

Suburban Life



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(F1C)

Siena Heights

College removes barriers for serious adult students

By Shirlee Rose Iden
staff writer

One of Oakland County's best kept educational secrets is Siena Heights College, where 1,700 students have earned degrees in the 15 years since it came to Southfield.

"Minds are like parachutes, they only function when open," reads a sign in the hallway of the school which shares quarters with Magnolia Community Center.

You won't find references to football competition, swimming meets, or fraternity and sorority activities. Siena puts no stress on socializing and good times, it's a place where people enroll to get the credentials to help them advance.

William P. McDermott, dean of off-campus programs for metro Detroit, said about 700 students enroll each term.

"We have a pool of about 50 instructors," he said.

"Our main campus is in Adrian, Mich. The school was founded by the Dominican Congregation in 1919 as a girls' college, later becoming coeducational."

McDermott said the average student age is 39 and 45 percent work at least 40 hours a week.

"SIENA COLLEGE is more like a graduate school mode with a lot of independent learning. We have experts in teaching adults which is a different dynamic than teaching youth."

Registration at Siena includes an assessment of the student's learning style so maximum progress is made.

"We accept up to 90 transfer cred-

its permitting students to take many classes at community colleges like OOC in Farmington Hills where tuition is lower."

Challenge exams can be arranged allowing a student to all for a test of his knowledge without actually taking the class. Students can also petition, putting forth an argument to gain credits for what they already know.

"We try to remove barriers for students. Colleges were designed for kids, not adults," McDermott said.

"WE'RE A PRIVATE Catholic liberal arts college with a program focusing on abstract concepts, classical ideas and a commitment to ethics and social issues. But we don't proselytize."

Of Siena's six administrative staff members, three are working on doctorates and one on a master's, according to McDermott.

"Everybody has to go to school all their lives," said McDermott presently studying in U-M's adult learning theory program himself.

McDermott, born in Buffalo, N.Y., came to Michigan 20 years to attend U-M. "Our school colors are navy and gold, pretty close to the Wolverines," he said.

HE HAS been dean of off-campus programs in the Southfield center for nine years.

Evening and weekend classes are tailor-made for working adults who make up a majority of Siena students.

For information, call 560-6490.



Linda Roth, director of Siena Heights College's Southfield Center stands in front of Magnolia Center, which houses the college.



Kyles Hamilton of Farmington Hills, a business major, registers for classes in front of Siena Heights College's main office.

'Potty Proud' venture: A flush with success

By Sue Mason
staff writer

"One and two and three and four . . . going to the bathroom door. Five and six and seven, eight . . . going potty just can't wait. One and two and three and four . . . I can't hold it anymore. Five and six and seven, eight . . . I think I might be too late."

"Potty Rock" isn't the kind of song you'll find on the airwaves. Don't look for a rock video on MTV and skip the bins at the record store.

You can find "Potty Rock" in just one place — on a cassette tape in a box that colorfully announces it's "Potty Proud."

If you're a parent with a young child, this tape . . . in fact, there's a kit is for you. So says Stephanie Olen of Farmington Hills who with her sister Pauli Giangrande of Southfield came up with a toilet training kit for children and their parents.

The goal of "Potty Proud" is to make the transition from diapers to toilet a fun and rewarding experience for all concerned.

"Adults tend to simplify potty training, but there's a lot of things the child has to master," Olen said.

OLEN AND Giangrande got the idea for "Potty Proud" while trying to toilet train their children. They went looking for information on the subject and found the same four-five books in book stores.

The books pointed out that toilet training should be something children are proud of and a lot suggesting using stickers and posters as a way of rewarding children in training.

But, the two women rationalized, "what working mother has time" to gather up those items. Enter Anton Enterprises Inc. of Farmington Hills.

A takeoff of the women's maiden name of Antonow, the company assembles, markets and distributes "Potty Proud" to book stores and day care centers in the metropolitan area.

The "Potty Proud" kit contains a 12-song cassette tape, produced through Steimar Studios in Farmington Hills and featuring the talents of everyone from the two sis-

'The Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts get patches when they complete something, but there's nothing for kids who accomplish potty training.'

— Stephanie Olen

ters and their husbands to musician Mark Heckert and members of his band, Intrigue.

Although lacking formal training, Olen and Giangrande wrote the lyrics for the songs, lyrics that cover everything from flushing the toilet, using toilet paper and having accidents to pulling pants up and down.

HECKERT PROVIDED the music. Some of the music is recognizable, taken from songs like "London Bridge." "Bingo Was His Name" and "Skip to My Lou" that are in the public domain. The others, covering everything from the blues and country-western to rap, are Heckert's creation.

"He has a real feel for contemporary music and what's good for kids," Olen said. "Mark had a great sense for writing the music."

The singers include Giangrande's husband Michael, "an aspiring opera star" and physics professor at Oakland Community College. Olen's husband David, a "frustrated actor" and psychiatrist in Bloomfield Hills, plays the roving reporter covering the "Potty Proud" Parade. One of the people he interviews is his 2½-year-old daughter Jamie.

Intrigue member Stella Actis carries the narration from song to song.

The kit also contains the artwork of William Callaghan — an illustrated book and coloring sheets to help reinforce the message on the tape, a poster filled with balloon-toting people and animals and smiley faced stickers to build self-esteem.

And for the youngster who accomplishes the ultimate goal, there's the "Potty Proud" medalion to be worn with honor and distinction and postcards to send to

grandparents, announcing that the child is "potty proud."

"THE BOY Scouts and Girl Scouts get patches when they complete something, but there's nothing for kids who accomplish potty training," Olen said. "And there's no great cards to send out and let people know what you've accomplished."

"When a child is in potty training, you end up inviting everyone into the bathroom to applaud. That's the exuberance that the child needs and that's why we included the medalion and the cards."

The finish product represents 1½ years of work. Olen credits her sister, who has an electrical engineering background and "is very creative," with the idea for "Potty Proud." Olen's background is in marketing.

In addition to the "Potty Proud" kit for parents, they've also come up with special day care editions, since, more and more mothers are relying on day care centers to help with the training, Olen said.

The two women have found people receptive to the idea behind "Potty Proud."

"It's easy to sell because there's no competition," said Olen. "We felt confident there would be a pretty good response and there has been."

Borders book store in Novi and Southfield, the Children's Book Shop in Beverly Hills and Annie's Book Stop in West Bloomfield to carry it. "Potty Proud" has a list price of \$19.95.

Olen stresses that "Potty Proud" isn't a panacea for the problems associated with toilet training.

"We can't guarantee it will potty train a child," Olen said, "but it will relieve the stress and struggle."



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