

POINTS OF VIEW

Goodwill needs public's effort for its programs

My daughter and her husband are way ahead of me. They used the Labor Day Week-end to clean out their closets and cupboards for fall.

They'll donate their out-of-date, ill-fitting or otherwise unwanted goods to a couple of charities, including carting some to the Goodwill Industries store in Waterford, about a 15-minute drive from their West Bloomfield home.

Frankly I had pretty much forgotten about Goodwill Industries of Greater Detroit, which celebrated its 75th anniversary in 1996. Its phone number is not in my kitchen drawer address book the way it was in my grandmother's or mother's. Come fall — and spring — they called Goodwill to take away their used clothing and furnishings.

Goodwill, in my grandmother's time, employed men and women who couldn't find jobs to repair used and abused items for resale. Goodwill, in my mom's era, also offered that kind of restorative work to people who were elderly or physically disabled. Income from the resold goods paid workers' wages, helping them become self-supporting.

But life has become more complicated. Goodwill responded by taking on the training of others who face barriers to employment — the economically disadvantaged, people with developmental disabilities or chronic mental illness, those recovering from substance abuse, displaced homemakers and some who lost their jobs to downsizing.

Detroit's Goodwill Industries has three divisions:

■ Employment/training for the private sector job market: Businesses can call Goodwill for a variety of employees. Goodwill placed 491 disabled and disadvantaged persons into community jobs in 1996. The most common occupations: sales, clerical, janitorial and housekeeping, food service, packaging and materials handling.

■ Industrial operations which contracts with the Big Three automakers, Detroit Edison and others for packaging and assembly, mainly out of its expanding Detroit plant. These contracts provide opportunities for work to disabled and disadvantaged people.

■ Retail, an extension of the concept that started it all: Six metro-Detroit stores sell used goods to help fund Goodwill's vocational services — and more are planned.



JUDITH DONER BERNE

In defense of my forgetting about Goodwill, all stores closed in the 1970s in response to changes in the retail climate and the high cost of collecting goods. Goodwill only began re-opening them in 1988, as the public turned on to recycling and resale shopping. Now, you must bring your donations to the store and "only the best that come in are on the shelves," reports Goodwill Industries Foundation president and board vice-president Brad Host of Birmingham.

Recently, more than 20 artists from the Laurence Street Gallery in Pontiac scored the 12,000-square-foot Waterford store for used clothing, furnishings and interesting items they could turn into art. Some also drove to the 20,000-square-foot superstore on Telegraph in Redford Township that celebrated its grand opening in May. Members of the gallery will host a benefit for the Goodwill Industries of Greater Detroit Foundation from 6-9:30 p.m. Friday. It will feature a silent auction of the art they created from "found" objects purchased at Goodwill.

Reva Pintzuk of West Bloomfield fashioned a metal sculpture from a bird cage stand that she came upon. Susanne Camp of Birmingham used the basket, plates and quilt she purchased to create still life paintings. Laura Whitesides Host of Birmingham found two recycled ceramic lamps, that she painted black on black and added a final of polymer clay. Kris Azelis-Lamb of West Bloomfield wove some used men's ties into a unique seat on a folding chair she discovered.

Goodwill has come full circle. This time around artists, like those early men and women who repaired used goods, are turning discarded into something you want to own. Funds raised help Goodwill to aid persons with disabilities or other needs to become self-supporting citizens. This is definitely inspiring me to clean my closets.

Judith Doner Berne, a West Bloomfield resident, is former managing editor of the *Eccentric Newspapers*. You can purchase patron preview tickets at \$25 to Goodwill's "Gallimaufry at the Gallery" Friday night in Pontiac by calling 313-961-3900, Ext. 305.

Join fight against crime, drugs

If I told you about a smart, tough crime-fighting strategy that could reduce by 100,000 the number of violent crimes reported in Michigan over a five-year period, what would your reaction be? No doubt, you would probably waste no time in telling me to carry out that plan to make Michigan safer.

The good news is that the no-nonsense plan I referred to is already on the books in Michigan. Since 1991, I have signed more than 300 bills to make our criminal justice system tougher, smarter and more effective.

Oakland County's legislators have been leaders in the fight against crime. For example, state Sen. Mike Bouchard, R-Birmingham, has been a key leader in making sure sex offenders register once paroled so that parents may take proper steps to ensure their children's safety. Sen. Bill Ballard, R-Milford, and Sen. Mat Dunaskis, R-Lake Orion have worked closely with me to help protect women from domestic violence.

State Representatives Nancy Cassis, Penny Criesman, Barbara Dobb, Shirley Johnson, Greg Kazu, Patricia Godchaux, Tom Middleton, and Andrew Raczkowski have all provided critical support to enact a crime-fighting strategy that is tough on criminals and more sensitive to victims.

Our strategy has been simple and to-the-point — new tools for police and prosecutors, stronger penalties for violent, habitual lawbreakers and probation, prison and parole reforms to protect the public.

The residents of Oakland County have every reason to feel safer. From 1995 to 1996, thanks to the efforts of local law enforcement, the overall crime rate in the county declined a solid 6.6%. Residents should feel comforted that some of the largest declines came in murder, down 36%, robbery, down 13.8%, and car theft, down 8.9%. The overall number of serious crimes reported in Oakland County dropped by more than 1,000 last year.

Michigan's solid progress forward in the war on crime and drugs is encouraging, but there is still much work we can do to help Michigan families and children be safer.

I am especially concerned about the rise in juvenile crime. That's why I pushed hard for our state legislature to enact the nation's toughest reforms to crack down on violent juvenile offenders.

The juvenile justice reforms we passed last



GOV. JOHN ENGLER

year represent a simple reality — that juvenile offenders who prey on innocent victims are no longer children and cannot be treated as children. There must be consequences — severe consequences — for violent, irresponsible, immoral behavior.

We've lowered the age at which juvenile offenders can be tried as adults and targeted violent crimes for adult prosecution, enhanced parental responsibility, and expanded sentencing options for judges. The bottom line: juveniles who commit adult crime will do adult time.

I'm also very worried about the increasing number of young people who illegally use alcohol, tobacco and drugs. Parents, along with school officials, law enforcement and government leaders across this state must speak with one voice on this issue. When it comes to telling our children about the dangers of substance abuse, our message must be blunt: "No use — No excuse."

When Michigan's legislature begins their fall session, I urge them to make crime-fighting a priority. We must build upon what we have accomplished, keep our strategy consistent and strengthen our message to those who might break the law.

With the invaluable help of police and prosecutors, I have developed detailed plan of action with some 50 initiatives to make Michigan even safer.

Government's first and foremost responsibility is to protect citizens from violent lawbreakers, and that is a responsibility I take very seriously. I'm proud of what we have accomplished over the last six years, and I invite you to work with me to make Michigan even safer.

Jobs go wanting as employers seek well-skilled employees

The facts are unassailable. The opposition leaves me, literally, shaking my head in amazement.

■ Jobs — any kind of jobs — are requiring more and more skills. Nationwide, 63 percent of workers held unskilled jobs in 1963. By 1993, this fell to 35 percent, and best estimates indicate it will plummet to 15 percent by the year 2000.

■ Incomes of workers with good job skills have remained ahead of inflation. Wages for unskilled workers started falling behind the inflation rate in the late 1970s, and the gap has widened ever since.

■ In today's near-full employment economy, there is an absolute labor shortage for skilled workers. Want proof? Look at the help wanted columns in the classified advertising section of this newspaper.

Even the rhetoric is compelling. Says Chrysler Corp. President Robert Lutz: "The vast majority of Americans do not know that they do not have the skills to earn a living in our increasingly technological society and international workplace. Business and industry no longer simply require a strong back and a good attitude."

This kind of logic is behind the drive to reform our schools to meet or beat international competition by establishing core curriculum standards and requiring regular performance testing. And this is the logic behind the school-to-work movement, a program that seeks to make sure that what kids learn in school helps prepare them for actual jobs when they join the labor force.

Not surprisingly, a lot of serious folks are behind the program, including Gov. John Engler and the Michigan Chamber of Commerce, neither notable advocates of big government.

But some people absolutely foam at the mouth when school-to-work comes up.

Some claim that the thinking behind school-to-work comes directly from the Soviet school system of even the Marx-Engels "Communist Manifesto." (I've read the "Manifesto"; you won't find anything in it about school-to-work or even labor force skills.)

Others say the whole thing is just another piece of Big Brotherism from the hated federal government. Henry Hyde, a conservative congressman from Illinois, says that under the



PHILIP POWER

plan, "the economy will be controlled by the federal government by controlling our workplace and our schools."

In an article earlier this month, John Puzo of Livonia recites the right-wing suspicion that "The plan was drawn up by Bill and Hillary Clinton, Ira Magaziner and Marc Tucker, president of the National Center of Education & Economy, funded by the Carnegie Corporation."

I happen to know something about all this, since I serve on the board of the National Association for Education and the Economy (correct title). I also served on the National Commission on Skills in the American Workplace, chaired by Magaziner, whose conclusively demonstrated the changing skills needs of American business.

I even reviewed the celebrated letter that Tucker wrote to the Clintons just after the 1992 election suggesting that the new administration had an opportunity to "remold the entire American system for human resource development."

Nobody in this group was visiting Moscow to see how the Russians were training kids for the workplace. Nobody was reading the "Manifesto." All we were doing was listening to a whole lot of big American employers who were telling us in no uncertain terms that our international competitors would win the economic competition unless we started improving skills in the workplace.

Watching folks on the fringe of American politics trying to turn school-to-work into a conspiracy hatched by Big Brother illuminates my understanding of paranoia and refreshes my sense of amazement.

Phil Power is chairman of the company that owns this newspaper. His Touch-Tone voice mail number is (313) 953-2047 ext. 1880.

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