

Jewish drug problem explored

By Jackie Klein
staff writer

"It can't happen here" is a Jewish myth. Just ask the Jewish parents of a drug-addicted teenager who lives in a hellish nightmare.

Judge Stephen Cooper recognizes that. From his 46th District Court bench in Southfield he has seen for too many Jewish young people who attempt to escape reality through drugs. He has seen youths whose alcoholism began when they were on the bar and bat mitzvah circuit at age 13, the age marking when they become men and women.

"They became far too intimately acquainted with the bar, and without enough supervision and encouragement to be involved in the bar mitzvah," he said.

With concern for the myth that alcoholism and drug abuse are not part of the Jewish culture came the idea for a five-part educational series at Congregation Shaarey Zedek — "Alcohol and Drugs: Use and Misuse: A Jewish Concern."

THE SERIES will begin at 7:30 p.m. on the five Wednesdays in March.

Cooper said he can't buy the presidential campaign rhetoric that drug abuse is Congress' problem.

"Certainly, each of us should send a reminder note to President Bush that would encourage a massive attack on the problem of drug and alcohol abuse," he said.

"But our tradition teaches us that while we may not be able to complete a task, we certainly aren't free from the responsibility of making a start. The drug and alcohol series is one of hopefully many starts (that) groups are making throughout

the community and the country."

COOPER LAST summer sat in on a seminar sponsored by Henry Ford Hospital/Maplegrove, a co-sponsor with Detroit Edison of the Congregation Shaarey Zedek series.

The summer seminar was for the Chaldean community. It worked for them, Cooper said, because the people in the room couldn't avoid reality.

"They couldn't say they were talking about another community. When they talked about Chaldeans having strong family units and drug abuse couldn't happen to them, they were able to be confronted with the problem.

"It's something every ethnic group has to deal with. We're facing a seemingly unsurmountable problem. We won't be talking about the untold deaths caused by abuse, the millions of lives that are shattered, the hope that is lost, and the human and financial costs we all have to bear. We'll identify with do-able objectives."

THE SERIES will focus on education about the problem of drug and alcohol abuse, the disease, the symptoms, the effect on teenagers and their family and the possible solutions.

"We can't afford to ignore the problem," Cooper said. "We can't afford to wait for Washington to solve it, and we can't wait for it to go magically away. If we don't make ourselves part of the solution, aren't we part of the problem?"

Judith Ernie, editor of the Birmingham and West Bloomfield Eclectics, is Jewish. Her's is a recovering family.

"When we learned that our daughter, Deborah, was addicted to drugs and alcohol, it was a shock to say the least," she said. "We thought we and our children were doing the right things."

"There was no crying or shrieking. We were just stunned. Well, we went a long way from there."

WHEN THE Bernes were told Deborah needed treatment, they went to Maplegrove Center. Deborah tried outpatient treatment for three weeks but said she had to be an inpatient. Judy and her husband, Ed, entered the parent treatment and agreed it was a growth experience.

"It's been almost three years, and they are still in recovery, Bernes said. She wants to help other people understand it can happen to them.

Sis Wenger, manager of community education at Maplegrove, will speak on March 15. Her philosophy, she said, is very simple.

"I really believe that if reasonable, intelligent, caring people get good basic education about alcohol and drug abuse, chemical dependency and its impact, these people will come up with the best solutions for attacking them.

"They will intervene and prevent it within their own cultures, families and communities."

List of topics for drug series

"Alcohol and Drugs: Use and Misuse: A Jewish Concern" begins March 1 at Congregation Shaarey Zedek in Southfield.

Dr. Eric Loranger of Henry Ford Hospital Pediatrics will speak at 7:30 p.m. on the disease of chemical dependency, early indicators, progression and physical complications. A film, "I'll Quit Tomorrow," will be shown.

At 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 8, Jane Heiser Williams, student assistance coordinator at Huron Valley public schools, will discuss alcohol, drugs and teens and the impact on adolescent, indicators and progression.

"Impact on the Family" will be the subject of the 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 15, session. The speaker is Sis Wenger, manager of community education at Henry Ford Hospital/Maplegrove. The film "The Family Trap" will be shown.

RENEE GERGER, Intervention

specialist of Henry Ford Hospital Chemical Dependency Treatment Programs, will speak at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 22. The film is "The Intervention," about a recovering family.

At 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 29, 46th District Judge Stephen Cooper will discuss "Our Jewish Community's Response — What Can We Do?"

The panel will include experts in the field, such as recovering professionals, community and youth leaders, treatment professionals and educators.

All presentations will be at Congregation Shaarey Zedek, 22725 Bell Road. Admission is free.

Detroit Edison is co-sponsoring the educational series with Henry Ford Hospital as part of the company's substance abuse awareness and prevention program. Jewish organizations throughout the area are participating.

Creative expressions of 'proud experiences' honored

Twenty-four Farmington-area elementary school students were honored Feb. 7, when awards were given by the Farmington-area PTA Council for projects related to the arts...

The awards, presented at a school board meeting, are part of the annual Reflections Contest, which used "proud experiences" as this year's theme. The contest is designed to encourage creative expression among children in the visual arts, music, photography and literature. All entries were judged on evidence of creative ability and expression of theme.

Categories include primary for kindergarten through grade three, intermediate for grades 4-6, junior high for grades 7-9 and senior high for grades 10-12. In Farmington, only elementary schools participate in the Parent/Teacher Association.

FARMINGTON-AREA photographers included:

• Timothy Zajaros, a third grader from Flanders won first place in the primary division for "Squirrel I helped save."

• Inge Baessler, a fourth grader at Flanders won first place in the intermediate division for "Liberty welcomes you."

• David Lee Greshong, a third grader from Gill won second place in the primary division for "Birth of my dog Tiffany's puppies."

• Susan Giovannini, a fourth grader at Flanders won second place in the intermediate division for "Look who's playin' the piano."

• Almee Sable, a second grader from Highmeadow won third place in the primary division for "I'm proud of my sleeping sister."

• Will Myers, a fifth grader at

Longacre won third place in the intermediate division for "Proud of my country."

STUDENTS WINNING in the art division include:

• Susan Banyal, a second grader at Gill won first place in the primary division for "When My Brother Ben was Born."

• Momoko Kawaguchi, a fourth grader at Eagle won first place in the intermediate division for "Seven Japanese Gods."

• Kristin Horner, a second grader at Highmeadow won second place in the primary division for "I finally climbed that tree."

• Almee Cameron, a fourth grader at Longacre won second place in the intermediate division for "Golden Egg."

• Stephanie Chamberlin, a first grader at Highmeadow won third place in the primary division for "Being a flower girl."

• Amber Mancey, a fourth grader at Flanders, and Matthew Trunk, a fifth grader at Gill, both won third place in the intermediate division. Mancey's artwork is titled "Things I'm proud of" and Trunk's is "Proud experiences for America."

WINNERS in the music division were:

• Stephanie Batkie, a second grader at Highmeadow won first place in the primary division for "Proud experience."

• Tricia Rbelw, a fifth grader at Longacre won first place in the intermediate division for "Proud of music and me."

• Matthew Wayne, a third grader at Highmeadow won second place in the primary division for "Proud experience."

• Christina DeSousa, a fifth

grader at Longacre won second place in the intermediate division for "Proud of music."

• Steven Merenda, a third grader at Eagle won third place in the primary division for "Proud experience."

SIX STUDENTS won in the literature division:

• Robert DeVries, a first grader

at Highmeadow won first place in the primary division for "Collection of poems."

• Maggie Surma, a fourth grader at Flanders won first place in the intermediate division for "Life's proud experience."

• Karl Pawlewicz, a third grader at Longacre won second place in the primary division for "That great grand slam."

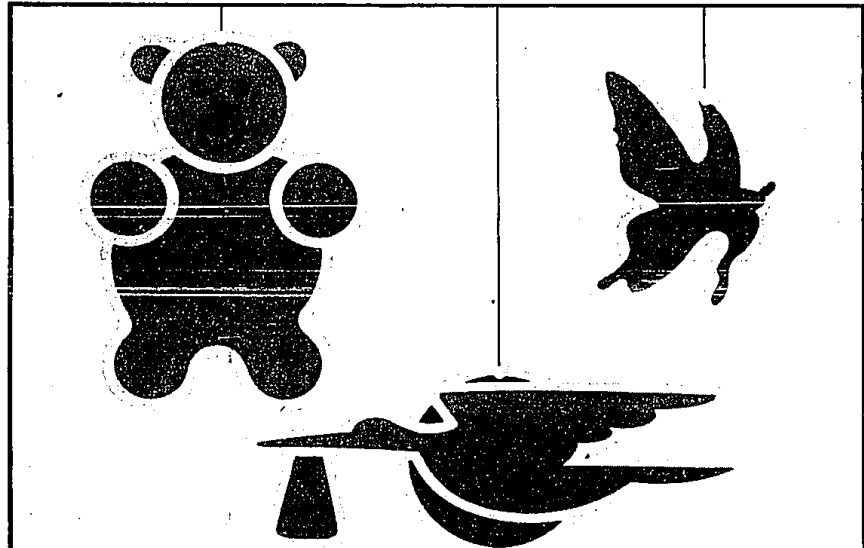
• Lauren Jones, a fourth grader at Eagle won second place in the intermediate division for "The gymnast."

• Rebecca Morello, a kindergarten at Gill won third place in the primary division for "Having a new sister."

• Tracy Wells, a fourth grader at Eagle won third place in the intermediate division for "Look into yourself."

The art and music judging was done by a panel of PTA parents. Photography was judged by Focal Point Studios of Farmington and literature was judged by librarian Barbara Shumer.

Entries will now go to the Michigan Reflections Contest, where students will compete with other PTA school entries from around the state.



Thinking for two.

Parents-to-be are more assertive today about their hospital choices. They want to be certain about the quality of the hospital experience for both mother and child. The medical aspects are most critical, but comfort, friendliness, family involvement, and privacy are also important. So families check things out for themselves. It's not just the doctor's choice anymore. That's why hospitals are talking about their differences. And the differences at Grace are significant. Grace is a teaching hospital.

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Thinking for two means planning ahead. We think Grace should be a future mother's first thought.

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