

Goodfellows put the beat back into hearts of the needy

By Susan Buck
staff writer

One young mother has three children younger than 2. A family with three sons has one child with a severe breathing problem.

Another household has three generations living under the same roof. They all contribute care to a diabetic grandmother who recently lost two toes to gangrene.

These folks are among those who received assistance Saturday from the Farmington Area Goodfellows, who help put a beat back into the hearts of struggling families and help create happy holiday memories.

VOLUNTEERS DELIVERED 266 sets of three baskets of joy to 156 families with 373 children, as well as to 139 seniors.

The baskets contained canned goods donated largely through the schools, apples, corn flakes, dried beans, fresh bread and gift certificates to a local grocery and discount store.

Families also received toys, knitwear, boys shirts, girls dresses and children's jeans. Seniors also received stationery, stamps, soap, lotion, paper goods and knitwear. Family makeup dictates the size and content of each basket. Potential recipients must document need. Local seniors make much of the knitwear.

"The food boxes alone, all three boxes together, are probably worth \$85-\$90," said Fred Tuck, a volunteer who helped pack boxes.

THE GOODFELLOWS were called to aid fewer families and seniors this year. But it's possible the families aided this year were more in need, Goodfellow James Stevens said.

"What has happened is that over the years, the number of families who we have served has gone down. Also, people don't have as many children," Stevens said.

Thus came the decision several years ago to aid seniors who need help to the recipient list.

Besides adult volunteers who came with helping hands Saturday morning, National Honor Society students from Farmington and Harrison high schools, along with North Farmington High Varsity Club members, participated in loading personal trucks and vans lined along an empty storefront in the Village Commons Shopping Center in downtown Farmington.

Farmington-based Nelson/Ross Properties donated use of the storefront during the weeks leading up to delivery Saturday. Robertson Brothers Pool Service, a division of Paddock Pools in Farmington Hills, donated the use of several trucks and drivers.

LEE RATLIFF, a Goodfellow volunteer since 1958, drove his van accompanied by passenger Chris Hartsock, 10, a Flamingo Elementary fifth grader and son of Bill Hartsock, a Farmington city councilman. The senior Hartsock was also on hand with former councilman Arnold Campbell.

At one stop, the Williams and Mary Walker home on Wheeler in southeast Farmington Hills, three generations live under one roof. Grandchildren Levi, 6, and Billy, 4, gladly opened the front door to admit the Goodfellow volunteers accompanied by an Observer reporter and photographer.

"My daughter comes down here because my wife just had two toes amputated," William Walker said. "She's not supposed to do any

walking or anything."
"My daughter, Suzanne, and these two kids (grandchildren) live upstairs, but it's too cold up there and they didn't go up there today," Mary Walker said.

THE WALKER home has several birdcages in the living room filled with a mynah bird, parrots and parakeets.

"I was thinking of maybe trying to raise some birds and sell them to pet shops because he (husband) just got his Social Security," Mary Walker said. "I was in the doll business. I was trying to make a business selling doll clothes. I won prizes downtown. But then I broke my leg and got into a wheelchair."

The Walkers tell a story about how Mary went to sleep and during the night her left leg swelled up so

badly from gangrene that two toes had to be removed.

"I just can't recuperate from this operation," Mary Walker said. "They're giving me one therapy, but they think they are going to give me another therapy."

THE SALE of a special-edition Goodfellows newspaper the day after Thanksgiving raised more than \$17,000 this year.

The Goodfellows, a lifeline for 40 years, offer limited emergency assistance throughout the year.

They also donate money to Neighborhood House, which serves as a clearinghouse to match local residents in need with appropriate services and agencies. Virtually all cash donations to the Goodfellows come back to the community, minus the cost of baskets and stamps.

Goodfellows call for donations

Again this year, the Farmington Area Goodfellows need your support to help provide year-round emergency assistance to needy families and seniors in Farmington and Farmington Hills.

With the money that's donated, the Goodfellows also deliver holiday baskets containing food, clothing, knitwear as well as toys for families and basic essentials for seniors.

Virtually all donated money is returned to the community because of the Goodfellows' minimal operating costs. Please fill out the coupon below and mail it, along with your donation, to:

Farmington Area Goodfellows
33411 Grand River
Farmington, Michigan 48024

Goodfellows

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
Amount of donation: \$ _____



Goodfellow helper Chris Hartsock, 10, of Farmington delivers a food basket to a house on Wheeler in Farmington Hills as 6-year-old Levi Walker holds the door open Saturday morning.



Volunteer Dave Singer moves food baskets Saturday morning at the Goodfellows headquarters in the Village Commons Shopping Center.



North Farmington High students John Kraus (left) and Chris Rivers help load food baskets Saturday morning at the Goodfellows headquarters in the Village Commons Shopping Center.

Orchard Lake/14Mile rezoning introduced

A request to rezone the northeast corner of 14 Mile and Orchard Lake Road from office service and general business to community business was introduced by the Farmington Hills City Council Monday.

The city council will consider enacting the zoning change in January.

L. William Sherr, a real estate developer, wants to combine four parcels and rezone them to allow for a three-tenant community business district.

The Michigan National Bank branch currently on the 3.6-acre site would be torn down and rebuilt. Another parcel houses a Michigan Bell switching center, which also would be torn down.

Two other parcels are vacant. The new community business district would front Orchard Lake Road, 14 Mile, Northwestern Highway and Greening.

On Nov. 16, the planning commission recommended approving the rezoning request. The acreage is master planned for office and commercial use. But planners felt the rezoning request "would be a reasonable alternative and wouldn't have a negative impact on the master plan," said Ed Gardiner, senior planner for the city.

Evidence shows that a community business district would create less traffic at peak hours than office zoning would. Planners also could better control curb cuts, Gardiner said.

Book tells on how to raise a 'mensch'

By Natalie Halpern
special writer

In a world where many things are "me" first and there are no prizes for being nice, Rabbi Neil Kurshan has written a book for parents of all faiths, about how to raise children who will strive to meet their goals without losing their capacity to be decent and kind.

He was at Adat Shalom Synagogue last week at the invitation of the congregation's Adult Study Commission. An audience of about 70 turned out to hear him discuss his book, "Raising Your Child to be a Mensch" (a decent, responsible, caring person).

"The areas of concern that congregants focus on," Kurshan said, "are not theological, but family concerns. They may be successful and economically secure, but they are still anxious about their families."

loved and valued, heard and understood, who knows he or she is taken seriously, is on the way to becoming the kind of person who will love, value, and appreciate the worth of others throughout their lifetime.

"Ethical values have to be taught by example. They do not emerge automatically," he added. "Instilling values takes a great deal of time. Parents who choose to be full-time parents should not feel they are part of a besieged minority."

He recounted how the book came into being. "It grew from a High Holiday sermon on menschlichkeit — knowing the responsible, fair, and decent thing to do in any situation. I wondered why there are books galore on how to parent, but few or none on how to rear and nurture a child to be kind and caring. A very persistent congregant, who happens to be a literary agent, persuaded me to write this book to answer that need."

Menschlichkeit calls for being sensitive to other people's needs. It is acquired, Kurshan believes, by living close to family and extending one's sense of obligation beyond the family to the broader community. "This reflects a social ideal representing

decency, generosity, kindness, and above all, integrity. You cannot be a mensch in isolation. In the Jewish culture of Eastern Europe where the term arose, to call someone a mensch was the highest compliment that could be given."

EARLIER in the day, Rabbi Kurshan met with the headmaster and several parents of third graders at Hillel Day School to explore strategies for teaching menschlichkeit in the context of a day school. Hillel Day School in Farmington Hills serves children from kindergarten through eighth grade from South Oakland County, Detroit and Windsor. The majority of the school's 550 students live in West Bloomfield, Farmington Hills, and Southfield.

"The important ideals we want for ourselves and to transmit to our children give life meaning," according to Kurshan. "Parents can have a unique effect because this area is determined by nurturing, rather than biology." He cited a recent study that found that the personality trait exclusively determined by environment is "niceness." The influence of the family is paramount in determining the values with which one

grows up. "Institutional supports for values no longer exist as they did in previous generations. Schools once reinforced common values. Public school educators today speak of values clarification, which purports to be value-neutral, but is not. They assume all values are relative and that important thing is not so much to know right from wrong, but to understand the values you hold and why you hold them. Do we want public schools to teach values?"

The breakdown in extended families, which used to live in proximity, he said, now makes it a "tutorial relic." People used to live and grow up in a community with a coherent set of values that touched everyone's personal life.

"We live in a secular world," Kurshan said, "and parents are on their own in instilling values. It takes a great deal of time and energy, but parents have to be role models for their children. No one has all the answers. The goal is to be a human being, not perfection. We recognize that life consists of imperfect compromises — we have to make choices," and these values guide in making them.