

ATHENA

from page A1

sonal funds to the nonprofit community house.

Deichert said she was asked about two and half years ago to serve on the board of directors for the historic house that hosts dozens of community activities and offers its rooms and grounds for receptions and dinners.

"Right away I was given tickets to sell for the raffle," she said with a laugh, adding she was also signed up to organize the house's largest fund-raiser, its annual auction.

"I was so naive, I had never even been to an auction," she said. "I was a good green apple, I had no idea. I did it this year, too, and I can't believe how much work is involved."

She said Longacre's rich history immediately appealed to her. "I love the grounds as much as the inside (of the house)," she

said. "There's a presence of warmth there."

"The best thing that I love is the staff and volunteers," she added. "They have been around a lot longer than I have and they stood by my side, supporting me and loving me."

Deichert and her husband Tom run Roof Management, but she said being acting executive director of Longacre for the past year has swallowed up time away from the business and even her family, which includes her kids, Tanin, 28; Tara, 19; and Tommy Jr., 17.

"People tell me you got so much invested in this," she said. "But it's been an investment where I truly received much more than I ever gave. I've truly made some friendships for life."

Deichert does plan to step down as volunteer executive

director, but said she will still be a volunteer on the board of directors.

Marianne Nedrosick, marketing director at Longacre, said Deichert has turned the house and grounds around to where visitors notice the difference. "She exudes energy," Nedrosick said. "She's very positive and upbeat. She's a take-charge person."

Nedrosick said Deichert has been a wonderful friend. "I learned a lot from her, she's touched my life as well as the whole house," Nedrosick said. "It's been an incredible experience."

The award program will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Wednesday at the Executive Hotel and Suites by Best Western, 31525 W. 12 Mile in Farmington Hills.

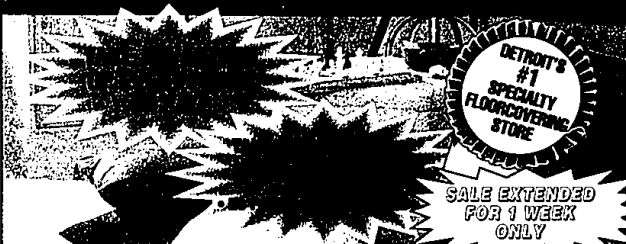
Hills. Tickets are \$30 per person. Advance reservations are request-

ed and may be made by calling the Chamber at (248) 474-3440.

The program is sponsored in part by Bob Saka Oldsmobile.



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from page A1

tic cups filled with oreo cookies, cream cheese, whipped cream, pudding and gummy worms.

"Rebecca just taught us Happy Birthday in sign language," Harrington said.

"You know," Watkins said to Rebecca, "You share a birthday with somebody I love very much. My son is 17 years old today."

Marowski called his student body "a homogenous group."

"We place the kids age appropriately. We have all abilities, all ethnicity and all cultures. This is what inclusive education looks like."

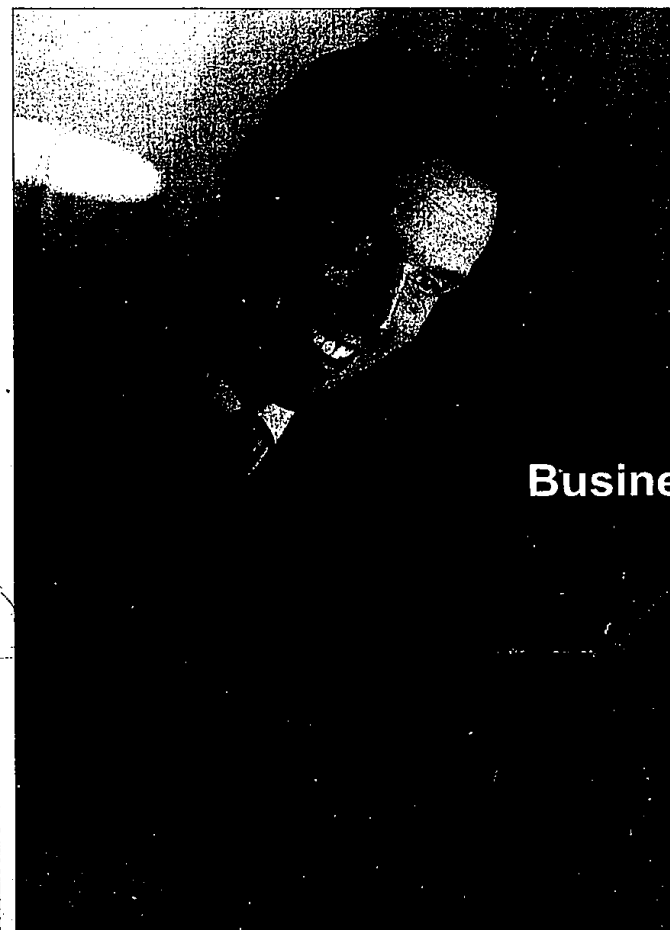


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