

Special plea

Parents bank on auction for upgrades

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

Staying silent about helping the cause for impaired students at the Cloverdale Developmental Center isn't such a good idea.

—But holding a silent auction could turn out to very well be one, particularly if the Friday, Oct. 2, event at Longacre House in Farmington helps raise the goal of \$10,000 for adaptive learning and media equipment. About 125 items will be on the block, all donated by area businesses.

Co-hosting the "Silent Auction to Support the Cloverdale Developmental Center" are the Parent Energy Partnership and the center itself.

Several Cloverdale parents and Principal Roger Martin recently discussed why the fund-raiser needs to be successful.

"We really need to have technology available to our kids," said Martin, who oversees 84 severely mentally impaired and severely multiply impaired students (ages 3-26) from Farmington and seven other districts. The center is staffed by the Farmington district.

Parent Nick Grisk, of Walled Lake, said "We don't have a media center. What we're targeting our effort to is the media center, a large-screen TV with a VCR and then, adaptive equipment to hook up to and learn from."

That adaptive equipment, explained Martin, could be anything from computer screen pointers worn on students' heads to giant rolling ball mouses, punch-sensitive screens, foot



Emily Hurst of Farmington Hills



James Gavin of Farmington Hills



STAFF PHOTO BY ELIZABETH CARNEGIE

On the block: Among bid items at the Oct. 2 Silent Auction for Cloverdale Developmental Center are a Larry Bird-autographed jersey and Beanie Babies, donated by The Robin's Nest in Plymouth. Shown are (from left) parent Deb Ferguson, parent Michelle Proulx, Cloverdale Principal Roger Martin and parent Marianne Tucker, holding 7-month-old daughter, Jocelyn.

controls, "all kinds of big buttons."

Money could also help purchase computer software they can use, rather than Windows '95, for example.

If the auction helps buy those items, too costly for Cloverdale to purchase out of its regular budget, "We'll end up with a much-better place than it is now," Martin said.

Cloverdale also needs new playground equipment. But that will have to wait for a future fund-raiser.

"Playground equipment is a big need," said parent Marianne Tucker, who lives in Farmington Hills. "But it's not what we're targeting the funds from this

event for."

Parent Energy Partnership members primarily decided how the money should be spent. But the wish list was assembled with the help of suggestions from parents, teachers and students, said Cloverdale parent Michelle Proulx, a South Lyon resident.

Although the number of parents in the group so far is limited, Proulx said that doesn't mean other Cloverdale parents don't think the silent auction is a worthy cause.

"Your dealing with severely mentally impaired and severely multiply impaired children," Proulx said. Parents "have a lot to deal with taking care of the needs of their children" and don't always have the time to volunteer for any parent organization.

Martin said he has high hopes that the auction will be the start of a regular fund-raising program.

"We're at a starting point," Martin said. "I'm pretty excited that a lot of energy is being spent and that we're going in a positive direction."

Cloverdale students are from the Farmington, Clarenceville, Walled Lake, West Bloomfield, Southfield, South Lyon, Huron Valley and Novi school districts.

Bid on fun

Tickets for the Silent Auction to Support the Cloverdale Developmental Center event are \$20 and will remain available probably right up to that day, said Cloverdale parent Marianne Tucker.

The fund-raiser will take place 7-10 p.m. Friday, Oct. 2, at the Longacre House of Farmington Hills, 24705 Farmington Road.

"Without the Longacre House we wouldn't be able to do this," said Cloverdale Principal Roger Martin.

Sports fans won't be disappointed. The Stanley Cup isn't available for bid. But an autographed photo of Steve Yzerman will be. Or how about a bonafide Russian "matryoshka" toy featuring Sergei Fedorov?

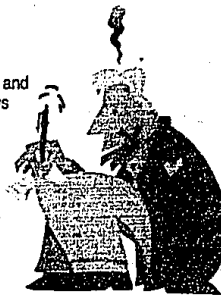
Basketball legend Larry Bird's famed Boston Celtics jersey, signed, also is slated to be auctioned off. So is Kareem Abdul Jabbar's old jersey.

A petite buffet will be served and several guests will entertain, including 1997 Miss Farmington Jennifer Hoemke and the current title holder, Erin Cogwell. The emcee for the event will be Terry Lyles.

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Waiting for help: Cloverdale students who would benefit from a successful auction include Nathan Renas (left) and Brianna Tucker, both of Farmington Hills.

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