

# Foster parents win state award

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She is really perfect for these kids." Jim, a professional musician and entertainer, easily accepts new foster children. He makes time to do magic tricks, participate as an in-home guide at the Livonia YMCA and drive the church bus on Sundays to be with the children.

**'We'll be doing this as long as we can. Some days are really hard. There have been days when we wondered why we're doing this, but the kids are our reward. They really are special.'**

— Donna Faulkner

to ask that a few children be removed.

BRIGETT, ONE of their adopted children, has recently been placed in a special treatment center in Grand Rapids due to severe emotional damage.

But he gives all the credit to Donna. "She takes everything in stride. When kids have to be taken to the hospital, she'll sit in the waiting room all night. Even during the roughest times, she remains calm."

slept in Donna's arms. Amber, a 2-week-old infant, was taken from her mother in jail.

dren hang in the hallway. No one is forgotten.

"WE'LL BE doing this as long as we can," Donna said. "Some days are really hard. There have been days when we wondered why we're doing this, but the kids are our reward. They really are special."

The children who have come into the Faulkners' home these past 20 years are "special needs" children who suffer mainly from abuse and neglect, abandonment, drug addiction and diseases.

One boy stands out in Donna's mind. The 14 month old had been abused and neglected. Donna raised the boy until he was 3, when the Department of Social Services decided his natural mother was fit to take him back. Three months after he was sent home, he was beaten to death by his mother's boyfriend, Donna said.

The Faulkners' adopted children are Jonathan, 6, born with a cocaine addiction; Christopher, 9, born a fetal alcoholic; Amy, 13, diagnosed with leukemia at 5; Brigett, 17, abused and abandoned; Ilsha, 18, born with severe cerebral palsy.

Donna admitted it's never easy to see a child leave, especially when the Faulkners are uncertain as to where the child will be placed.

"I'll never forget him. He was a good little boy." Throughout their 20 years of foster parenting, not all the children were well-behaved. The couple had

Their four birth children are Ryan, 27; Renee, 25; Kevin, 23; and Annette, 21.

When Ilsha was adopted by the Faulkners, she said, "Now I'm a human being." Donna recalled.

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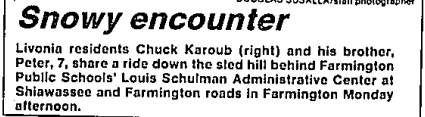
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## Snowy encounter

Livonia residents Chuck Karoub (right) and his brother, Peter, 7, share a ride down the sled hill behind Farmington Public Schools' Louis Schulman Administrative Center at Shiawassee and Farmington roads in Farmington Monday afternoon.

## Hills man charged with beating tot

A Farmington Hills man is charged with assault with intent to murder in connection with an alleged severe beating of a 7-month-old boy he was helping care for.

Arrested Feb. 21 before District Judge Fred Harris of Farmington, Ronald Lowell Dring, 23, stood mute to the charge and an innocent plea was entered in his behalf. Harris signed the arrest warrant the day before.

Harris adjourned Dring's preliminary exam last Wednesday at defense attorney Joseph Kosmala's request.

Dring was remanded to the Oakland County Jail in lieu of \$250,000 cash or surety bond pending the exam, rescheduled for March 14.

Harris denied Kosmala's request for personal bond but the Mount Clemens attorney said he intends to request it again if his client is bound over for trial.

"We categorically deny any mistreatment of Joshua whatsoever," Kosmala said Friday. "We're absolutely abhorred that Mr. Dring has been charged in this case."

Joshua Martin was reported in fair condition Friday at Children's Hospital of Michigan in Detroit.

"As I understand it, his condition is vastly improved. That's information I got from the baby's mother, who seems him on a daily basis," Kosmala said.

Dring and Joshua's mother are engaged, Kosmala said.

## Recycling workshop slated

The Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce will host a workshop on recycling for businesses Wednesday, March 14.

The breakfast workshop will begin at 8 a.m. at the Radisson Suite Hotel, 37529 Grand River.

Businesses must consider the impact of solid waste on profit margins, according to the workshop flier.

For reservations, call the chamber: 474-3140. Cost is \$10 per person for members, \$12 per person for non-members.

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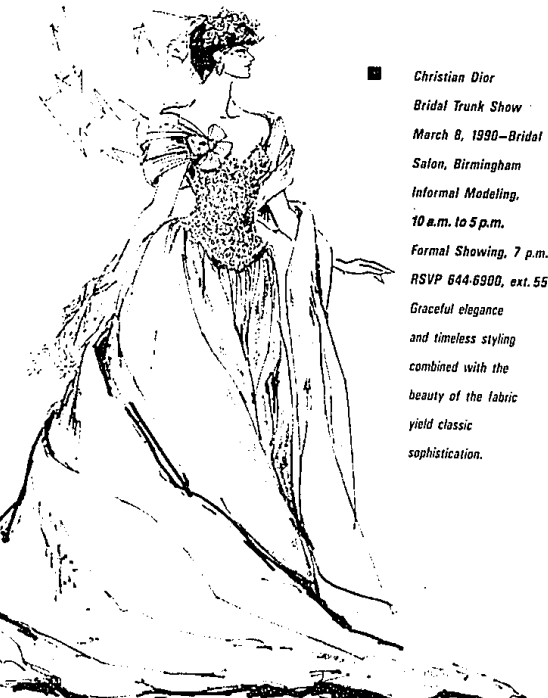
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