

Big business moves to address day care needs

The UAW has considered child care a significant issue since 1984, resulting in major advances in this area at Ford, Chrysler and General Motors.

A pilot program for resource and referral programs that began at several Ford locations in 1984, including seven Michigan plants, has recently been expanded to a total of 26 locations.

In June, Chrysler made headlines with its announcement of an on-site child-care center at its electronic plant in Huntsville, Alabama. The center is scheduled to open in 1991. This plant was chosen because more than 50 percent of the workers are women, and 70 percent of them are of child-bearing age.

Chrysler has set up resource and referral programs at plants in Sterling Heights and Warren also. Needs assessments are currently being conducted at five other U.S. facilities.

In 1987, General Motors expanded a 1984 pilot program through a commitment to make the collection and distribution of child-care resources available to all U.S. plants.

THE EXTENT of these services varies widely depending on need. Peter Festillo, Ford vice president, Employee and External Affairs, said that he is proud of his company's role in the "joint effort with the UAW to meet the family needs of today's UAW-represented workers for quality day-care, parent education and other services."

He stressed the importance of "finding workable solutions to some of the toughest problems faced by today's parents."

Ford's program is currently the most extensive in the industry. A child-care specialist is assigned to each plant.

The specialist then helps any worker asking assistance in finding



child care
Marcie Walker

child care by compiling a list of licensed providers meeting his specifications.

THE ULTIMATE selection, as well as payment, is up to the employee.

Ford's program includes other features: a 24-hour child-care hotline, summer camp programs, assistance to families with handicapped children, tutors and more.

The resource and referral offices also hold seminars to acquaint child-care providers with the needs of

UAW-Ford families.

The UAW plans to continue pressing for child-care benefits during UAW 1990 contract talks.

Proposals will include more on-site centers as well as company-funded assistance with child-care costs.

Marcie Walker is a free lance journalist who has researched the child care industry in the metro area.

Choosing the right special care facility

By Mary Rodrigue
staff writer

Placing an aging loved one in a special care facility can be a heart wrenching undertaking for families. Citizens for Better Care (CBC) tries to ease the burden somewhat.

While not an outright promoter for specific homes, the non-profit organization tries to help the consumer make an informed choice.

"We try to help provide information so that families can make a good choice," said Mike Connors, project director for the agency's southeastern Michigan office. "We tell them how to evaluate a home, what to look for, certification status and we do have copies of department of public health inspection reports."

The organization does not conduct its own inspections. And it doesn't have to go far to find out what and where the problems exist.

"Most problems are brought to our attention," Connors said. "We try to help people with their problems and we try to help those looking for long-term care."

There are basically three types of long-term care facilities CBC focuses upon: homes for the aged, adult foster care and nursing homes. Each has different licensing requirements.

Adult foster care homes, for example, are generally smaller residences (20 beds or less) for adults age 18 and older.

HOMES FOR the aged, on the other hand, are usually more than 20 beds and are for people age 60 and up. They provide similar services, personal care and supervision, but both are distinguished from nursing homes, which provide more medical based care.

CBC deals only with licensed facilities for the aged, not the mushrooming industry of retirement residences which are unlicensed but offer assisted care for residents.

Some adult foster care homes deal with spinal cord injured victims, others with mentally ill or mentally retarded clientele.

But CBC focuses on those which house the aged, which comprise the majority of adult foster care homes.

"Those other homes have their own advocacy groups," Connors said. Between 4,000 and 5,000 people were served in some way by CBC last year.

"We're not the enforcement; we're more the watchdog," Connors said. Those with complaints are guided through a process which usually includes first informing them of their rights, ways to work within the

home, meeting with residents and staff, and as a final resort, filing a formal complaint with the Michigan Department of Public Health, the licensing agency for such homes, or the Department of Social Services or Attorney General's office.

CBC IS financed through the Area Agency on Aging and the United Foundation. Resources are limited. Established 20 years ago, in 1969, the agency has a downtown Detroit office location that serves as its main headquarters. A smaller office in the Mercy Center of Farmington Hills was closed and the two operations consolidated.

"(Farmington Hills area) was a high demand area and we couldn't meet the demand with a one or two office staff," he said. "We serve the entire area from our downtown office now. There is no charge for assistance, but we encourage people to donate when they can."

CBC has other offices to serve other parts of the state. The Detroit

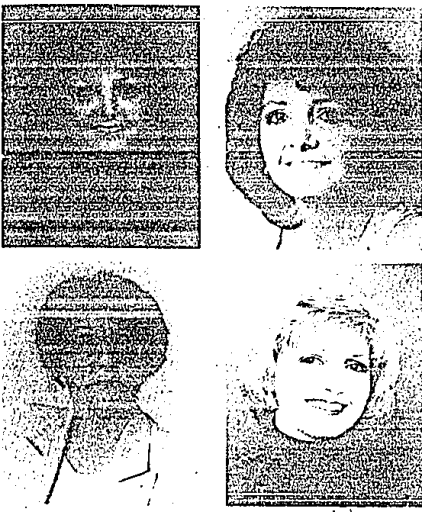
office, at 1553 Woodward, Suite 515, serves the seven-county southeastern Michigan corridor. Inquiries can be directed to (600) 833-9548 or 962-5968.

Diabetics invited to class

A series of six diabetes classes begin 7 a.m. Thursday, Sept. 7 in Oakland County Health Division's South office, 27725 Greenfield Road, Southfield.

The classes are for adult diabetics and their family members. They are taught by a public health nurse and a registered dietitian. Topics for discussion include the nature of the disease, dietary management, medications and suggestions for coping with everyday problems.

The classes are free. Registrations will be accepted until Sept. 5. For register, call 424-7042.



Publicity photographs show four looks of Marti Bowling.

She'll be seen in Unsolved Mysteries

Marti Bowling auditioned for a part in the television show "Unsolved Mysteries" on a Thursday. She was told she got the part on Friday, began work on Friday evening and filmed throughout the weekend.

"I've been in the movies, in theater, worked in television shows and commercials for a long time, and never had anything go that fast," the Farmington Hills resident said. "All the actors went home Sunday night and the crew worked through Mon-

day with the people who were involved in the actual mystery."

The segment of the show Bowling will be seen in concerns the murder of an Ypsilanti realtor Jack Brown. Dutch Jordan, who was co-owner of a realty firm with Brown, and Ed Hall, an Ypsilanti police detective, are prominent in the show which will be shown this fall.

Locally Bowling has appeared in the Redford, Upstage, Attic and Slate Fair theaters.

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