

# Business profits

## Hudson's employees get back more than they give

By Janice Brunson  
staff writer

The match is good, a dozen or so little boys and girls celebrating birthdays and employees from Hudson's at Summit Place on Telegraph Road with gifts and goodies for the

celebration.

The endeavor, a new monthly activity staged at the Women's Survival Center's Child Care Center in Pontiac, is a team volunteer effort urged by Hudson's of all employees. Over 50 participate in planning and implementing the birthday festivities, ac-

ording to Kelle Rodrigues, 25, of Birmingham.

Rodrigues, a Hudson's sales manager, helps coordinate the project with Alan Blison, a Hudson's sales consultant from Rochester who conceived the idea of a monthly event following last year's annual Christmas party hosted by the company for the children.

"We get interested at Christmas and then tend to forget it," Blison explained. "I hit on the idea that in the retail business we have access to goods. We could stage birthday parties and give each child a new outfit and a present."

Hudson's contributed \$400 to the project. The employees activity committee contributed another \$100 and additional funds have been raised by selling lilies (\$550) and a raffle (\$200). Clothing and gifts are purchased at discount from Hudson's.

**MANNY IS CRYING.** A life-sized doll in his smart new outfit, replete with blue bow tie, he misses his mama. He and Alexandra are among the guests of honor today, each just 2 years old and children who are labeled "economically disadvantaged."

The center offers hope for the future, providing Manny, Alexandra, and another 150 youngsters ages 6 weeks to 5 years quality care while parents attend school, seek employment or work.

"You're not a real bunny," a 4-year-old shrieks at a huge rabbit that has just entered the classroom. Christine Serra, a Hudson's sales consultant, wears a furry costume donated by Sutton's Costumes and passes out candy and affection.

Rob Ferstman, a 22-year-old Hudson's salesman from Sylvan Lake, observes "this whole thing is about kids and these kids are exceptional." Katrina Shaw, also in sales, feels "very positive" about the party. "This is a definitely needed service. The benefits to the community are so great."

Indeed, such volunteer service is needed more than ever, according to center director Diane Hausker. State funding of the facility has been slashed by budget cuts, forcing the center to cease care for the most needy, homeless youngsters whose families temporarily reside in an adjacent shelter.

"We're trying to roll as many of them as we can into this program but, of course, we can't take care of all of them. We're looking for other sources of funding," Hausker said.

**THIS BIRTHDAY** party is Barbara Meisner's first with the youngsters. Meisner, of Birmingham, is board president of the Women's Survival Center of Oakland County, the agency that has sponsored the center since founding it in 1981.

"This is the first time business and non-profit has come together. There are so many deserving organizations. I'm so happy (Hudson's) chose us."

Hudson's manager Michael Wade, participating in his third party, stooped low to hand out Easter baskets to small fry, saying "it's nice to give back to the community."

The only thing missing, Blison accurately notes, "is nobody's singing Happy Birthday." More than pleased, however, he adds, "these volunteers are repeaters. They insist on coming back."

Future volunteer efforts include



PAUL HIRSCHMAN/staff photographer

Kelle Rodrigues (right) of Birmingham scoops some vanilla fudge ice cream onto 4-year-old Boomer's plate.

providing the center with a TV and VCR, and special outings with the teens, and legal services and counseling for women in need or in prison.

STATE FUNDING has been slashed this fiscal year by the state Department of Social Services. The Women's Center budget was cut \$49,000, Borg said, forcing severe cutbacks in child care services, entirely terminating housing for un-

married teens and a "significant" reduction in staffing.

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For more information on volunteering or contributions, call 335-1520 or write 167 West Pike, Pontiac, 48341.



Four-year-old Amber and Rob Ferstman of Sylvan Lake enjoy the party.

## Shower staged to aid Child Care Center

By Janice Brunson  
staff writer

An old-fashioned baby shower complete with silly traditional games, but in this case, no particular mother and lots of babies.

The shower, hosted by Ellen Tallero of Bloomfield Hills, is meant to raise sorely needed funds and supplies for the Child Care Center in Pontiac, a program of the Women's Survival Center of Oakland County.

"If we give 50 crib sheets that means funds can be diverted to other things. There are always needs," said Tallero, whose shower is meant to offer women from the Bloomfield Hills and Birmingham a hands-on "opportunity in community volunteering. She and others are forming Friends of the Child Care Center."

Such volunteer support is essential if programs supported by the Women's Center are to continue, accord-

ing to director Ann Borg. Other programs include Sojourner House, until recently a home for unwed pregnant teens, and legal services and counseling for women in need or in prison.

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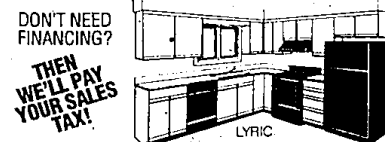
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