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Suit filed Awareness week focuses attention on crippled

National Awareness Week through Sunday is being used to alert the public to the environmental and social barriers faced by one in 10 Americans, those with limited mobility. It is co-sponsored by the National Easter Seal Society for Crippled Children and Adults and the National Paraplegia Foundation.

This week has been chosen by the Easter Seal Society for Crippled Children & Adults of Michigan to announce that it has joined in a class action law suit against the Southeast Michigan Transit Authority (SEMTA) and state and federal authorities for failure to comply with state and federal laws with respect to public buses.

"Michigan laws covering barrier-free design are better than those of most states," said Dean E. Lidgard, president of the Easter Seal Society of Michigan. "Michigan legislators have advanced this state to a leadership position, by means of Public Act 190 of 1974."

"Federal law, the Urban Mass Transit Act of 1964 and subsequent related acts, requires that all public transportation that involves federal funding must be usable by the physically handicapped."

"UNFORTUNATELY, the law is not self-executing," said Lidgard. "The Southeast Michigan

Transit Authority (SEMTA) plans to order \$40-million worth of new buses that would contravene the law because they would have no provision for people who must use wheelchairs, for instance. By what license or logic do bureaucrats think that the rights of physically handicapped adults, veterans and crippled children can be ignored?"

The Easter Seal Society of Michigan, in company with Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America, Michigan Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, the Detroit, Garden City and Michigan divisions of the National Association

for the Physically Handicapped, and others, has joined in a class action suit, the aim of which is simply to insist that the law with respect to physically handicapped persons be honored, not broken, by local, state and federal bureaucrats, as in the SEMTA case."

One of the lawyers in the case, Sheldon Wachler of Southfield, said, "It is time to put an end to the medieval practice of hiding and sometimes virtually imprisoning handicapped citizens."

A hearing in the case is scheduled for July 22.

Volunteers

This column describing volunteer needs in Oakland County is co-sponsored by the Junior League of Birmingham and the Oakland County Volunteer Bureau. Inquiries regarding volunteer needs listed here should be made to the Oakland County Volunteer Bureau at 642-7272. Requests for volunteer listings should also be made through the volunteer bureau.

Oakland Ave., Pontiac. The senior citizens center needs volunteers to conduct house-to-house assessments of senior citizens' need such as medical care, transportation and social programs. The three-month survey will canvas four areas in Pontiac and will begin the first week in July. Hours are flexible.

LAHSER HILLS NURSING HOME 25300 Lahser Road, Southfield, needs volunteers to work with elderly and handicapped patients. Assistance is needed with the arts and crafts programs from 2-4 p.m., afternoons. The home is also looking for individuals with special talent to entertain the patients on a one time or regular basis.

CHILDREN'S VILLAGE, 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac, houses wards of the court due to delinquency or neglect. Two types of volunteers are needed, those willing to work at the village and those willing to take a child home for the weekend. Volunteers are needed at the unit to share a particular talent or offer personal care such as doing hair or visiting. At least one hour per month during the afternoon or evening is requested. The volunteer weekend program needs homes for teenagers to visit. Those interested in taking a child into their home are interviewed by a senior counselor and may indicate preference as to age and sex. The number of weekends required is flexible.

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Festival luncheon set at ballroom

The International Freedom Festival Friendship luncheon will be held on Thursday (July 3) in the ballroom of the Veterans Memorial Building.

Five hundred persons are expected to attend from Windsor and the metropolitan Detroit area. The luncheon will salute International Women's Year and the Detroit Bicentennial.

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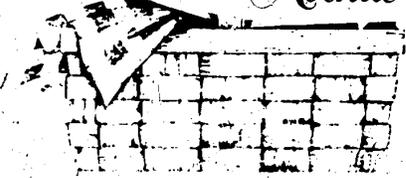
Serving as co-chairwomen are Mrs. Willis Graves and Mrs. Edward Pierson, both of Detroit. Former Congresswoman Martha Griffiths is honorary chairwoman.

The theme will be international and will feature entertainment from the various Bicentennial Ethnic Festivals on the riverfront.

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