

# Farmington LIFE

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(7) 18

## Making Christmas merry for the less fortunate

By LORRAINE McCLISH

In December of each year the staff of this newspaper has come to expect telephone calls from persons asking what they might do to help make Christmas a little merrier for those who live in institutions.

One group said they had some books—who could use them? A singing group asked if we knew anyone who might want to hear some carols.

We hope we steered them to the right places, but in the meantime we made six telephone calls to the activity directors of nursing homes and institutions in the city to ask about their Christmas plans. This was their response.

LEE HASTINGS at the Farmington Nursing Home provided a list of items residents would appreciate which added up to "just about anything they wouldn't ordinarily be provided with here."

Personal items are most important, she said. Those might include postage stamps for the more alert residents who do write letters, or a money-tree card filled with dimes for the pay phone for those who do a lot of telephoning.

Greeting cards for residents to send to others, or large, sturdy tote bags for those who want to bring personal items with them to the recreation room, were also suggested.

Knee socks for both men and women are always in demand, as well as knitted slip-on booties, pajamas, nightgowns and robes.

Colognes, cosmetics and stand-up mirrors are important for morale, as are live plants or accessories for the individual's room.

If you are thinking of sending games or playing cards for recreation, make sure they come with large print or numbers.

Other suggestions included hearing-aid batteries, non-spill eating utensils or wheel-chair trays.

Gifts will be accepted wrapped or unwrapped. Donors are asked to indicate the contents of wrapped packages so the staff may make appropriate distributions.

They will be accepted by Ms. Hastings at 30405 Folsum, Farmington.

THE STAFF AT Boy's Republic will be sending 64 of their 70 youngsters home for at least a part of the holiday season. The staff is currently in the throes of "making as plush and as comfortable a day for the six we'll have here as we possibly can."

Gordon Boring, who is directing the Christmas Day plans for the boys, said "any extras would be fantastic."

Outdoor sports equipment for boys between 12-18 years old would be well used, Gordon said.

"I'm sure that there must be a lot of people in town who have sons who left home and left their ice skates or hockey sticks in basement, maybe they have a TV that isn't used any more. These would be wonderful gifts to brighten up these kids' day."

"One of the most important things we can do

*'One of the most important things we can do for these boys is to let them know they are not forgotten.'*

Gordon Boring, Boy's Republic

for these boys is to let them know they are not forgotten," he said.

Boring and Frank Harris will receive gifts at Boy's Republic, 28000 Nine Mile, Farmington.

CHRISTMAS PLANS are clicking along just fine for Sister Marie Judith at Sarah Fisher Home For Children. Most of the 98 children there will go out for Christmas Day with volunteer families.

Shirley DuVal, administrative secretary at the home, spoke for the staff: "We get so much from our volunteers. We get many, many gifts from both individuals and groups—people who just give from the goodness of their hearts—not only on holidays, but all year through. We really can't ask for more."

JENNY CANNART, activities director for the Oak Hill Nursing Home, is looking forward to a scheduled visit from Salvation Army members on Christmas week. She believes "they have about the best concept of what visiting a nursing home is all about."

The church members will bring gifts of fruit to the residents there, but the important thing is that they will be distributing their gifts to individuals and will be visiting with them individually at the same time.

"The social contact is so important—just saying 'Hi' to them and shaking their hands is doubly important for the bed-ridden," she said.

"When a group comes in to sing for us, I always ask if they will go up and down the halls, or from room to room. This is so much more meaningful than having them sing in an assembly."

Mrs. Cannart said the biggest thing that ever happened to the home was the invitation and transportation residents received last winter for a "Nostalgia" concert sponsored by the Farmington Community Arts Council.

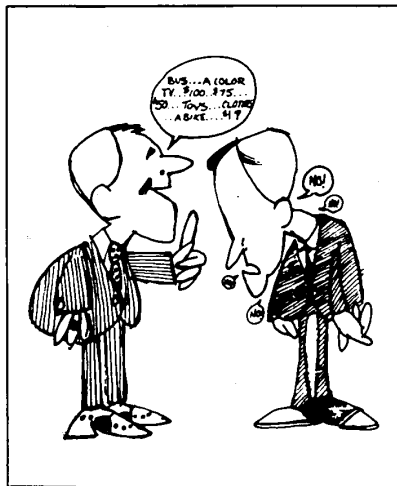
"But even then there were a few we couldn't take with us, and those are the ones we have to reach," she said.

Gifts such as hand lotion, shampoo, or something decorative for residents' rooms "are most meaningful when they are delivered personally," she said.

Mrs. Cannart may be contacted through the Oak Hill Nursing Home, 34225 Grand River, Farmington. "And if I'm not in, don't give up. Leave a message. I'll get back to you," she said.

JEAN HUTCHINSON has shaped her Christmas plans for the nine elderly persons for whom she cares in the Hutchinson Adult Foster Care Home.

Mrs. Hutchinson has but one volunteer, a retired woman who lives nearby and comes in occasionally to visit or bring knitted items.



She said her greatest need was for persons who would come to the home on a regular basis to teach some simple crafts "that would be an incentive for them; something they could look forward to; something that would motivate them."

"I could decorate their rooms up for them. But wouldn't it be nicer if they could make things themselves? I've been trying to do this myself but it isn't going too well," she said.

"They need individual visits, someone to help pass the time with them," she added.

The persons who now live at the home are from "46 to somewhere in the 80s," she said. Mrs. Hutchinson has arranged for them to have a visit from Santa Claus and a party with their families and children.

She can be contacted at the home, 21630 Middle Belt, Farmington.

DEBBIE TOLBERT, activities director in Williamsburg Convalescent Center, says residents there are much more in need of services than items.

"The basic needs always are the same," she

said—"one-to-one visits with the residents; someone to write letters for them; someone to read to them."

Operating now in the home are a beauty salon and barber shop run by members of St. Alexander parish; craft classes; bingo parties; and birthday parties. "But we could always use more hands," Ms. Tolbert said, to help with the 106 residents whose ages range from 21-100.

"We also need persons who will run errands for the residents. This would be something most appreciated. Just someone to run to the store for a toilet article they might need," she said.

As for gifts, "fruit is one of the nicest things someone could send. We have 23 diabetics here and it had gotten a little difficult at times when we have a party. We'd like fruit on hand to give to them."

Otherwise, she listed combs, brushes, perfumes, soap, pocket books, items of a personal nature.

Volunteers or donors may contact Ms. Tolbert at the home, located at 21017 Middlebelt, Farmington.

Christmas... ...I love it!



OPEN TONIGHT UNTIL

8:30

in Detroit, Saturdays 'til 5:30

9:00

in Troy, Saturdays 'til 7

...and all weekdays through December 23.

Saks Fifth Avenue

Second at Lothrop, Detroit  
Somerset Mall, Big Beaver at Coolidge, Troy

## At Womencenter

The Womencenter on the Orchard Ridge campus serves as a place for women to meet, talk, plan programs, relax... and sometimes take care of the kids. From left, those watching Buffy Sinclair adjust Aleah's shirt are organization advisor Mary White and Cynthia Jarman, student volunteer and program planner. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

