

# SUBURBAN LIFE

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1993

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HOMER SMITH

## Little girl's gift shows true spirit

The holidays are nearing and the Salvation Army is gearing up for a busy season. We will once again be providing food, gifts and good cheer to many residents of this area.

In 1992 over 3,000 individuals were served by the Salvation Army of Farmington Hills during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Based on services already given during 1993 this figure will most likely be increased by an additional 300 people.

The holiday programs will begin with a Thanksgiving dinner for approximately 200 people. The dinner which is sponsored by Bill LaKritz of LaKritz-Weber Co. includes a turkey dinner with all the trimmings, a magic show, music and of course Santa with gifts for all the children. On Nov. 23 food baskets will be given to 175 families to provide a Thanksgiving dinner for them.

The Christmas programs begin with a luncheon for approximately 60 seniors on Dec. 3. Lunch and gifts will be provided to those who have preregistered. We also will provide gifts to over 1,100 residents of nursing homes.

During the week before Christmas we will provide food and toys to approximately 2,000 individuals. Many of these individuals will be assisted through our Adopt-A-Family program. In this program groups or individuals adopt a family that has been pre-screened and purchase toys and gifts that are specific to that family. In addition the employees of the Ford plant in Livonia will be providing toys for 200 children.

Last year we received a call on Christmas Eve from a woman who needed some help for Christmas. I gathered together a food basket and a couple of toys for her young daughter.

When the door opened and I was asked in, I was taken aback by what I saw. The house, though clean and neat, was very sparsely furnished. In the corner on a stand was a two-foot high metallic Christmas tree decorated with a dozen ornaments.

Under that tree was just one present - the little girl's homemade gift for her mother.

All the services provided of course do have a cost. During the holiday season we will be conducting their annual Christmas Kettle Campaign. This year the goal will be \$135,000 which reflects an increase of about \$3,000 over 1992. We are seeking individuals and groups who would like to donate a few hours to help raise this money. By raising this money we will be able to continue to provide services not only during the holidays but throughout the entire year.

Last year we received a call on Christmas Eve from a woman wondering if there was any way she might receive some help for Christmas. I gathered together a food basket and a couple of toys for her young daughter.

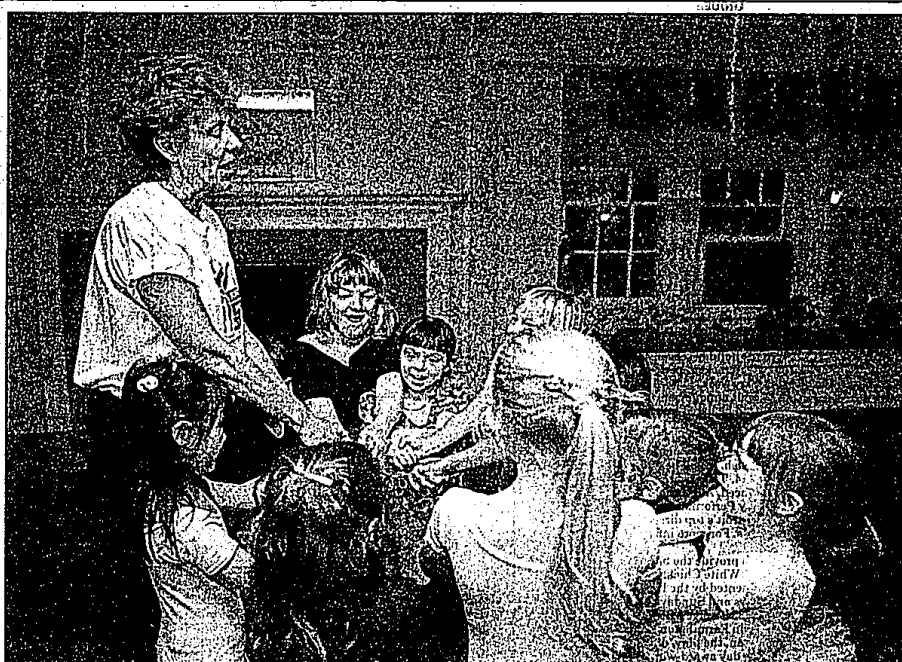
I located her home, parked and went to the door to make sure I had the right place. When the door opened and I was asked to come in I was taken back by what I saw. The house, though clean and neat, was very sparsely furnished. The little girl was watching television on a small portable black and white set that appeared to be several years old.

In the corner on a stand was a two-foot high metallic Christmas tree that held about a dozen ornaments. Under that tree was one present that I later found out the little girl had made for her mother.

When I left the home a few minutes later I prayed a silent prayer that the Christ of Christmas would be sensed by the individuals in that home. That is why we do what we do. We want those whom we serve to witness the Christ of Christmas in our care for them.

The Salvation Army of Farmington Hills serves Farmington, Farmington Hills, Livonia, Novi and portions of Redford Township. If you are interested in volunteering or learning more about the Salvation Army call 477-1153 or write: 27500 Shiloh, Farmington Hills, Michigan 48336.

Capt. Homer Smith and his wife, Robin, run the local Salvation Army.



SHARON LEINER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Next generation: Marion Knisley teaches dance to 5- and 6-year-olds at the Community Center.

## Happy Anniversary

### Center provides history, art, culture



During a landmark anniversary, the Community Center, Farmington-Farmington Hills, is facing a turning point financially. Behind the scenes, employees are hoping to raise more interest in the art/cultural institution.

It may be the 25th anniversary of the Community Center, Farmington-Farmington Hills, but the people behind the scenes aren't exactly kicking up their heels.

The community landmark, art and cultural institution is suffering from an identity problem compounded by money woes during this momentous birthday.

Budget projections were so bleak last summer that the center closed for three weeks to cut down on operating costs. There's been thought about closing for a short time again this year.

Getting to know you

One problem is an identity crisis. "We'd like to get the community re-aware of the center," according to executive director Rosalie Degregorio.

"I've seen like in the past few years a lot of the people who donated in support of the center have retired or moved away and a lot of the new people aren't that aware of us. People think we're connected with the city."

The fact is that no local, state or federal dollars are paid to run the facility. However, employees are hoping to capture grants in the future.

"With 76,000 people, if everyone just gave \$1 that would be almost half

of our budget," Degregorio said, adding that the center's annual budget is about \$189,000 with part-time staff paid \$6.50 to \$7 an hour.

"You do it as a labor of love," said Laura Collins, volunteer coordinator also in charge of public relations.

Upkeep on the old building is costly and needed. For instance, the ceiling heating system needs replacing, which was obvious on a recent November morning when some rooms were chilly and others were stifling hot.

The center is a non-profit and survives mainly on fund-raising, donations, program fees, proceeds from a clothing sale, shop, Second Edition on the second floor of the center and room rentals.

History abounds  
Listed in the Michigan Historic Registry, the building was a six-room Victorian house built in 1869 by

**"We're at a crossroads. We live in a transient community and a lot of people don't know what we are or what we're all about."**

Laura Collins  
Volunteer coordinator

Palmer Sherman, which was originally the only brick house in the area and was a landmark to Farmington Road travelers.

It was sold to Luman Goodenough, a Detroit lawyer, and until 1918 was used only as a summer house. It was also the first house in the area to have electricity and a telephone.

The grounds were lush with Goodenough's formal gardens changed yearly to follow a different style such as English and Italian. Pools and fountains finished the picturesque setting. The shape of the property eventually gave way to the name "Longacres."

In 1968, after the deaths of Goodenough and his wife, the Goodenough family donated the house and five acres of ground to the people of Farmington to be used as a non-profit community center.

And 25 years later, during its silver anniversary that began in September and will be observed until the end of September 1994, the employees and volunteers are inviting people to visit (or revisit) and learn more about the center's cultural and artistic offerings.

Celebration events are in the works, including one program that will feature cultural diversities represented in the Farmington-area community, Collins said.

"We're also planning on a number of activities to familiarize people with the center," Degregorio added.

That familiarization is crucial if you listen to comments people at the center hear, Collins said. It's common, she said, to get calls from people asking where the pool is.

"People think of us as a Y community center and we're an educational and cultural type center," she said.

Something for all

Classes offered at the center are wide-ranging and include: business and finance; dog training; psychic phenomena; consumer tips; dance and ballet; languages; making gingerbread houses; quilting and other needle work; instruction on stained glass; photography and watercolor; beauty and fashion; children's classes and programs; health and fitness; music; theater and personal growth programs.

The programs are diversified, it's just a matter of getting the word out, Degregorio said.

"This is a turning point for us," Collins said. "We're at a crossroads. We live in a transient community and a lot of people don't know what we are or what we're all about."

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## AROUND FARMINGTON

There's no excuse if you don't have anything to do in the next couple of weeks. Look at some of the programs that are happening around town.

Farmington Area Community Women are planning their 19th Annual Arts and Crafts Show, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 4, at Farmington High School on Shiloh north of Grand River and west of Orchard Lake. Admission is \$1 and proceeds go to charity. Anyone who brings two canned goods for the Salvation Army food drive will receive a raffle ticket.

"This is our main fund-raiser and money from fundraisers goes to charity," said Cindy Brown, FACW public relations director.

FACW originated in 1958 as an auxiliary unit to Farmington Area Jaycees.

"Over the years our name has changed, but our goals have not," Brown said, adding that the club provides leadership training and personal growth

opportunity through community involvement.

"We are a group of women dedicated to the provision of community service through fund-raisers and projects as well as social and program activities for our children and ourselves."

The group meets at 7:30 p.m. every third Monday in the Community Center of Farmington-Farmington Hills. Members may bring children to meetings.

"You can do as little or as much as you like," Brown said.

Some of the programs sponsored by the FACW include Halloween and Easter lunches and a program for children during the Farmington Founders Day festival.

Community-service projects include Christmas and Easter baskets for needy families; parties for nursing-home residents; a Baby Beautiful contest with proceeds going to fight sudden infant death

syndrome; Sarah Fisher; Penrickton School for the Blind; barrier-free playground equipment for special-education students; donations to the Botford Hospital pediatric ward; Head Start; the Salvation Army; and the Haven.

"We also have internal events for ourselves and families," Brown said. There's a mom-and-kids-outing and couples' night out.

"This group is a great way to spend a little bit of time to give back to the community and at the same time (meet) others and (strengthen) friendships."

Another program is sponsored by the Farmington Garden Club, celebrating the holiday season with a Christmas luncheon at 11 a.m. Monday, Dec. 6 at the Community Center of Farmington-Farmington Hills.

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