

Single parent teaches others

By Margaret Miller
staff writer

"I'm doing so well, then why am I feeling so badly?"
"If you don't know where you're going, it's harder to get there."
"Love me? Love my children."
The foregoing quotations aren't comments from a psychiatrist's couch. Nor are they songs listed in the Top 20.

All are the titles of workshops coming to Schoolcraft College, sponsored by its Women's Resource Center and led by a Garden City woman who wears the hats of social worker, counselor, single parent and innovative teacher.

Judith Friday works as a supervisor in the Garden Department of Social Services office in Lincoln Park and does some private counseling with Amity Mental Health in Dearborn.

She also does occasional short term courses and seminars for Eastern Michigan University and the Garden City school district's continuing education program.

active involvement on the part of her students in solving the knotty problems that vex so many lives.
"I assign homework in the ones that run several weeks," she said. "I have them describe problems, then we talk about solutions, then they try working with these ideas and reporting back."
The one-day seminars also involve active participation.

"In all my classes," she said, "I want people to leave with something that makes life more enjoyable. Listening to a lecture is fine, but working to apply it is much better."

"We talk about motivation and how it applies to each of our lives. We talk about setting goals, in personal life as well as in our work. We talk about how to attain these goals. I give them positive things to work on, how to make a concrete plan and take the first step, and then the second step."

MS. FRIDAY noted that in each class situation she is frank about "where I am."

"I'm a single parent who hasn't tried step-parenting because I haven't yet met a partner who could improve my life," she said. Ms. Friday is divorced and has three children, 16, 14 and 3 years old.

"I certainly am not against marriage," she said. "And I feel I can look clearly at the challenges of step-parenting."
The courses, she said bring together

a mixture of participants, some who are step-parents and others considering a second marriage.

"We talk about how you have to learn communication and establish traditions," she said. "The models people see in the media, like the Brady Bunch on television, are total unrealistic. On that program you have beautiful children living in a mansion and if there are problems mother and dad have instant answers."

"But in life it doesn't work that way." "Step-parenting: Love Me? Love My Children" is offered through Schoolcraft's continuing education department and carries one hour's credit. The fee is based on residence.

THE TWO one-day workshops for women are based on what Ms. Friday called "the confusion women have in the past tell us not to achieve," she said.

What she covers in class, she said, applies both to the woman "taught that her role is to be a good mother and a good wife," and to the one whose problem is "sex-role stereotyping."

"I teach that the good-wife-and-mother role is fine if you want it, but it's also all right to have skills and achieve and be creative," she noted.

And regarding stereotyping, "I try to teach women to be aware of it and live with it because it may not be changed for some time."

Decisions, she emphasizes in the workshop knowing where you're going, have to be made with understanding. "We talk about letting things ride, and putting them in the hands of others, and I explain why I think that's a pretty handy way of doing things," she said.

The two Saturday sessions are offered through the resource center. Both run 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., both cost \$20 and for both participants are asked to bring a brown-bag lunch.

JUDITH FRIDAY pointed out she's been the route she covers in her sessions.

"I earned a degree in early childhood development from the University of Wisconsin in the days when women were structured into child-care work," she noted. "Later, when I went to the University of Michigan for a master's in social field, I stayed in that area of study because I had been in it so long and felt it was where I had the most to offer."

This kind of "woman's work" message is one she definitely is not sending on to her 16-year-old daughter, Pam. "I want her to do what she wants, not what society says," she said. "In fact, I've said that so much, she may be getting tired of hearing it."

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