

CHAT ROOM



KATHIE O'DONOHUE

Motherhood is a complex tapestry

The image runs through my mind not so frequently now, but it still comes. Mom holding in her arms her mom as she left this world. A powerful, evocative image, the woman who, as an infant, was cradled by the dying woman, now cradles the mother who held her.

To me, it calls to mind the summation and epitome of motherhood — a complex tapestry of interwoven thoughts, feelings, experiences with love as the common denominator.

I contemplate a mother's heart — soft enough that the smallest pain of her child registers, hard enough to allow her to cope with any family difficulty. Myopic enough to love her own children the best, yet judicious enough to know each of their faults and weaknesses.

A mother's heart is equipped both to rain torrents and unleash uproarious laughter.

Mushy and stoic

Most great moms I know are equally mushy and stoic. They're nurturing, multi-tasking and selfless, and they struggle with just the right time to hold onto and let go of. They always have an available lap and are capable of bestowing endless hugs. They're experienced in the currency of forgiveness, patience, acceptance. They watch when no one else thinks they're looking, listen when no one else hears. They care deeply, endure heartbreak, risk rejection.

Most seasoned moms develop the ability to accept hard-to-accept things. For the sake of peace and harmony, for the sake of love. They learn to be quiet at the times they'd like to scream.

Moms frequently put others' needs first, sometimes to their own detriment. Often inwardly crushed when their children hurt, they have the amazing ability to demonstrate the strength to see through the pool of blood and tears with enough presence of mind to proclaim, "Well, it needs stitches, but it's not that bad," and in one short declarative phrase, calm all those watching.

All your life you seek Mom's approval, and when it comes the day is sun-filled and bright, without and within. I am so fortunate to still have my mom; many friends have lost theirs. Yet, I see age taking its toll in many ways and it saddens me to the point of denial.

Mom is my dearest friend in the world. Many sad, lonely confusing times things were miraculously made better simply by hearing the love and concern in her voice. She is a person of great resourcefulness and wisdom wrought from experience.

Mom is a deep blessing to my life, and her pain is my pain. The hurt she tries to hide from me I somehow recognize, if only on an unconscious level. Does she realize the awesome power inherent in her embrace — how it completely suspends any turmoil and trial for the moment? Can she know, in spite of her increasing frailty, the strength her words and expressions yield?

Do any of us honored with the title "Mom" know? One thing alone is certain: if my children feel about me the way I do about my mom, a lifetime of pain and struggle is more than worth it.

Happy Mother's Day to my precious mom and all the moms!

Kathie O'Donohue, a resident of Farmington Hills, has five children.

10 vie for pageant crown

BY MARY RODRIQUE
STAFF WRITER
mrodrique@oc.homecomm.net

Ten contestants have thrown their hats into the ring for a chance to wear the crown of Miss Farmington/Oakland County.

The theme this year is Broadway and Farmington will go Broadway in grand style, with show tunes and production numbers including all of the contestants. The pageant is being staged at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, July 18, at the Farmington Civic Theatre. It's the official kick-off event to the annual Farmington Founder's Festival.

WDIV-TV channel 4 weathercaster Rennela Wolf and Erin Cogswell, a former Miss Farmington, will share master of ceremonies duties for the evening. Ginny Morris, longtime pageant executive director, says an afterglow reception will be held at Page's Food and Spirits in downtown Farmington.

Meet the contestants

Here's a thumbnail sketch of this year's contestants.

Lellani Thorn, 19, a sophomore at the University of Hawaii. Thorn is from Waterford.

Marcia Thomas, 18, a graduate of West Bloomfield High School, who will sing for the talent portion of the competition.

Jamie Gumbrecht, a sophomore at Michigan State University. A Davisburg native, she will perform a color guard routine for her talent entry. Her platform is "Opening Doors to the Disabled."

Brooke Brennan, a junior at Lawrence Technological University in Southfield. Her pageant platform is "Music: Making Unique Sounds in Concert." Brennan resides in Canton.

Josica Pedrosa, of Farmington Hills, will be a college freshman this fall. She will perform a dance routine for the talent portion of the program.

Heather Barnes, who is employed at the Cloverdale School in Farmington. A baton twirler, she is also recipient of a Masonic Temple scholarship. The Masonic Temple in downtown Farmington is her pageant sponsor.

Kristin Sokolnicki of Clarkston, a senior at Michigan State University. Her platform is "Children in Crisis: Cancer." Sokolnicki is a pianist.

Kelly Zander of Farmington Hills, who will be a senior at Farmington High School in the fall. She will perform a dance for the talent portion of the contest.

Katie Vandomer, who lives in St. Clair Shores and works in Farmington. A flute player, she is being sponsored by Cornwall and Bush Real Estate Co. Her platform: "Volunteering — Opening Your Heart."

Francesca Romero of Farmington Hills, a repeat contestant who has won other titles including Miss Columbus Day. She is currently working on a master's degree at Wayne State University and is being sponsored by Dynasty Financial Corp. and Mike White.

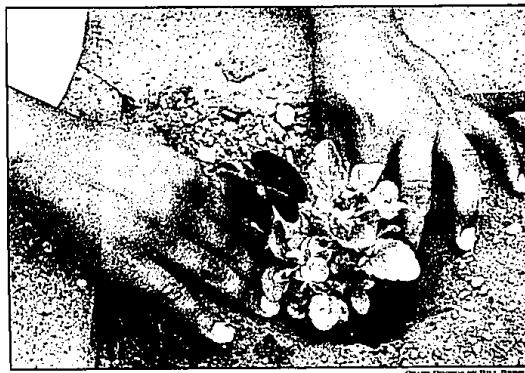
Last year, the Miss Farmington pageant gave away \$6,000 in scholarship money. Morris expects the amount to be at least that much this year. The pageant is affiliated with the Miss America Scholarship Program.

Tickets for the evening cost \$15 and are now available. For more information, call Morris at 471-9042.

Planting flowers for garden party



Planting: Children who live at the St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center in Farmington Hills recently spent time planting flowers on the grounds for the upcoming garden party benefit on Sunday, June 3. This year's goal is \$300,000 to help pay for the center's programs for children and families in crisis in southeast Michigan. The party includes food from 50 of the area's finest restaurants, wine, live entertainment and an auction. Call 626-0865 for ticket information.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BUCKLE

Dance day

Instructors offer myriad workshops

The Farmington Area Arts Commission, in partnership with Farmington Public Schools, will present the first Farmington Area Dance Day on Saturday, May 19, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Harrison High School. It will feature several prominent area dancers and instructors teaching classes for dance enthusiasts aged 5 to adult.

Main Program

Dance Day's main program will include morning and afternoon classes for participants ages 14 and up:

■ Afro-Haitian Dance taught by Lisa McCall;

■ Basic Intermediate Ballet taught by Marie Averara;

■ Beginning/Intermediate Jazz taught by Gregory Patterson, principal dancer with the Eisenhower Dance Ensemble;

■ Funk/Hip Hop taught by William McClellan, principal dancer with CounterGroove Dance Company;

■ Modern Dance taught by Courtney Kellogg, principal dancer with CounterGroove Dance Company; and

■ Tap taught by Pinky Thomas, who specializes in tap instruction at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana.

Cost for the main program is \$10 for residents; \$15 for non-residents. The price includes a morning and afternoon



Artists: Eisenhower Dance Ensemble members Darby Wilde, left, and Greg Patterson, top.

class of choice, t-shirt, and lunch.

Mini Program

Dance Day will also feature a "mini program" for senior adults and children

ages 5-13. A Modern/Creative Movement class for senior adults will be offered by Linda Buckwitz of Wayne State University. Buckwitz will also teach a Creative Movement class for children ages 5-7. In addition, Darby Wilde, principal dancer with Eisenhower Dance Ensemble, will introduce kids ages 8-10 and 11-13 to Modern Dance.

Cost of the mini program is \$5 for residents; \$8 for non-residents and includes one class and a t-shirt.

A free public performance showcase will be presented at 12:30 p.m. in the Harrison auditorium. Experience the dynamic rhythms of Afro-Haitian Dance by Lisa McCall & Company, away to the jazzy duet "Who's the Boss?" performed by Gregory Patterson and Darby Wilde of the Eisenhower Dance Ensemble, and swing to CounterGroove Dance Company under the direction of Erika Wilson-Perkins.

To register, contact Nan Reid at (248) 471-2675 or Paul Barber at (248) 469-3412. Registration forms and payment must be received by May 14, 2001.

Farmington Hills volunteer feted for Alzheimer's work

BY MARY RODRIQUE
STAFF WRITER

The Detroit area chapter of the Alzheimer's Association marked its 20th anniversary recently by honoring volunteers who have given countless hours on behalf of families and patients afflicted by Alzheimer's disease.

Suzanne Ethridge of Farmington Hills was cited for 14 years of volunteering for the organization. "I began by answering the phone; now I do computer inputting," said Ethridge, who works in the association's regional office in Southfield.

"My father was an Alzheimer's patient."

Preston Martin, association vice president, presented her with the award.

"She has volunteered in administrative support twice a week for the past 14 years. She is truly an outstanding individual," he said.

Ethridge was the first of eight people honored for volunteer service during the noontime ceremony May 2 at the Dearborn Inn. Others included UPN-50 anchorwoman Amyre Makupson and longtime Detroit radio personality Bob Allison.

Makupson and fellow UPN-50 anchor-

man Rich Fisher emceed the event. Makupson, whose mother suffered from Alzheimer's, has been a longtime supporter of the organization and is a member of the board of directors of the Alzheimer's Association.

Makupson recalled how the association's biggest annual fund-raiser, the Chocolate Jubilee, was created in 1985 and raised \$20,000 that year. Last year, the jubilee raised \$500,000. Makupson has chaired the jubilee for the last 10 years. Currently, the Alzheimer's Association budget is \$2 million.

Dian Wilkins, association president, said 65 Alzheimer's support groups in

■ The Alzheimer's Association helps 65 metro area support groups, three patient support groups for early-stage patients and two adult day care centers.

the Detroit area receive help from the association. There are also three patient support groups for early-stage adult Alzheimer's patients. The area also has two adult day-care centers for Alzheimer's patients, one in Detroit and one in Birmingham. Patients at the Detroit site are learning to use computers.

The association fields 4,000 calls a

year. Spanish translation service is available. Soon there will be Arabic translation.

The association offers respite care to the caregivers of Alzheimer's patients and is involved in the national Safe Return program, which has been responsible for hundreds of safe returns of patients who have wandered away from home.