



ROM MANDELKA/staff photographer

This is winter?

A Farmington Hills tyko surveying the situation at what neighborhood children call Wolf Pond off Farmington Road near 14 Mile is treated to a rare January scene of wildlife at play.

Help for Southfield's poor

By Jackie Klein
staff writer

Southfield Human Resources Department is establishing a food distribution center to assist residents needing emergency aid.

Human Resources, according to director Thomas Frommeyer, will serve as a center for contributions of non-perishable food items and cash donations to the community's needy. Drop-off points will be announced soon, Frommeyer said.

The only similar service available to Southfield residents is Duns Scotus Poverty Program, which provides food and other assistance to persons in the metropolitan Detroit area.

"Duns Scotus has been inundated with requests for help as a result of severe and prolonged unemployment," Frommeyer said.

"The majority of Southfield's unemployed are cared for through unemployment compensation, food stamps, ADC, general assistance and similar programs."

Some families and individuals, however, are getting caught between the time their unemployment runs out and the time they can be processed for public assistance, Frommeyer said. Others aren't getting enough food for their families through these programs, he noted.

PHASE ONE of the city program is food collection and cash donations among city employees, Frommeyer said. This phase is projected to start next week.

Frommeyer is discussing with Southfield school officials the possibility of a food collection program in schools as the second phase.

The third phase will be a financial contribution campaign among members of the business community with donations applied to food purchases and other emergency needs, Frommeyer said.

General guidelines for qualified recipients established by Human Resources include proof of residency and families having a valid need for assistance, Frommeyer said.

The department will determine the amount of food to be dispersed depending on the need of the client and the availability of food, he said.

"Another guideline is the expectation that recipients where possible will volunteer time to help others," Frommeyer said. "The program must be non-discriminatory and those picking up food must be at least 18 years old."

Suggested staples are pasta, macaroni and cheese, tuna fish, rice, soup, canned meats, canned vegetables, fruit or juices, powdered or condensed milk, peanut butter, grape jelly and dried cereals.

"WE'RE ALSO establishing an advisory board of persons who have worked in food co-ops, Goodfellows and other programs so we can tap all resources and operate efficiently," Frommeyer said.

"We're suggesting that Southfield families, church groups, office groups and others adopt families to give them more than one-time help. Poor people never get breaks.

"Many of us have the money to buy on sale. The poor buy on time and pay twice as much. They don't get a deal because they don't know influential people who can show them how to buy in quantities."

Persons adopting families can not only provide food but can help with budgeting and tell them where to buy certain items at the best price, Frommeyer said. The goal is consultation and ongoing friendship, he said.

"A number of persons adopted families over the holidays and continued to help through the year," Frommeyer said. "We will supply names of families after checking with them. Charity is

more than a one-time check or a bag of groceries." For more information, call human resources, 354-4864

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