

Support group helps widows start over

By Julie Brown
staff writer

Cathy Clough was only 33 when her husband died of cancer in 1983. At the time, Clough had children ages 5 and 9 and a 16-year-old stepson.

"Most people think that a widow is 60, 70 years old," said Clough, a Plymouth resident. She couldn't really relate to the experiences of older widows whose children were grown.

"I knew that I needed to meet other people like myself."

Clough began to work for Arbor Hospice, based in Ann Arbor, a couple of years after her husband died. In August of 1987, she invited 10 other young widows to her home and the Starting Over support group began.

"We were in my house for the first year," said Clough, director of bereavement services for Arbor Hospice/Personalized Nursing Service. As the group grew, a larger site was needed, so members began to meet at the First United Methodist Church of Plymouth. Within the first six months, men were added to the Starting Over group.

THE GROUP'S for men and women age 45 and

younger who have lost a spouse or fiancé to death. Starting Over meets 7-8:30 p.m. the first and third Tuesday of each month at the First United Methodist Church of Plymouth, 4201 N. Territorial, west of Sheldon.

Children's groups, for preschoolers through high school students who've lost a parent, meet at the same time and place. Those groups are coordinated by Sally Dunning, an Arbor Hospice social worker.

Starting Over draws from a wide geographical range, including Royal Oak, downriver communities, the Ann Arbor area and even as far away as Jackson. Many of those people find there's no comparable group closer to home.

"It absolutely is" needed, Clough said. "That's what I hear from everybody who comes. I would have struggled a lot less if I'd had people to go through it with."

Pat Whalen of Canton has found Starting Over to be a great source of support. Her husband Hank, who was a Canton Township trustee, died in September 1989 after a battle with cancer. She has two daughters ages 11 and 13.

"I didn't even know there was a group such as this," said Whalen, a homemaker who previously worked as a Ford Motor Co. secretary. She began going to meetings in October 1989 "right after my husband had died. I was

looking for something for my children."

WHALEN, WHO'S in her late 40s, found it helpful to discuss issues with others who knew what she was going through. Although friends can empathize, they haven't walked in the shoes of a young widow or widower.

"It helps when you meet others who have suffered a similar loss," Whalen said.

Meetings in Plymouth usually attract 40 to 60 adults and about 30 children, Clough said. Meetings include both large and small group discussions.

Several smaller group sessions are given at meetings, including: orientation/early grief; early grief; transition; and Moving On, for those who've dealt with and accepted their grief.

As part of Starting Over, a relationship/remarriage group meets 7 p.m. the third Tuesday of the month at the First United Methodist Church of Plymouth. That group is facilitated by an alumni couple from the group.

"Often, younger people feel their only alternative is to remarry soon," said Clough, who remarried three years ago. She and her husband have four teenagers at home.

In the relationship/remarriage group, participants talk about such subjects as finances, sexuality and the

realities of the blended family. They come to understand that early remarriage typically isn't a good idea.

STARTING OVER sponsors other activities, including 7 p.m. get-togethers the second Tuesday of the month at the Mexican Fiesta in Canton. At the same time on the fourth Tuesday of the month, small groups meet in members' homes. Those geographical groups include: Canton; Plymouth/Northville/Livonia; Royal Oak; Ann Arbor; Farmington Hills; and Wayne. Starting Over members facilitate those sessions.

"The leaders in these groups, they've all come out of the group," said Clough, who's working toward a social work degree and plans to transfer to Eastern Michigan University. Starting Over members also participate in a variety of social activities.

A related group, the B-Tweeners, was recently created. It's for widows and widowers who are 45 to 55 or thereabouts.

There's no charge for adult attendance at Starting Over. A small donation is requested for those who have children or teens participate. For more information, call Arbor Hospice/Personalized Nursing Service, (313) 677-0500.

Writer is reserved and sensitive

Dear Lorene,

I would look forward to your observations regarding my handwriting. I am 40 years old and right handed. I have been told I have an unusual grasp of my pen and I usually received low grades in penmanship.

Thank you.

P.L.

This writer would not have received low grades had I been her penmanship teacher. I feel it is unfortunate that our educational system demands that our handwriting must conform to their standards as opposed to judging it on the basis of legibility. As you can see, the handwriting is very legible and neat. What more should be necessary for a good grade?

Contrary to popular belief, this left-slanted handwriting was written by a right-handed person. In a backslanted handwriting you will often find a demanding adult who responds to squelching the writer's responsiveness early in life.

A unique young woman is reflected in this handwriting. She has many inner resources and an intellectual mentality. Her mind is ever probing

and questioning, ferreting out answers which she can accept.

She is reserved, sensitive and cautious in emotional situations. Her feelings are not much in evidence to others.

You have undoubtedly heard me say this before, but it bears repeating in this case. One's past strongly influences the present and the future.

Having been hurt in early life, our writer is careful in her relationships with others. Criticism is difficult for her. Intimacy can make her uncomfortable, as does an outward show of affection.

Our writer has developed an outer facade to better cope with daily living. She can be rather charming in social situations and is probably quite adept at "role playing."

Organizational talent is much in evidence here. Self-discipline and dependability were ingrained into her personality in the formative years. She strives for perfection in all her undertakings. No matter how well she does, she is rarely totally satisfied with her efforts, often feeling she should have done better. This may be the cause of the tension I see.

Home and family are perhaps her

graphology

Lorene Green

I would look forward to your observations regarding my handwriting. I am 40 years old and right handed. I have been told I have an unusual grasp

greatest area of enjoyment. Much time is spent there. Others may see her as a homebody, but this is her choice. She also appears to prefer working alone. This may also be done in her home.

Everything about this writer would be clean, tidy and in good taste. She has an appreciation of beauty, good music and material comforts.

When her illegible signature is considered with the remainder of

her handwriting, I think it is a self-protective measure. She may not allow others to know her intimately.

If you would like to have your handwriting analyzed in this newspaper, write to Lorene C. Green, a certified graphologist, at 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150. Please use a full sheet of white, unlined paper, writing in the first person singular. Age, handedness and full signature are all helpful. And feedback is always welcome.

Mall opens early for morning walkers

Looking for a painless way to burn off those holiday calories?

Best the shoppers to the mall.

Twelve Oaks Mall and the University of Michigan MedSport have

teamed up to launch a mall walking and health education program at the Novi shopping center.

The mall opens at 8 a.m. Monday through Saturday for exercisers who wish to walk the hallways before the stores open. The doors open at 10

a.m. Sundays. New participants are asked to register in the Twelve Oaks security office on the upper level.

From 9-10 a.m. the second Tuesday of every month, U-M presents a health education program. Also available is the "Fitness over 50

Program," a low-impact aerobic session designed by the U-M Physical Education Department and presented by a certified instructor from 9-10 a.m. Mondays and Wednesdays.

For more information, call 348-9438.

Preschool plans fall registration

Sunshine Preschool is conducting registration for its January enrollment class.

The class is designed for children entering kindergarten in the fall of 1992. The program emphasizes math, science, language and creative art.

Growth and development in the areas of problem solving, critical thinking, creative dramas, self-expression, group interaction and creative art are included. A hands-on approach is emphasized.

The class meets on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons in Faith Covenant Church, 14 Mile and Drake Roads in Farmington Hills. For more information, call Sheila Wade at 661-2125.

club circuit

BETHANY NORTHWEST A Catholic group for divorced and separated adults meets for coffee and conversation at 7 p.m. each Thursday in the Ram's Horn, Grand River at Power, Farmington. For details, call 471-2708, evenings; 478-0535 days. The group meets the second Friday of each month at Our Lady of Sorrows social hall on Power in Farmington. A separate group for the newly separated or divorced meets weekly.

THE FARMINGTON SINGLE PROFESSIONALS meet for wallyball at 8:45 p.m. Tuesdays at Racquet Ball Farmington, on 9 Mile west of Farmington Road. For information, call 478-9181.

FARMINGTON SINGLE Professionals holds its Holiday dance Dec. 27 at 7:30 p.m. at the Community Center, 24705 Farmington Road. \$3 members and \$5 for non-members.

FARMINGTON SINGLES holds Pizza and Movie night Saturday, Dec. 28 at 7 p.m. at Shields Plaza, Grand River east of Novi Road in Novi.

FARMINGTON SINGLES Professionals will hold an ice skating event Sunday Dec. 29 at 7 p.m. in Eddie Edgar Ice Arena on Lyndon west of Farmington Road in Livonia. For more information call 478-9181.

THE BREAKFAST OPTIMIST CLUB OF FARMINGTON/FARMINGTON HILLS meets every Wednesday at 7:30 a.m. at the Elks Club, 23586 Orchard Lake Road in Farmington. For more information, call 553-6695.

FEMALE, Formerly Employed Mothers At Loose Ends/At the Leading Edge, has formed a chapter in Oakland County. Meetings are at 7 p.m., the third Thursday of the month at the Bloomfield Township Library at Lone Pine and Telegraph. For more information, call 623-0011 or 684-6096.

NOVI CHESS CLUB will resume meetings in January. For information, call 478-9181.

tion, call 544-9833 evenings.

FARMINGTON SINGLE PROFESSIONALS 6th annual holiday mingle Friday, Dec. 27 at 7:30 p.m. to midnight in The Farmington Community Center, 24705 Farmington Road between 10 and 11 Mile roads. Semi-dressy attire. \$3 for members and \$5 for non-members. For more information call 478-9181.

WESTSIDE SINGLES New Year's Eve singles party Tuesday Dec. 31 at Bonnie Brook Country Club. Ticket information given by calling 562-3170.

SUBURBAN SINGLES holds its weekly dance party Wednesdays from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. at Bonnie Brook Country Club on Telegraph and Eight Mile. Cost is \$3 to all ages 21 and up. Proper attire, no jeans. Telephone hotline is 842-0443.

THE FARMINGTON PROFESSIONAL Women's Network meets Jan. 10 for a 7:30 a.m. breakfast in the Farmington Community Center, 24705 Farmington Road to find out more about first aid and CPR knowledge. Guest speaker Carol Lee, has been an active member for 12 years and has taught advanced first aid, First Responders Emergency Aid and CPR classes for police and firefighters. Reservations are made by mail to: PWN c/o Farmington Secretariat, 25882 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills 48336. Fee is members \$7 and \$9 for non-members. For more information call Dorothy Holtsch at 478-6907.

SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN MENSA holds its public monthly meeting Saturday, Jan. 18 at 8 p.m. Admission is \$3 per person. The meeting is at Southfield Civic Center on Evergreen Road just south of 11 Mile Road in the Parks and Recreation building.

All club news and announcements for this column should be addressed to: Club Circuit, Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336. The information must arrive before noon on the Monday before Thursday publication.

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