

Rx briefs

■ Meditation

Healing comes in many forms, including meditation. Oakwood Complementary & Alternative Medicine Center, 36555 Warren, Westland, will offer "Mindfulness Meditation" 6:15-7:30 p.m. Wednesdays, Feb. 5, 12 and 19. The three-session class is designed to help reduce stress and improve their overall health through meditation. Oakwood RN Barb Metzer will teach breathing and walking meditation techniques to help quiet the mind. The cost is \$25 dollars to attend three sessions. Call (800) 543-WELL to reserve your spot. The center's number is (734) 414-9003.

■ Breast cancer

Postmenopausal women with an increased risk of developing breast cancer can take part in a national research study at Beaumont Hospital that will compare the effectiveness of two drugs in preventing breast cancer. Volunteers will take either tamoxifen, a drug approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to reduce the incidence of breast cancer in women at increased risk; or raloxifene, which is approved by the FDA for treating osteoporosis and has shown promise in reducing a woman's chance of getting breast cancer. Call (248) 551-7695 for more information.

■ Heart attack risk

At St. Mary Mercy Hospital, Livonia, the latest fast CT scanner allows patients to discover their potential risk of heart attack through a quick new test called calcium scoring. St. Mary Mercy is one of the few hospitals in the area to offer this new, leading-edge technology. The exam gives patients a "calcium score," which is a measurement of calcified plaque in their coronary arteries.

For more information on Cardiac Services, call (734) 655-2885. For a cardiologist on staff at St. Mary Mercy, call (888) 464-WELL.

■ Tremor Disorder

Shari Finsilver of Orchard Lake leads a local support group for those who suffer from Essential Tremor, a debilitating and incurable movement disorder. The group meets 7-8:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month at Temple Israel, 5725 Walnut Lake Road in West Bloomfield. Contact Finsilver at (248) 683-4138 or finsilver@earthlink.net, or visit www.tremorsupport.com. To learn more about the International Tremor Foundation, visit www.essentialtremor.org or call (888) 387-3667.

■ Appointment

The Southeastern Michigan Chapter of the American Red Cross has appointed Jan Shimshock of Bloomfield Township as chief development officer. Shimshock joins the Red Cross from Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village where he served as associate director/major gifts & gift planning officer. He brings to the Red Cross nearly 20 years of experience in the nonprofit sector. To learn more about the American Red Cross, call (313) 833-4440 or visit www.semdredcross.org.

Beaumont Eye Institute offers vision rehabilitation

BY KENEE SKOGLUND
STAFF WRITER

Mary Ann Scheele, a Redford Township senior, thought she'd be in the dark forever after she lost most of her vision following a stroke last spring. Fortunately, she made an appointment with Dr. Susan Hahn, an optometrist with the Beaumont Eye Institute for a low-vision evaluation. Hahn referred her to Manjula Amarnath, an occupational therapist at Beaumont Hospital and a specialist in visual rehabilitation.

After months of therapy, Scheele is seeing a lot better.

"I'm able to watch TV and go out with my friends. I can read a little if I have the right light," she said.

It's all about learning to track, said Scheele.

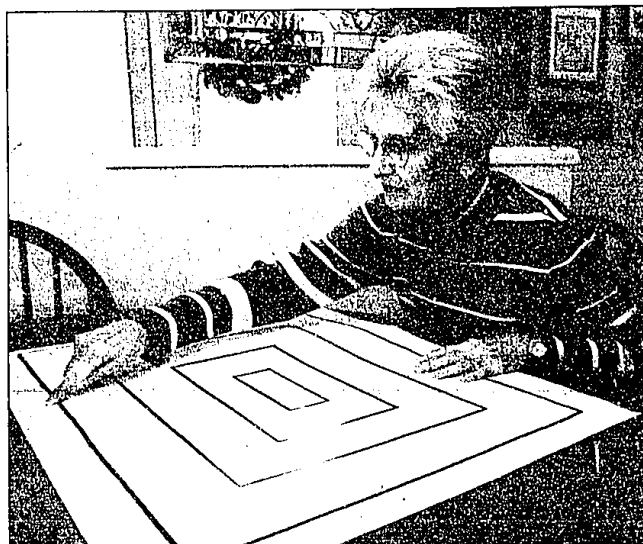
"Before I just moved my head and not my eyes. Now, rather than feeling for an object, I locate it with my eyes then reach. The brain and the eyes have to get together in this business."

Exactly, said Amarnath, who recalled that Scheele had to be led in the room by her daughter-in-law, Catherine, during her first therapy session. "Her eyes were fixed and she wouldn't move her eyes to locate anything."

A vision-impaired person cannot "see" unless what he or she sees is correctly interpreted by the brain, she added.

Amarnath soon had Scheele using her eyes to track a moving object, catch a swinging ball, and write and read by using her finger as a guide. She would give Scheele instructions as to an object's location, thus setting up a tracking route. She also gave Scheele homework. Scheele proved to be an eager student.

"It was amazing, really a pleasure to work with her," said Amarnath. "Every time I gave her a task she'd



Mary Ann Scheele traces the outlines of concentric boxes, part of her eye training exercises.

PHOTOS BY JIM JACKELDS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

work on it, and when she came back we could move on."

Unfortunately, Scheele's Medicare benefits have run out and she is now confined to doing her therapy at home.

NEW LIFE

Scheele has a new appreciation for the little pleasures in life, even though they may come with a few pitfalls.

"I made Swiss steak one night and pounded the flour in it. My daughter-in-law put it in the pressure cooker. My son came out of his office and slid across the floor because I had gotten flour all over the floor," she said. (Scheele's son and daughter-in-law came to live with her after her stroke.)

"It has been a great, great improvement," she added. "I can't say enough about my occupational therapist. She has such concern and compassion. She teaches you so well."

Scheele's sight is not perfect. Her vision is still foggy; still kind of gray, she said. "But I can see the kids when they sit down. I can see my son sitting there. He has a mustache and a goatee."

Scheele's family has benefited from Scheele's improved vision. "My life is a lot easier," said Catherine, who had to physically guide her mother-in-law around the house. "It's given our family a lot of hope. Her life is changed. She's able to sing in the church choir again."

"She's doing very well and probably could be doing better if I let her walk by herself more," Catherine added. "We've gone from mom saying, 'I'm blind' to



Mary Ann Scheele finds the entrance to the hallway via bright colored tape that outlines the doorway.

mom saying, 'I'm visually impaired.' There's much less stigma."

EVALUATION

Not everybody with low vision can be taught to "see" once again, said Hahn, who usually refers patients with vision loss from stroke or brain injury to Amarnath.

"Sometimes, it can be retrained, sometimes we can't regain everything we have lost. Visual field loss is not

PLEASE SEE VISION CT

Blood drive honors Martin Luther King Jr.

Many Americans are at a loss of how to honor Martin Luther King Jr. on the national holiday. Participating in the Blood of Martyrs Blood Drive Campaign, a national initiative to increase minority blood donations, provides an opportunity to fulfill civic responsibility and perpetuate Dr. King's legacy by giving the gift of life through a blood donation.

In Metropolitan Detroit there is a chronic shortage of Type O and Type B blood. Both are more commonly found in African Americans.

Southeastern Michigan Blood Services

Region has partnered with the ecumenical community (all denominations), corporations, hospitals and community leaders to commemorate King's holiday with the Blood of Martyrs blood drives throughout the state of Michigan.

The statewide campaign started on King's birthday Wednesday, Jan. 15, and continues through Wednesday, Jan. 22. There are 30 community drives scheduled in southeastern Michigan with the hope of collecting 1,300 units of blood over the seven-day period.

"Life's most persistent and urgent

question is ... what are you doing for others?" King once said. Donating blood is a living, active witness to his legacy. Blood drives will be conducted at the following locations:

Jan. 19 - St. Kenneth Catholic Church, Plymouth, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.; St. Alexander Catholic Church, Farmington, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.; St. Fabian Catholic Church, Farmington, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Jan. 20 - Our Shepherd Lutheran Church, Birmingham, 1:30-7:30 p.m.; St.

Thomas More Catholic Church, Troy, 1:30-7:30 p.m.; North Congregational Church, Farmington Hills, 2-8 p.m.; First Baptist Church, Northville, 2-8 p.m.; Bentley Elementary, Canton, 2-8 p.m. Jan. 21 - Temple Kol Ami, W. Bloomfield, 2-8 p.m.; St. Timothy Presbyterian Church, Livonia, 2-8 p.m.

For additional locations and to make an appointment to donate blood, call (800) GIVE LIFE. You must be in general good health, at least 17 years old and weigh at least 110 pounds.