

Mom reaches milestone, says 'no more whippings'

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

It was a milestone — plain and simple.

Her 6-year-old son was misbehaving. Not seriously, but enough to frazzle a busy mother's nerves.

On previous occasions, when her son misbehaved, Terri (not her real name) reacted almost instinctively — she whipped her son.

"I never put him in the hospital," said the 39-year-old divorcee. "But I hit him hard. I was raised with willow-switches and belts. That was my idea of discipline."

This time, however, Terri ordered her son to sit down. "I told him he had to sit there until he drew a picture showing how he felt at the

moment," she said.

"He's a very artistic kid," Terri said. "And my discipline worked. He sat down to draw" and everything was fine.

The finest part of all, Terri said, was being able to control her anger, channeling it into something more constructive than simply beating the boy's bottom as she had done in the past.

"I felt good about myself" and the way I related to my son, she said. It was a milestone indeed.

TERRI'S FAMILY is one of 40 in Oakland County to get help under the Family Advocate program initiated within the last year by Oakland Family Services with a \$175,000 federal grant.

The goal is to help families with counseling from professional social workers and a trained volunteer who cares.

Terri said the professionals were good. But in her case, the volunteer made the difference.

"Here was a woman who had education and so much more than I did," Terri said. "Yet she cared. She wasn't being paid to, but she cared."

Terri credits the family advocate program with helping her overcome the debilitating effects of an abusive childhood, two equally abusive marriages and an affinity for "men who pulled her down."

Terri's now engaged to a man who makes her feel good about herself and plans to make a good home for her and her family.

Judges set to train assistants

Oakland County Circuit Court Judges Gene Schmelz and Fred M. Mester will be among the faculty for the 10 legal assistant courses being offered by Madonna College this winter.

Madonna's legal assistant program, the first to be approved by the American Bar Association in Wayne County, offers associate and bachelor of science degrees as well as post-baccalaureate certificates in the field.

Registration for winter term is set for Monday, Dec. 4, through Thursday, Dec. 21, and Tuesday, Jan. 2, through Friday, Jan. 5. Classes begin Jan. 8.

Beginning legal assistants are offered both introductory classes, Legal Assistant Orientation and Legal Research and Writing I, taught by Mary Urisko, local attorney and assistant director of the legal assistant program at Madonna.

Urisko will also teach Business

Associations, which covers incorporation procedures, directors' and stockholders' meetings, public sales of securities, partnership agreements and dissolution.

Mester will teach Legal Research and Writing II, a course which develops analysis of facts and studies the evolution of a typical lawsuit, emphasizing federal law.

For more information call Cote or Urisko at 591-5195. Students wishing to enroll for winter classes should make an appointment now.

Madonna is at 1-96 and Levan Road in Livonia.

Let the traveling consumer beware

It's still consumer beware in the travel business.

Greater consumer awareness is necessary when dealing with travel industry agents, said state Rep. Judith Miller, R-Birmingham, after an unsuccessful attempt to get a state law to protect travelers when a travel agency goes out of business.

Miller introduced her legislation in the wake of the abrupt closing of a Lathrup Village travel agency, to which area residents and groups

had paid money to book travel. She wanted to protect other travelers' investments by requiring agents and tour operators to establish escrow accounts or purchase special insurance.

"I met extensively with House members, state officials and travel industry representatives to discuss not only my bills, but legislation to license travel agents," she said. "However, the involved parties could not reach agreement on the bills."

"PROSPECTIVE TRAVELERS should work only with travel agents who are bonded through the Airlines Reporting Corporation or tour operators who offer association protection plans. Reputable agents and operators concerned about maintaining their integrity will make every attempt to assure pre-paid travel arrangements are honored."

For further information about existing traveler's protections, contact Miller at 433-3080.

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