



Founders Day: Kim Harris Jones, second vice-president on the board of directors at Boys and Girls Republic, spoke at the Founders Day event, which celebrated the organization's 111 years of service to children. The day's activities included entertainment, games and refreshments.

STAFF PHOTO BY BILL HEDGECOCK



Boys & Girls Republic celebrates century of success

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Executive director MaryJane Peck, honored for 10 years of service Oct. 7 at Boys and Girls Republic's Founder's Day Celebration, remembered looking out her window one day in February years ago, wondering about the fate of the agency.

Financially, it had only a few months to survive.

She recalled her private talk with God, asking Him to help her gauge the future.

"If you want, I'll go," she prayed.

"It's up to you."

Very quickly after that, Peck said, things began to turn around. "It taught me what I could do."

The agency has survived.

"It came down to the dedication of the board, the staff and God that we survived," Peck said.

"I remember coming here and finding not only a

place to work but a family. If we go away, they will not be able to rebuild a place like this, because of zoning laws and people who don't want us in the community. If we go away, there wouldn't be another place. There would be one less place."

The efforts of Boys and Girls Republic to help at-risk, court-adjudicated youth — one at a time — become contributing members of society were honored at the Sunday event.

Turning lives around is their goal. "It's about giving children

choices for their future," Peck said.

Peck's achievements include: an expanded residential program from 40 to 80 residents, strong family therapy and therapeutic recreation components, opening the residential program for girls in 1994 and establishing the supervised independent living program in 1995.

She also collaborated with the Farmington Public School District to create a year-round academic calendar for BGR residents and initiated the process

for BGR's accreditation by the Council on Accreditation for Children and Family Services.

The Oct. 7 event, which celebrated 111 years of service to youth and families, was held on the grounds at Nine Mile Road west of Inkster in Farmington Hills.

Officials dedicated outdoor athletic fields and a quarter mile track, the last phase of a total \$1.5 million project, according to Mike Barth, BGR finance director.

"We're still raising money for the fields," Barth said.

BGR is a private, not-for-profit 301(c)(3) agency which has served 11,000 youth since its founding. BGR is licensed by the State of Michigan Department of Consumer and Industry Services. It now houses 80 children — half boys, half girls — in the residential treatment program for youth ages 12 to 18. A nationally accredited program, BGR also offers a supervised independent living program for youth ages 16 to 18.

A bevy of honors

Other honorees were:

■ Village Ford, Dearborn, for excellence in leadership of BGR's capital campaign to support the Jack McElroy Recreational Center on Campus. Once a direct service worker at Boys Republic in the early 1970s, Jim Seavitt is now the owner of Village Ford.

Village Ford recently underwrote a capital fund-raising event which was hosted by Seavitt and wife, Nancy, at their home. The event raised \$47,000 for support of the outdoor playing fields and courts. He also marshaled support from other Metro-Detroit Ford dealers.

■ KTD Printing Associates, Inc., Madison Heights, in recognition of support of BGR's fund-raising and public relations campaigns. In the past 10 years, Karl Dorn of KTD Printing Associates has assisted with design and typesetting for all BGR newsletters and annual reports.

■ Zip Etc., Southfield, for support of BGR's operations, special events and fund-raising campaigns. Steve Mandell of Zip has supported BGR with donations of cider and donuts for youth at

Halloween, holiday turkeys and hams for food baskets for families, and dinner at bi-monthly board meetings.

■ William Pope, intake coordinator, for 20 years of service to BGR. He's also worked as a group worker, supervisor, treatment coordinator, and residential coordinator. He is a certified nonviolence crisis intervention trainer and trains not only BGR staff but other groups in the metro area. Pope has been recognized by his peers statewide with the Hugh Whipple Award for Direct Service Excellence in November 2000.

■ Noreen Haggerty, resource director, for 10 years of service to BGR. She took on difficult tasks like assembling all of the records for donors, coordinating donations and conducting the annual holiday appeal. She oversees all volunteers, including student interns. She wrote several grant proposals generating thousands of dollars and coordinates Christmas donations and gift wrapping for residents.



Headliners: North Farmington High School's steel band entertained folks at the open house.

STAFF PHOTO BY BILL HEDGECOCK

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