

Unemployment

Congressional committee learns of toll on family life

By Kathy Parriat
Staff writer

After Dawn's dad was laid off work, the 10-year-old spent a lot of school time daydreaming about home problems.

"I thought it was my fault because my parents gave me dirty looks, ignored me, and yelled at me," the Detroit fifth grader told a group of congressmen Monday in Redford Township.

"I spent a lot of time thinking about my problems and my grades went down."

APPEARING BEFORE five members of the House of Representatives Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families, Dawn and a dozen other area witnesses talked about their own experiences with joblessness.

Among those on hand were unemployed auto workers, a school counselor who runs support groups for children of unemployed, a minister whose church does job referrals, and the director of the state Office of Children and Youth Services.

About 100 attended the hearing in Methodist Children's Home Society, chosen for the event because it deals daily with the needs of children and families.

"Redford's kind of a typical suburban community. It's the usual bedroom community in America," said committee member Rep. Sander Levin, D-Southfield, whose 17th Congressional District includes Redford Township.

The freshman congressman last year campaigned door-to-door in the community which leads the nation in percentage of owner-occupied homes.

MICHIGAN WEAVERS' GUILD

7th

MICHIGAN WEAVERS' GUILD

"It's a community that has lots of typical families."

THE 23-MEMBER bipartisan committee, now in its second year, was set up to assess the condition of American children, youth and families and make recommendations to Congress on topics dealing with them.

Last year it held 13 hearings ranging from "Families in Crisis: Economic Security" to drug use by youth and teen pregnancy.

Monday's regional hearing on "The New Unemployed: Long-Term Consequences for Their Families" was an effort to examine the economic, social and psychological impact of job losses on the newly unemployed.

Much of the three-hour session focused on the effects of long term unemployment.

"UNEMPLOYMENT traditionally gets attention by legislators when there's a crisis situation," explained committee chairman Rep. George Miller, a California Democrat.

"We're looking at the people left behind in the recovery, who may never get back on their feet. This is a little bit of preplanning so we can help those people."

Levin, in his introduction to the session, said that while going door-to-door in the area, he had heard stories of families being fragmented because members left the state for work or children dropped out of school to help support relatives.

"This is an opportunity to learn more about those stories," he said. "The more we understand the true cost of unemployment, perhaps the more we understand the importance of prevention."

AS WELL AS citing financial problems, witnesses testified that joblessness can lead to spouse and child abuse, use of drugs and alcohol, severe depression and even divorce.

"I got to be a regular house husband, but not without paying a price — my sense of male esteem," said Charles Knapp, who became depressed and withdrew from his friends after losing his job as a diesel mechanic.

Artie Morris-Vann, a guidance counselor at two Detroit public elementary schools, observed that children of the unemployed often undergo personality changes. Typical are aggressiveness,

crying, falling grades and daydreaming.

One youngster blamed herself for an argument between her parents over a pair of designer jeans her mother bought her. Another stayed up all night trying to figure out on a calculator how to pay the family bills.

"There's a great deal of confusion because children don't understand what's going on," explained Morris-Vann, whose groups share ideas on how to cope with their home problems.

Talking with others in the same situation often helps make it easier.

for the Child Care Coordinating and Referral Service of Washtenaw County, talked with the congressmen about its project to train people to open day care homes.

Then she tearfully recalled going with her father to collect his unemployment checks 20 years ago.

"I will always remember the hurt look in my father's eyes when he went to the unemployment line," said Wehking, who believes the experience has "far-reaching impact on children."

"I call on you to save other children from that experience."

WHILE THE ECONOMY is improving, Shirley Tate, executive director of the state's Office of Children and Youth Services, said her agency's workload isn't down.

And she told congressmen public policy is failing to meet the growing needs of unemployed Michigan families, which are experiencing more domestic violence and substance abuse.

SUPER SAVER SALON



Open now at Pontiac
Offering super salon services by Glenby-trained stylists, at super low prices. All because we've limited ourselves to just a few services, so we can do them superbly for less. No appointments. Just walk right in to Hudson's Beauty Salon and sign up.

Our specialties:
Precision haircuts, \$6
Shampoo/conditioning/finish, \$6
Perm* (with either or both of above), \$6
*Not recommended for all hair types.

HUDSON'S

ADVANCE NOTICE

We will be opening with a complete presentation of clothing from Freedberg of Boston for men and women.

ROBERT VANCE LTD.
for Men & Women

Somerset Mall
2861 West Big Beaver • Troy, Michigan 48064
(313) 649-2066

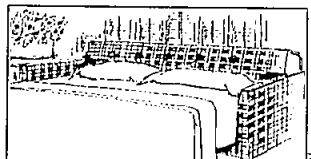
When it comes to classics, Gant® really knows the score

There's just no contest. Our baldy-striped Gant® Rugby shirt and neat twill pants are winners all the way...thanks to precise tailoring and quality fabrics. Just part of our new collection of better sportswear, sure to fit right into your game plan. Sizes S-M-L-XL in Men's Sportswear, all our stores. 26.50 to 39.50.



Crowley's
STORE FOR MEN

double your investment overnight, with a sale priced sleep sofa...



A sofa that turns into sleeping space at night...now at wide-awake savings! This 81" Queen-size Simmons Hide-A-Bed has the famous Beautyrest mattress... a biscuit, brown, bittersweet chenille stripe fabric...and handsome contemporary lines. IN STOCK FOR IMMEDIATE DELIVERY.

specially priced
\$599 queen-size

SIMMONS HIDE-A-BED



Wiggs

Visa, MasterCard, Wiggs charge

4080 TELEGRAPH ROAD, BLOOMFIELD HILLS, MI 48013 644-7370
HOURS: MON., THURS., FRI., 9:30-9:00; TUES., WED., SAT. 9:30-5:30

Shop tonight until 9 p.m. at Western, Macomb Mall, Livonia Mall, Lakeside Mall, Universal Mall, Farmington and Birmingham. Grand River open until 7 p.m. New Center open until 6 p.m.