

# Ladies of Charity feed hundreds in county

BY JENNIFER PLACINTO  
STAFF WRITER

Twenty-eight years ago, Kay Browne accompanied her mother to a Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent De Paul meeting. Today she is a member of the charity's national board of directors.

Browne became a member of the charity organization the same year the group started their Annual Christmas Project. This year, that project is expected to provide some 250 food and toy baskets to over 1,000 needy Oakland County residents.

Giving to others is not something Browne, a Bloomfield Hills resident, ever questioned. Her parents, now deceased, had always been giving people, involved in helping the community.

"I think that's really how you celebrate Christ's birthday," Browne said. "We're in it because we know it's the right thing to do."

Her mother, Blanche Byerlein, a nursing school graduate, raised 7 children while working full-time and still found time to be a member of the Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent De Paul in Detroit.

"She was my inspiration," Browne said.

One of the things Byerlein used to do was dress her children up for the holidays and bring them to area nursing homes "so that we would get acquainted with what it was to take care of people," Browne said.

Nearly 100 volunteers are expected to gather at St. Hugo of the Hills Parish Social Hall in Bloomfield Hills Dec. 11 and

**"We're asking for monetary donations to help defray our costs for this project."**

Marianne McBrearty

Ladies of Charity member

12 to fill food baskets for needy Oakland County families. The Oakland County Chapter will deliver food baskets with the help of volunteers Friday and Saturday, Dec. 13 and 14 to a group of individuals whose names were provided through social service agencies.

Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent De Paul is spending \$20,000 on food and \$5,000 in toys for the baskets.

"We're asking for monetary donations to help defray our costs for this project," Ladies of

Charity member Marianne McBrearty said.

Browne was part of the small movement to start a Ladies of Charity chapter in Oakland County. That effort grew from local women storing food and clothing in their basements for the needy to a 350-member organization which has a clothes closet and food pantry at St. Hugo.

Recently, the Detroit and Oakland County associations merged.

"We (help) as much as 40 to 50 families a week," Browne said, adding that the Ladies of Charity has a nationwide membership of 15,000.

"It's the oldest Catholic organization in the world," Browne said, adding that any woman, no matter their religion, is welcome to join the group for an annual fee of \$10. "We want members, but we want members to be active. There are nine Oakland County agencies that ask for our help."

The charity organization helps the community year round through many events in addition to the food pantry and clothes closet, where donations can be made from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesdays. Other services provided by the charity include

visits to elderly members, birthday parties for children at the Sarah Fisher Center, working in the St. Vincent De Paul soup kitchen in Pontiac, making blankets for the poor and more.

"We just try and help out when we can," McBrearty said. "We try and fill their need."

"To the Ladies of Charity, Christmas is everyday and every week," Browne added, referring to clothes closet volunteers Mary Weinand and Mariah Best. "I wish the same enthusiasm would be there in the month of March."

To make a donation, call (810) 626-7527 or make checks payable to Christmas Baskets, c/o Sarah Fisher Center, 27400 West 12 Mile Road, Farmington Hills, Michigan 48334-4200.

## Surgeon from page A7

at which time the financial arrangements will be reviewed. Records indicate Coleman made more than \$750,000 in 1993 and more than \$900,000 in 1994.

Joseph G. Salamone, Oakland's Friend of the Court, said the bench warrant against Coleman was issued after he failed to appear at a hearing on child support and alimony. "Our records showed him living in the Bahamas, although I believe he was picked up in Florida," Salamone said.

Judge Edward Sosnick declined to comment on Coleman's specific case. As presiding circuit judge, however, Sosnick is firm supporter of county efforts to crack down on deadbeat parents.

In mid October, for example, the courts' 17 judge panel on deadbeat parents during a one week "support roundup." During that week, 401 court hearings were scheduled, 126 bench warrants issued and more than \$404,000 collected.

"Collections are very important for the welfare of the children involved," said Sosnick. "When parents don't pay as ordered, the children begin to doubt their self worth."

Sosnick said the county would continue its pressure on deadbeat parents. "We may have another roundup, or we may have an amnesty period during which people who are delinquent in child support voluntarily come forward and make arrangements to pay."

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