

MENTORING from page 13A

years old — looking for a mentor.

"Their commitment is for one year," said McAleer. "It is usually once a week for how ever long the activity takes." At the end of the year, the pair might choose to continue the mentoring relationship.

"The matches sometimes maintain contact through adulthood," said Sandy Smith, volunteer PLUS Program co-ordinator.

Typical activities are movies, walks, trips to the park, window shopping, the library, checking out garage sales or playing ball.

"It doesn't have to be an expensive endeavor," explained McAleer. "The intent is not to financially spoil this child with material goods, it's to emotionally spoil the child with quality time."

That's just what Minguski had the opportunity to do last April when he was matched with 12-

year-old LaJuan Larkin, also of Farmington Hills. The East Middle School sixth-grader is the eldest of seven children and lives with his mother and siblings.

For LaJuan, the weekly outings with Minguski are like being an only child. They have gone bowling, putt-putt golfing, to Tiger games, to the State Fair and to Cedar Point.

"Rollerblading is something that he turned me on to," Minguski admitted. Having a cookout at the Minguski household is another favorite.

Farmington Youth Assistance sponsors group outings — like a trip to the theater, hayrides and pizza dinners — free of charge to the children and their mentors. The Oakland County Probate Court also sponsors a county-wide Plus Program activity as least once a year for things like

bowling, a canoe trip, the circus or Cranbrook.

McAleer said the group outings are also a great way for the Plus volunteers to get together to share ideas of places to go.

According to Smith, who interviews both the adult volunteer and the child, "We try to get as close a match as we possibly can." She looks for similar interests to help the two develop a firm relationship.

"It helps bolster the child's self-esteem to have a solid relationship with an adult because a lot of times in the past, adults have promised kids a lot of things and they don't carry through," Smith said. "This is a relationship for these kids, somebody that they can try to emulate."

One of LaJuan's interests this year in middle school is playing percussion in the band.

"Same thing I took," said Minguski. When LaJuan admitted that sometimes his mom tells him to practice outside, Minguski said, "I was told that several times too when I was a kid."

"His favorite school subject is science," Minguski said. "That's the subject I used to teach, sixth-grade science."

"The program itself is absolutely fantastic. I would recommend it to anybody that would ask me."

For information about getting a mentor for a child call (810) 439-3434. To volunteer call (810) 858-0041.

'Keep Me Ever Warm'



Hospice benefit: Farmington Hills resident Dr. Leslie Bricker, medical director at Henry Ford Health System Hospice, and his wife Kathy attended the recent Soiree at the Henry Ford Village in Dearborn. The event previewed "Keep Me Ever Warm: A Kaleidoscope of Quilts and Dolls." Proceeds benefit Kaleidoscope Kids, the children's hospice of Henry Ford Health System. Kathy Bricker was co-curator of the show.

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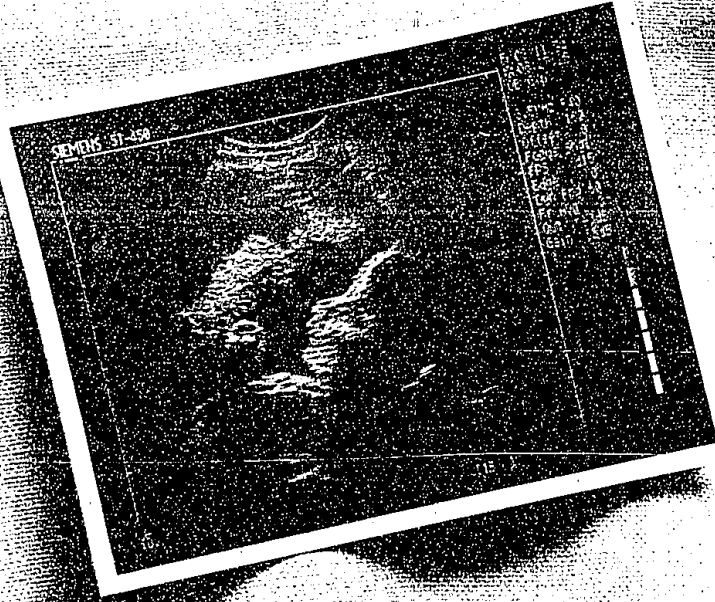
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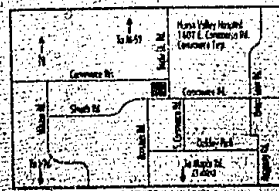
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