

Chat room from page B1

can get.

"Hopefully, this is to bring parents and professionals together to discover different ways to support parents," Sayers said. "Both in and out of the NICU."

Most, if not all, parents of premature babies have no idea what to look for or what to expect after learning their child is about to be born many weeks earlier than expected, as was my daughter, Elizabeth, born at 25 weeks gestation and 1 lb., 14 oz. in November 1994.

"The unexpectedness and uncertainty of the premie experience is one that is filled with anxiety, worry and even a little disappointment."

"Wait a minute. I'm not ready for this," parents of very premature babies often say. "Will my baby be disabled? Will my baby be able to survive such an early birth? What kind of a chance does my baby have for a normal life after such an abnormal beginning?"

And, on top of that, parents find out they won't be bringing a chubby checked baby home to the nursery. They also won't be met with an onslaught of relatives eager to bring home gifts and good tidings, to welcome the newest addition of the family.

What premie parents do find out - if they are lucky - is their tiny child will spend weeks, maybe months, growing in a makeshift uterus in neonatal

intensive care units. Visitors will be infrequent and few, partly because it is such a physical impossibility to cradle relatives in rooms filled with incubators and other life-sustaining equipment.

There are some stuffed animals. But they have to share space with tubes and monitors.

On top of all that is the shock of having a baby many weeks ahead of schedule. Parents of premies find themselves unexpectedly thrown into the NICU maze. But, for baby's sake, they can't mess. Instead, they have to stand up, brush away the fears and worries and adjust. They have to take notes, listen to doctors and nurses, learn the medical jargon and be there for their child.

Parents who log countless hours next to NICU cribs and isolettes improve the odds that their premie children will become healthy enough to come home to that too-long-empty nursery.

But becoming informed is another avenue toward achieving that goal. That is why there never can be enough workshops, seminars and conferences about a delicate subject that many people just don't know much about.

Saturday's Cobo conference is only the start as far as Sayers is concerned.

"We're already planning for next year," she said. Elizabeth Smith's dad is a reporter for the Farmington Observer.

Authors, advocates to address seminar

Following are some of the guest speakers during Saturday's "Empowering Parents of Premature Infants: A Conference for Parents and Professionals."

■ "A Different Journey: Reactions to a Premature Birth," Deborah L. Davis, Ph.D.; Michael Hynan, Ph.D.; Mara Tesler Stein, Ph.D.

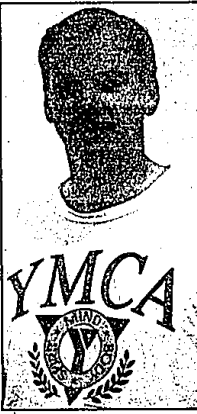
■ "Supporting and Empowering Parents of Prematures," Helen Harrison, author; Becky Hatfield, advocate.

■ "A Kinder, Gentler Neonatal Intensive Care Unit," William G. Cvetnic, M.D.; Doug Derleth, M.D.; Read McCarthy, President and CEO, Children's Medical Ventures Inc.

The conference is presented by Birmingham-based The Alexis Foundation, and Premie-L, an Internet resource forum for parents. The program will take place from 9 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. Saturday at the Cobo Conference/Exhibition Center. (Registration is from 9-9:30 a.m.)

For more information, call Elaine Sayers at (248) 543-4169.

YMCA from page B1



resources we do," said Maibach, adding that the metro consortium now includes 18 operations in three counties: Oakland, Macomb and Wayne.

The old downtown Detroit YMCA building brought the organization \$5 million in a sale to make way for the new Tiger Stadium. A new building will be erected somewhere downtown.

"We will be working with (Detroit) Mayor Dennis Archer and (Wayne) County Executive Ed McNamara once the casino issue is settled," Maibach said. The YMCA board of directors doesn't want to be neighbors with a gambling institution, he said.

"We grossed \$21.2 million last year in revenues," Maibach added. "We've seen good growth, and there will be more with expansion of programs. Things are going very well for the 'Y.' We have bridged the transition from multiple issues to one key issue. It's truly a community-driven organization."

What started out as the Young Men's Christian Association was primarily known for providing hotels for transient young men in stately downtown buildings across America during the 1920s and 1930s. The YMCA has metamorphosed into an active force of community life in the 1990s, emphasizing activities for men, women and children in every age group. Many programs are offered off-site. The YMCA works with many agencies, such as the Police Athletic League and community parks and recreation departments.

■ 'We grossed \$21.2 million last year. We've seen good growth and there will be more with the expansion of programs.'

Ben Maibach III  
—YMCA board chairman

"We have strong behind-the-scenes partnerships. Our mission is different today than it was years ago when we had the large residential facilities which would be costly to run. Today we serve our communities better. We are now in a position to move strongly forward."

In a joint effort with Chrysler Corp., a new YMCA building will be constructed in Rochester this year. The city of Milford also has plans to build a YMCA facility soon.

Overseeing Barton-Malow construction projects in fields as varied as automotive, health care, sports and education requires a great deal of forethought and planning. Maibach brings that same dedication to his service to the YMCA board.

"It's hard to switch gears and not be yourself," he said.

In addition to the YMCA, Maibach is a director of the American Red Cross and a trustee of New Detroit, Inc. The father of Ryan, 24, a Barton-Malow project engineer, Maibach has received awards from the Boy Scouts of America, the Engineering Society of Detroit, and an honorary doctorate of engineering from Lawrence Technological University in Southfield.

The Farmington YMCA has monthly memberships ranging from \$30 to \$60. Hours are 5:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, 5:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and 10 to 6 p.m. Sunday. Call 553-4020.

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'Y' from page B1

22 years. He, too, has seen the organization's focus change over the years.

"It has moved from the more traditional programming to reaching out to the community and delivering to where we are needed. Community needs include child care at church and school sites and working actively with other agencies. In Farmington we work with the middle school after-school program."

"We've come to realize that none of us has all the resources separately, but collectively can make many contributions. We have reached out to become a partner in the community."

Church concert set for Sunday

Antioch Lutheran Church hosts a concert 7:30-9 p.m. Sunday, July 26.

The church is on the northeast corner of Farmington Road and 13 Mile.

A youth choir ministry from Cambridge Lutheran Church in Minnesota will be performing an upbeat concert including Christian contemporary music and drama. There will be about 60

Vacation Bible school set

Farmington Hills Baptist Church invites children ages 4 through junior high to Vacation Bible School on Monday, July 27 through Friday, July 31 from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

The theme is "Passport to the Holy Land; Following Jesus Every Day." The church is at 26301 Middlebelt, north of 12 Mile. For further information, call 851-0310.

high school students from different denominations coming together to put the show on.

The concert's theme this year is "In His Presence." The concert will be geared for all ages. Everyone is welcome. The Cambridge Lutheran Church youth choir embarks on a yearly outreach program during summer and tours all over the country performing at every stop.

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