

COMMUNITY LIFE

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1995



SANTA CLAUS

Santa has a merry resume

Editor's Note: Since this is a tremendously busy time of year for Santa Claus he wasn't able to write a column, but he was kind enough to share his resume with us.

Professional Merry Maker, Toy Builder and Gift Giver. To the Frosty Time: Toy builder and giver. Supervisor of little people. Proficient with hand tools, imagination, strategic planning and facial expressions.

Position Desired: Planner of the world's merriest night of the year, December 24th, when I take it upon myself to distribute gifts to people, young and old throughout the entire world.

Nicknames: I'm known through the world by many names, among them: St. Nick, Kris Kringle, Father Christmas, Father Frost, Santa Claus, and my very favorite — The Jolly Old Fat Man, Ho-Ho-Ho. It's very hard to keep track of all of them, but let them keep coming.

Skills: The ability to talk to anyone. Especially those who have not long to live, be they young or old. It is helpful to me to be fortunate enough to visit who young children who are suffering from some terminal disease, and to know that I helped make their lives a little better, with a smile or a word. The same is true for older folks that have lived a long life and are enjoying the sunset of their lives to know that their dream of visiting with Santa after all the years is finally happening. Santa had to join in the electronic age a while back. I started using a PC to keep

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Heartland offers love to families in crisis

A Farmington Hills woman wants to launch a program that will give single parents a place to go and rebuild their lives with their children.

By DIANE GALE
STAFF WRITER

If Anne Merrill of Farmington Hills gets her way H.D.P. Heartland will be a center for children and their single parents to heal themselves emotionally.

"It will be for adults and children who have been victims of violence and need a safe home away from home and to begin to hear their own inner voices," Merrill said. "Their lives are just unmanageable. They are not successful with their relationships with one another."

At Heartland they'll receive direction, support, nurturing, job search information, skill building and most of all love. The ranch, as Merrill calls it, is a dream named for her father, Harry David Raven who taught her how to teach the world to love.

Interaction with nature, animals and a grandparenting program will help families repair their rifts. They'll have 21 days at the facility. Merrill, the founder and president of Heartland, sees a healing power in the simplicity of nature.

"Those who share that experience will put some things behind and pass some boundaries and he will live with a license of a higher order of things in proportion of how he simplifies his life," Merrill said quoting naturalist and writer Henry David Thoreau.

Children who have been in abusive families and who are acting out because of it will be the focus. While volunteers and donations will



Puppy love: Anne Merrill, with her children Steven and Helen Safran and their dogs, Friday, Boomer and Charlie, take a walk on a recent sunny day. Merrill hopes that animals and nature will help residents repair their lives at Heartland.

be essential to Heartland, the residents who live there will also be encouraged to volunteer.

The target opening date is August 1996, however, there are many hurdles to clear. Merrill hopes to buy the land in January, but only

\$5,000 of the projected \$250,000 for the property has been raised.

Heartland, funded privately and non-profit, will depend on a series of fundraisers scheduled to begin in February. Restaurants, beauticians and retailers in Wayne and

Oakland counties have pledged support, said Merrill who is currently forming a Heartland staff.

"We do have doctors and psychiatrists who have offered to work pro-

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