# Stairway Up founders took one step at a time

Ruth Pennington laughs at the hought of her day-care center de-

vouring a church.
"I never thought of it that way,"
she said. "But all that's left is
that one room, and we use that

But in a sense, the Stairway Up Day Care Center, with each new growth spurt, has eaten up the available space at Rice Memorial United Methodist Church in Red-

Onto the second state of the part of the p

Michigan.
They got out the phone book and started looking for a place when Rice Memorial came to mind. Pennington had passed the church at Eight Mile and Beech Daly on her way to work.
They called the pastor, met with the board, and pent a year working out the fine points before

Stairway Up opened on Sept. 4, 1984, with 12 youngsters, one "big" room, and three taschers—the Penningtons and Carolyn Seal, who had been a member of the church committee that looked into the arrangement. "It was small at first, and we were amazed at how fast it grew," Seal seld, overseeing a group of 3-year-olds in the small play yard. "I don't think we knew what we were in for," Soon after opening, the center held an open house that attracted more children, and before long the Penningtons were remodeling the Sunday School wing as the tod-diars' room to accommodate more youngsters.

'A vision'

'A vision'

"A vision"
"Really, it was a vision for both
of us," said Pennington. "When
we saw the building we had a vision of what the center could be
for the community."
A decade later, Stairway Up has
a staff of 15 full-time employees,
two cooperative education students from Thurston High
School, and an enrollment of 60
children. A majority of the chil
dren livs in Redderd, but others
come from Livonia, Plymouth,

Southfield and as far away as Fowlerville — "The father works in St. Clair Shores and drops his son off on his way to work."

Longwity is a plus for the center, according to Pennington, pointing to Seal. A Livonia resident, she was thinking about a job when Pennington asked if any church members were interested in working in the center.

Seal decided to give it a try. She started out with the toddler group and "got so attached to the first group that I moved up with them." Now she works with early 3-year-olds.

"I only it; it's a fun place to work and these are terrific people to work for," she said.

Seal credits Carolyn Penning-

to work for," she said.

Seal crodits Carolyn Pennington with inspiring her to get her
degree, while Ruth crodits Seal
with the naming of the groups. It
started out, she said, with Mrs.
Seal and her little scals; now
there are seven groups with
names like giraffe, panda and
tiger.

Another veteran is Dolores Schihl, who got involved with Stairway Up through her daugh-ter, who worked there during high school. She was working at a deli

at the time, and "things needed to be done around here." Now she's the office manager.
"I'm like the principal around here," said the former Redford Union School Board member.
"The the one they send the kids to ... and I fill in when the cook's not here."
She also works evenings as a secretary at the Pierson Education Center and is a psychology major at Wayne State University. But this day, those things take a back seat to helping a youngster change his solided clothing and getting one of the children's groups in for their "school picture."

Parents matter

Parents matter

The focus of the center is on the working parent — whatever the staff at the day care can do to help the children can make life easier for the parents and give them more time to spend with their children.

To that end, the center is open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. and serves breakfast and lunch. In addition to its normal activities — reading play and the like — the center of fers a day camp during the summer, special activities involving

parents and children at the holi-days, and special guests.

Another perk for parents who want to enroll their children is dance. The center offers jazz, tep; ballet and grampastic classes dur-ing the day, provided by a teacher from Shirley's School of Dance, for a fee.

Unit - - -

for a fee.

While based at Rice Memorial, the center Isn't affiliated with the church. However, youngsters do attend the annual vascition Bible school, and the pastor is invited to say grace at the Thanksgiving feast. At Christmas the children's parents join with church members for the hanging of the greens.

"Our main philosophy is that a child learns through play and by being exposed to many things during the day." Pennington said. "We want them to be prepared when they leave here."

But after 10 years, the staff members want their children and families to come back . . . for an anniversary celebration. More than 500 invitations have been sent out, and response has been

years of togetherness and to celestoria the International Year of the Family. Former students and their families will be there Oct. \$1.75. Those families who can't make it's have sent laters and photographes; that will be displayed throughout; the center.

"I think the secret to its sucy; case it the family atmosphere," added Schild. "One thing parents tells us when they walk in is that; they feel a family atmosphere." "The life is the family atmosphere," "The life is the family atmosphere," "The feel a family atmosphere," "The the community and the church, which have been "very receptive"; to the center.

"This had to be very hard fefti

to the center.

"This had to be very hard for church to have us come in and slowly ... grow," Pennington said. "But the church secretary has told me how life has changed around here because of day care how it use to smell of mold and must and now it smells of pany cakes and syrup.

"It's been a wonderful 10 years, even with the upe and downs."

than 500 invitations have been running at about 85 percent, according to Schihl.

Church families gathered with the staff on Sept. 24 to mark 10

## Local training school receives cash

The Women of North Parmington recently gave \$1,000 to Cloverdals Developmental Training Center in Parmington. The money was raised during functions such as an annual suction and by selling Entertainment books. It will be used to buy Christmas gifts for every Cloverdale student will be the pay for the student will also help pay for the student will also help pay for

dale student.

The gift will also help pay for the cost of transportation in orthopedic buses during excursions.

Lastly, the school has a program for foster grandparents. Curtural transfer.

gram for foster grandparents. Cur-rently, three grandmothers attend the program four days a week. Donations help to maintain this

program.
The Women of North Farmington Club has been a service organization since 1957. It also contributes to the Meals on Wheels Program and Farmington Area Advisory Council.



From us to you: Marion Prover of the Women of North Farmington presents a \$1,000 check to Robert Tunnell supervisor of special education at Cloverdale Developmental Training Center.

## Walk takes moment to remember babies

Huron Velley Hospital caregivers will join parents and profesalonals nationwide to observe
October as Pregnancy and Infant
Loss Awareness month.
At 1 pm. Seturday, Oct. 8, the
hospital's Help, Understanding
and Order support group will host
a free "Walk to Ramember." It is
a-time to remember babies who
have died because of miscarriags,
sciopic pregnancy, Sudden Infant
Death Syndrome or stillibirth.
Families, friends, children and

professionals are invited to attend.

"This is our ninth annual "Walk to Remember," said nume Sue Duff, a co-coordinator of Huron Valley Hospital's Perinatal Loss Team.

"It is a gathering which sym-bolically joins people across the nation who are working to raise swareness of perinatal grief and ensure that sensitive cure is given to parents who experience a prog-

remembered," said Jill Carr, walk co-coordinator.
Since 1986 when the Maternal/Child Department at Huron Valley created by the Parinatal Loss Team, services to families have grown to include the Mothers' Network and HUGS support group. The Mothers' Network is

nancy or newborn loss," Duff said.
"Families need an opportunity to acknowledge that their babies were real, are loved, grieved and were real, are loved, grieved and the meets from 7-9 p.m., the third Taursday monthly at the

For more information about the Walk to Remember at Huron Val-iey, to register, or to arrange to have flowers planted in the me-morial garden, call Maternal/ Child department at 360-3619.

#### Best neighbor



Beautiful winners: The Farmington Garden Club gave Jan and Larry Hunt on Parkside in Farming-ton Hills a donated gift certificate from English Gar-dens for winning first place in the Good Neighbor Garden Contest. Their backyard includes perennial borders and a shade garden. The three runners-up also received gift certificates from English Gardens. They are: Irving Rosen, Fox Chase, first; Rosemarie and Hal Henderlong, Ardmore, second; and Barbara DeGrande, Dohany; third.







#### Affording the best is not the question...finding the best is.



A first . . . Apartment living in a Skilled Nursing Facility

For the discriminating person requiring an elegant environment



Call for our irrnousine to pick you up for a personal tour of our facility.

Orchard Lake 363-4121

6470 Alden Drive 1255 W. Silverbell Rd. 391-0900