

Suburban Life

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Phobias

Program for anxiety disorders aims for short-term treatment

By Loraine McClich
staff writer

FEAR OF FLYING and fear of speaking in public are the most common phobias suffered by Americans. There are 217 phobias listed in the official "Complete List of Phobias," but that official list does not include scriptophobia.

Working out a treatment for a client who feared having to write in public was one of the first jobs Jude Bordnick was called upon to do as she was working her way into a career specializing in helping those with anxiety disorders.

"She couldn't sign a check in public, check out a library book, sign a registry, sign for a charge account," Bordnick said. "It sounds silly and irrational, but it is all irrational or it isn't a phobia."

HEAVY OR speeded-up heart beat, sweaty palms, dizziness, light-headedness are all physical symptoms of the fear.

"Because your heart is pounding it is very reasonable to go to a doctor, but repeated tests will tell you nothing is wrong. The physical sensations are repeated and the anxiety is heightened. It becomes a vicious circle."

"Phobias are among the most prevalent of misdiagnosed illnesses because of those physical symptoms."

"I cannot tell you how much running around I did, how many doctors I saw, how many stress tests I had when it happened to me," Bordnick said of her own bout with agoraphobia (fear of being in open or public places).

"I had no idea what was happening to me except that I was 35 years old and I was dying."

BORDNICK is the newest member of the Farmington Hills Counseling Services staff, which has expanded to include a new Anxiety Disorders Program.

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ed to include a new Anxiety Disorders Program.

"The program was made to meet the overwhelming demand of individuals with anxiety disorders that can be any of those 217 phobias or maybe more that we never heard of," she said.

The program provides short-term cognitive and behavioral assessment and treatment.

"It is short-term planned for the individual according to need," Bordnick said, stressing the word, "short-term."

"We believe significant life changes can occur quickly with a sufficient amount of motivation and effort," she said, stating the philosophy of the counseling service.

"Getting started is the hard part. The longer you are in that vicious circle the more likely you are going to retreat from shopping, from church, from friends, from all of life," Bordnick said.

"At the time of my first anxiety attack I could have won the title of 'Super Mother of the Year.' By the time I finally got started in treatment I was unable to go out to lunch with a friend."

THE TURN-AROUND for Bordnick came when her counselor asked her what she wanted to do more than any other thing in the world. She responded by saying she had always wanted to go to college.

"Signing up for that first class at OCC (Oakland Community College

Orchard Ridge Campus) was the most difficult thing I have ever done in my life," she said.

Things did not get any easier for a long time. Bordnick spent a lot of that first semester in panic, scared, crying, sometimes cringing in the women's bathroom. Her legs shook as she made her way to class. Once inside the classroom, she was always the closest to the door, the better to bolt out of the room if panic struck.

As she pursued more classes at OCC, then study at Madonna College for her bachelor's and master's degrees, she became steadily surer that she wanted to help others conquer their phobias.

"There are just not enough social workers in the world who specialize in anxiety disorders," she said. "And there is no need for treatment to take forever."

THERE IS, however, a lot of homework. Clients learn to confront their fears in the office, home or environment pertinent to the phobia — for example, in the woods if the problem is a fear of snakes.

The new Anxiety Disorders Program services include individual and group therapy, assessments, home and environment sessions.

The first workshops, presentations and community education programs are being lined up now for the spring in Farmington Hills Counseling Services, 32905 12 Mile.

Bordnick will take inquiries at 553-9770.



Judith Bordnick, once a victim of agoraphobia, through a new Anxiety Disorders Program in Farmington Hills is now helping others to confront their fears.



Local high school students recognized for the volunteer work they do in and around the community are (from left) Amy Brun, Andrea Thibodeau, Bryan Thibodeau, Michael Logan (seated), Steven Story, Kara Kurtz, Christine Gale, Angie Socher, June Farrell, Jennifer Geach, Susan Kracoe and Erica Watrick.

Teens give time, talent, skills

William Hamilton, caseworker for Farmington Youth Assistance, handed out plaques to 12 teens in recognition of the time, talent and skills they have contributed to the community during the fourth annual Youth Recognition Breakfast.

Amy Brun spends two hours every Tuesday afternoon providing recreation for fourth- through sixth-graders. She is a trained volunteer for the American Red Cross and chairs Nardin Park Youth Service Fund committee.

June Farrell served as North Farmington High School blood drive

publicly chair this year and has publicized Walk America for the March of Dimes for several years. She participates in the American Legion poppy sale and worked on the American Legion Auxiliary Bowlathon to benefit the disabled.

Christine Gale is president of Farmington High School's chapter of Students Against Driving Drunk and is on the state advisory board of the organization. Three or four times every semester, she heads up peer resistance training sessions in the local elementary schools.

Jennifer Geach is a volunteer at

Haggerty Center for Neurorehabilitation, an outpatient facility for those with closed-head injuries. She has aided in therapy treatment, trips and clerical work. According to her nominator, "Jennifer's creativity, energy and professionalism are exceptional. She has a natural ability to deal with the physically and cognitively handicapped."

Susan Kracoe "helps define the role of the teen as part of the church community through sharing her leadership skills," says her nominator. She has developed several programs for St. Fabian Youth Group

and participated in numerous activities over the past two years above and beyond what is expected of group members.

Kara Kurtz is a member of Students Against Driving Drunk and regularly travels to elementary schools to speak on the dangers of peer pressure in relation to drugs and alcohol. She is the adult advisor for a middle school student newspaper and directs about 30 students in all areas of journalism. She serves on the Student Advisory Board of

High School, was nominated by Betty Martin, a teacher at her school.

Please turn to Page 2

Community recognizes teens' spirit of giving

By Loraine McClich
staff writer

FARMINGTON AREA city fathers turned out en masse late last week to applaud the giving spirit of 12 teenagers.

The event was Farmington Youth Assistance (FYA) Youth Recognition Breakfast, the fourth annual gathering of its kind to publicly acknowledge the voluntary contribution teens make in many and varied areas.

"We want you to know that your community values your efforts," FYA volunteer Madelyn Ryan told the 12 honored guests.

"This recognition has nothing to do with scholarship or sports achievements. From the nominations submitted, we selected teens (for this honor) who stick with a task to serve others," she said.

AMY BRUN, a ninth grader at Harrison High School, was nominated by Bill Roy, youth director at Nardin Park United Methodist Church. June Farrell, a senior at North Farmington High School, was nominated by Alvina Harvey, a teacher at her school.

Christine Gale, a senior at Farmington High School, was nominated by SAAD advisor Robert Lekovich. Jennifer Geach, a senior at North Farmington High School, was nominated by Wendy Weckstein, a physical therapist and clinical supervisor for Haggerty Center.

Susan Kracoe, an 11th grader at North Farmington High School, was nominated by Judy Thibodeau, youth minister for St. Fabian Parish. Kara Kurtz, a 10th grader at Farmington

High School, was nominated by Betty Martin, a teacher at her school.

Michael Logan, a senior at Harrison High School, was nominated by coach Michael Teachman. Angela Socher, a junior at Claremontville High School, was nominated by Adele Emmer, director of volunteer services at Boisford Hospital.

Steven Timothy Story, a 11th grader at Harrison High School, was nominated by French teacher Flicette Orlich. Andrea Thibodeau, a ninth grader at Mercy High was nominated by Kathleen Daray, religious education coordinator for St. Fabian Parish.

Bryan Thibodeau, a junior at University of Detroit Jesuit High School, was also nominated by Kathleen Daray. Erica Watrick, a junior at Harrison High was nominated by Charmaine Ragusa, a teacher at the school.

OAKLAND COUNTY Youth Assistance is dedicated to the prevention of juvenile delinquency and child neglect in the 26 communities within the county. It is administered under the auspices of Oakland County Probate Court.

Farmington Youth Assistance operates with sponsorship of the Oakland County Probate Court, the Farmington School District, the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills. Its principal funding is supplied through the Oakland County Board of Commissioners.

Among those who spoke in thanks to the teens for giving of their time and talents and skills, was Joan E. Young, who "sees a lot of kids in trouble," she said, in her position as Judge of Probate Court.

Please turn to Page 2