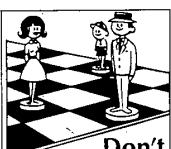


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## Runaway teenagers find temporary haven

By JACKIE KLEIN

"You've got to face the hassle out there. You can retreat for a while, but it takes brains and determination to go back."

That was Bob talking on the porch of an old rambling house in Pleasant Ridge. It's called the "Sanctuary," a temporary shelter for runaway youths.

Bob though he'd be isolated when he decided to check into the Sanctuary. But he found the staff warm and concerned and the kids willing to help each other "get their heads together."

"I like being here, but it's not forever," Bob said. "I'll take more than luck to get me out a better person. I hope I'll be ready for it."

THE SANCTUARY opened May 20 with a one-year \$73,000 grant from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, the state and Oakland County and \$10,000 from the Birmingham Junior League.

Alan Barnes of Southfield, executive director of the project, has a staff of two counselors and house parents. He said kids were waiting for the Sanctuary to open and they came the first day.

"Summer is usually a slow time for runaways," Barnes said. "A lot of them are out on the streets, moving from one friend's house to the other. But it's hard for law enforcement officers to pick them up."

The kids at the Sanctuary are 12-17 years old and can stay a maximum of two weeks. Before they're even allowed to spend the night, parents are notified, said Barnes.

"Some parents are relieved to know their kids are alive and safe and have a place to stay," he said. "Others are hurt and upset."

THE EMPHASIS at the Sanctuary is on individual and group counseling. The kids come voluntarily and can leave at any time.

Since the house opened, 26 runaways have come to find the help they wanted when they left home, Barnes said. Of the group, 24 have gone home and two are in juvenile court awaiting placement in foster homes.

The new batch of 10 fill the pleasant old house.

"We can't force the kids to go home," Barnes said. "Some of them want to keep running. But we've been successful so far. We have periodic follow-ups to see how the kids are doing."

"It's interesting that 80 percent of our runaways are girls. I guess it's easier for boys to make it on the streets."

Kids are either running from something or to something. The Tom Sawyers' are looking for adventure, but they're in the minority. Most of the kids are running from alcoholic parents, rejection, divorced parents or child abuse.

WHILE THE kids are at the Sanctuary, the staff provides family counseling. When the runaways leave, families are referred to other agencies.

"We use problem-solving techniques," Barnes explained. "We're not here to judge or give orders. We're here to guide the kids so they can make decisions and

choose the best alternatives.

"Our goal is reconciliation of the family, and we help the kids learn to deal with their parents."

A 14-year-old girl left home because her parents couldn't get along and they blamed the youngsters. The mother made her husband leave and now wants the girl for security.

"The kid has been kicked around like a football," Barnes said. "When the father comes knocking at the door in a few weeks, the girl will be the scapegoat."

"We've filed a neglect complaint against the parents who are playing games with their kid's life."

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Robert Smith attended the University of Wisconsin, Industrial College of the Armed Forces, Hallmark Institute, Wayne State University, Wayne Business Institute (graduate Business Administration). Robert and Shirley Smith reside at 21109 Laurelwood in Farmington, and are shown with their four children, Gary, a teacher, Michael, an engineer, and students Roy and Debbie.

Robert Smith served in World War II, — Korea twice, — plus the Vietnam era, — and works diligently to preserve your rights and values.



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