firm has an office building at 777 E. Eisenhower and plans for an apartment complex and conference center.

Others firms branching west include:

- Holtzman and Silverman, Farmington Hills, is developing a 520-unit apartment complex called Village Green and an 86-unit condominium project known as the Arbors in Ann Arbor Township.

- The Jesse Co., Birmingham, is renovating City Center at 230 E. Huron Boulevard, an 85,000-square-foot, seven-story building in downtown Ann Arbor. It is also building a

**'It's (Ann Arbor's) not a Troy or a Southfield.'**

— Eric Yale Lutz

fifth building at University Park and renovating the four existing buildings.

- Westin Development Corp., Royal Oak, is developing Woodland Plaza, a 95,000-square-foot retail center on Ann Arbor-Saline at South Main Street.

- Anthony S. Brown, Birmingham, has two projects planned for downtown Ann Arbor, but would not elaborate.

- Beaschum and Roeser, Birmingham, is developing Williamsburg Square, an office complex, on Eisenhower west of State Street.

- Lauree Limited, West Bloomfield, is developing Arbor Meadows, a mobile home village on Michigan Avenue near Ann Arbor.

- Kojalan Properties, Birmingham, owns 301 E. Liberty Street, an office building. One North Main, an office-condominium project, and Northeast Plaza, an office-research project at Green Road and Plymouth Road. A joint venture with Comerica

Bank is also planned, according to Angela Kimble, director of corporate communications for Kojalan. The project will be called Comerica Plaza and is to be at 125 S. Fifth Street. Kojalan is also partners in two Ann Arbor Holiday Inns and two Hampton Inns.

- Selective Development Co., Farmington Hills, is developing the Boardwalk Office Centre, a 110,000-square-foot office complex at Boardwalk and Eisenhower Parkway in the Briarwood Mall area.

DEVELOPERS say Ann Arbor started gaining popularity as a development spot about four years ago. "We've made a large commitment to Ann Arbor," Lutz said. His firm's developments will continue into the 1990s, he said.

To be successful, a developer must understand what Ann Arbor is and what its people like and dislike, Lutz said. "It's not a Troy or a Southfield," he said.

Building in Ann Arbor involves using a smaller scale, a longer design period and taking a less urban approach. "It's a softer approach," he said.

Please turn to Page 2

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