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Marillac Hall is threatened by closing

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Young girls seek a refuge during program at Marillac Hall. Farmington Hall may find the doors closed next month unless administrators can come up with

enough money and teachers to continue the facility's high school program. Marillac Hall's problems began when the financially pressed Detroit school board withdrew two of its teachers from the facility as an economy measure. The

two remaining teachers will leave Dec. 22. Since Marillac is licensed as a child care center, it must retain an accredited high school program. Without the Detroit paid teachers, the educational program at the Hall is in jeopardy.

The Hall's school program must be accredited by a district within the state. Although the facility has received 22 calls from teachers who are willing to volunteer their time, administrators are still searching for a way to retain the program's accreditation.

THE FARMINGTON SCHOOL district has been asked by the Hall's administrator, Sister Mary Patricia, to consider taking over the educational program. The financially troubled Farmington district administrators are sympathetic but aren't making any promises.

"Off the top of my head, I'd have to say that I don't think the district could afford to pay Farmington School Supt. Lewis Schulman."

But we are examining the situation, he added. Four extra teachers for the Hall could be funded through special education funds or county funds, he said.

Meanwhile, Sister Patricia is hoping to raise enough money to operate the school independent of a district until June 1977.

If people give us the funds we can operate the school with state accreditation until June, she said.

I've been told by the state department that funds alternate school programs for program girls that we might be able to operate as a state facility.

We would be able to give credit and issue our own diploma to girls who finish their high school requirements here, she said.

"BUT WE need money to hire teachers. They can't operate the program with old uniforms."

This could be an interim plan to serve the young people until the Farmington school district accepts our program," Sister Patricia said.

Of the 60 girls who came in, we could then continue our own school, she said.

Although Marillac Hall also serves using unwed mothers who are over 18 years old, the majority of its girls are of high school age or younger, according to Gail Carter, director of social services at the Hall.

Between 60 and 70 percent of the girls are under 13 years old, she said. We're unable to admit more without the school program, she said.

If we don't get accredited and are closed for a semester, we'll have to start over like a new agency, if we reopen. It's unrealistic, she said.

We don't have enough girls over school age to run the Hall," Ms. Carter said.

Since news of the Hall's predicament has circulated, more women over school age have been coming to the facility.

We have to tell the girls who are school age that we can't guarantee that the Hall will be open past December, said Sister Patricia.

Currently, there are 31 residents in the Hall, which has a capacity for 35. Five girls are enrolling to the Hall from the Farmington area to take classes.

The Hall should stay open, administrators argue, because not all pregnant girls feel comfortable remaining at their home school.

The girls feel responsible, Sister Patricia said.

Other girls are referred to the hall by various social and state agencies. Some girls are wanted by the court. Others are escaping from a bad family environment.

When the girls first come here, some times the family situation is tense, explained M. Carter. But things get better as time progresses. The parents visit. They reach a new pattern of understanding, she said.

The girls are also escaping peer pressure and boyfriends who are pressuring them to make decisions that they feel they can't handle.

They want to be away from the pressures of boyfriends and relatives who want to know whether the girl will keep the baby or put it up for adoption, she said.

The Hall provides classes in a Providence Hospital nurses and counseling center.

ALTHOUGH MARILLAC Hall is operated by the Holy Family Church of St. Vincent de Paul, this is a public organization which does not require that the girls at the Hall register as Catholics.



Sister Mary Patricia: Keeping Marillac open is her goal.

At community library

She prefers happy colors

A Farmington Art Club member displayed a 12-in.-by-16-in. picture which she had painted for a painting.

I thought to myself, I'm not a kid to paint that kind of picture, said Northrup Keston, of Westland.

Instead, she bought and completed two paintings by the time she was ready to start the show. She was bored with executing another person's ideas and decided to paint for the numbers.

I thought this is ridiculous. I was tired of painting in the numbers. So one day, I decided to paint things that were what I wanted, she said.

I haven't turned back since. She has kept on painting almost continuously and her work is on display at the Farmington Community Library, 3237 West Taylor Ave., through Nov. 30.

I've been painting for about 10 years for the last three years, she said. Each painting takes a different amount of time. Sometimes, I become bored with one and start another, but I always go back to the first, she said.

The number and idea pop into my head. I have to start painting on canvas, she said.

Her finished paintings convey happiness and peace, she said.

I don't want to hang problems on the wall, she said.

I want to convey joy. People have really problems today.

People don't feel secure, she said. It's sad when so many young and old people are prisoners in their own home today. Culture and bread will be enough to eat if people feel safe from muggers and problems, she said.

Empathy is the answer to some of the world's dilemmas, she concludes.

Empathy is the biggest word in the world. If you can't have it for other people, then the world's problems can't be solved, she said.

Her answer to outstanding problems is to paint pictures to uplift the viewers' spirits.

She doesn't attribute her style to any particular source. She insists that everything influences an artist.

I like the expressions of the Fauvist painters, but everything has an influence on you. Everything that you see is an influence.

Seton center opens child food program

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A PATTERN in a dress can influence me, she says.

Although her husband Peter and her two daughters at first admired her efforts, she thinks that they have become saturated with her works.

Our whole basement is full of paintings, she laughs. If I don't sell enough of them, we'll have to move out. They take up more room than pets.

Although she is self-taught, she believes that formal lessons can speed a student's progress.

It's part talent, part determination and part intensity, she sums up.

As I learn more, I see me affected, she said.

WHEN SHE STARTED the venture, she decided that she should have a name that sounded as if it belonged to an artist.

I thought you had to sound eccentric, she admits.

She retained using her real first name, Northrup, which had been given to her by her godmother in Greece.

My father would let me change my name, she says. But in high school, someone told me that I looked like an Anne.

So for a while, I became Anne.



Grid title denied

The football world of Xs and Os has ended for Mike Bowden (above) and his Farmington Harrison High School team. Harrison won 10-straight games before finally dropping a 38-27 decision to Midland Down in the state Class A final played last Saturday in the Pontiac Silverdome. See story on Page 6. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

PLUS gives the young an added chance in life

By HOWARD ROSTAL

A kid shouldn't have to be a switchblade totting juvenile delinquency before someone other than the criminal justice system pays attention to him.

Psychologists, child psychiatrists, teachers, social workers, and the next-door neighbor can spot a kid who's headed for trouble. But because society seems to operate on the squeaky wheel gets the grease principle, the kid who everyone ignores will get into trouble, does.

Bruce Bolton is an adult volunteer in People: Listening, Understanding, and Sharing, PLUS, a program which tries to provide a young person who may never have had it, the chance to back in the attention of a caring adult.

PLUS, administered by Farmington Youth Assistance, is all volunteer, from people like Bolton to its professional staff.

Bruce's new 14-year-old friend is typical of the kind of child, male or female, PLUS is designed to help. The boy's father is alive, but he's not around. Without a consistent male father figure, the boy's mother became concerned that this would create a problem in her son's development.

He's really a likable kid, a lot of energy and a lot of energy, said Bolton, stressing energy with a fatigued sigh. We hit it off pretty well.

IT'S JUST THE whole feeling of being wanted and needed. He's got an older sister and a young brother and sister, and he doesn't get the kind of attention he thinks he needs, said Bolton.

A PLUS volunteer doesn't treat a young charge for any specific emotional problem. I'm not a psychiatrist. I'm a friend, said Bolton, an architectural student at Lawrence Institute of Technology, who also works part time as an interior decorator.

They do the sort of things friends do, go to the movies, talk. Sometimes Bolton lets the kid drive his car on a highway. They usually get together once a week for two to three hours.

Most volunteers must see their kid at least once a week for a year. John Pinkerman, the volunteer case worker for PLUS, who also works for the Farmington Area Advisory Council, said that a successful relationship will carry on beyond the year commitment. Since PLUS is only 18 months old, no relationships have come to that point.

Bolton said he plans to continue seeing his friend.

He doesn't set a time limit. Like a friendship, some you outgrow and drift away from, and some you keep forever.

Of course, the relationship between an adult, who set up with the introduction was a total stranger, and a teen who knows he's being befriended because he lacks a certain kind of friendship isn't totally spontaneous.

THE KID KNOWS from the beginning that it's a year commitment, said Pinkerman. Understanding the artificiality of the relationship doesn't invalidate the kind of magic that's going on.

Debbie Knighton, PLUS chairperson, and a student at Oakland Community College



DEBBIE KNIGHTON



JOHN PINKERMAN



BRUCE BOLTON

is one of the program's original participants. She noted that the mother of Bolton's kid wants to get some of her young-er kids involved in the program, after seeing how the companionship has effected her son.

Child neglect and abandonment is something that goes on in all communities and knows no socioeconomic boundaries. Of the 1,000 in the PLUS program, one is part of an ABC family, another from a disadvantaged, upper-middle class family.

Even in a community like Farmington, PLUS has found that it has more children in need of an adult companion than it can supply.

JAYCEES PROTEST

Farmington Area Jaycee President Jack Davis and Secretary Bill Reed speak out in the editorial page letter box concerning an article and Cracker Barrel Debate column which they feel reflects unfairly on their organization. To read their views, turn to Page 12A.

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