

By CAROLINE PRICE

There's an activities center not far from where 13 year old Corina Maxam lives in Redford Township. It offers woodworking classes, swimming and basketball.

Corina would like to participate in all those activities, but she can't.

That's because the center is a branch of Boys' Clubs of Metropolitan Detroit and girls aren't allowed.

Corina, the daughter of LuAnn and Douglas Maxam, has tried to join the nearby center several times, but was told to go to the Girls' Club at 15785 James Couzens in Detroit—quite a way from her home.

So Corina and her family went to the American Civil Liberties Union in Detroit to see if a non-profit organization can exclude potential members on the basis of sex. The ACLU decided that the Boys' Club is violating the Michigan Public Accommodations statute, and plans to file a lawsuit against the organization unless the boys-only policy is changed within three weeks.

"What is important here is that the Boys' Club caters to the general public, rather than being controlled by the members," says Howard Simon, executive director of the Detroit ACLU.

Simon says the club is a public recreation facility and as such must offer its services equally to all persons regardless of sex.

But a representative for the Boys' Club says the organization would violate its federal charter if the doors were opened to girls.

"Boys' Club of America is chartered by Congress to provide services to boys only," says Gary Kolasa. He says that the club for girls in Detroit is funded by a Matilda Wilson grant and is chartered by Girls' Clubs of America. "Maybe the boys should go down there and try to join," he adds.

"If the executive board votes to accept girls we will violate the federal charter, and if they vote not to accept them we will have a lawsuit filed against us. We just can't win."

In the meantime, Corina is waiting somewhat impatiently for their verdict. "I want to go through with this even if it takes a couple of years in court. I'd be 15, too old to join then, but I have two sisters (Brandi, 8 and Tania, 4) that would like to be able to join," she says.

Corina says that she has been getting mixed reactions from her friends and classmates about the controversy. "Lots of my girlfriends say they want to go. Some of the boys I know tell me the

whole thing is dumb, but others say go ahead with it."

One of Corina's staunchest supporters is her mother, LuAnn. "The Boys' Club gets \$760,000 a year from United Fund. I contribute to United Fund, yet only half of my children get to go to the center," she says.

Mrs. Maxam adds that the Boys' Clubs in Ypsilanti and Pontiac admit girls. "I don't see why Corina can't join the one here," she says. Mrs. Maxam is an insurance agent, and her husband Douglas is a utility man at Ford Motor Co.'s Wixom factory.

Even their 11-year-old son, Doug Jr., who belongs to the Boys' Club, thinks his sister should be able to join.

"My son has never been able to understand why girls weren't allowed," Mrs. Maxam comments. The Maxams have one other son, Chad, 2.

Mrs. Maxam adds, "Joe Kozo (executive director of Boys' Club) has daughters. What does he tell them?"

Sometime during the next three weeks Corina will know if she can become a member of the Boys' Club, or if she is in for a court battle. She seems a little surprised by all the trouble she's had.

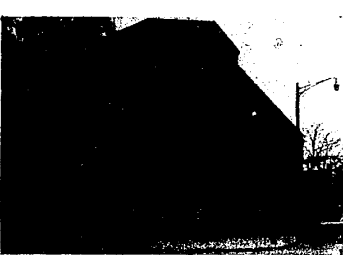
Boys' clubs under fire — issue is girls



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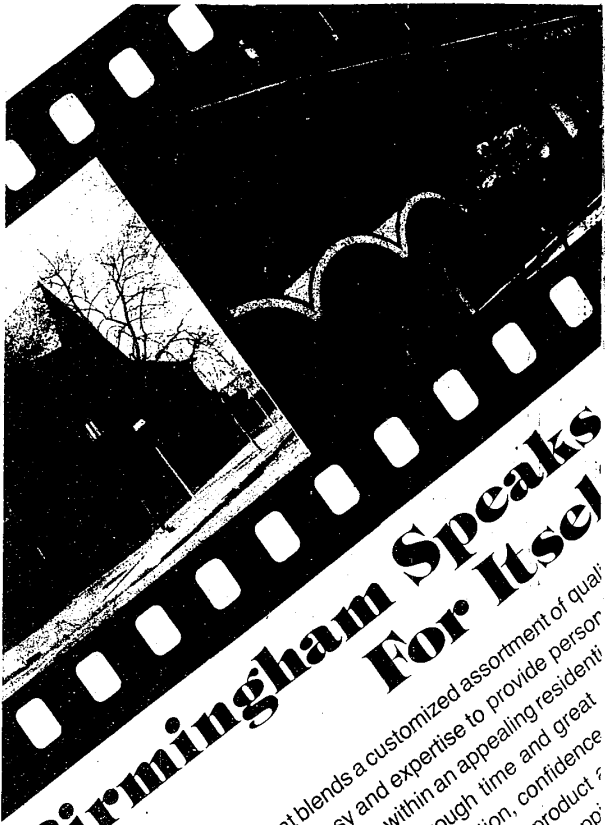
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