

# Suburban Life

Loraine McElish editor/477-5450



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## Toughlove

### TV airs message of support

By Shirlee Rose Iden  
staff writer

OVER HIGH TECH lines of cable television, a message for out-of-control teens and frantic parents is signalling hope and support.

Since last March, Amy Devone, founder of the Toughlove Chapter in Oakland County, has been writing, editing and producing "Get Tough with Love" a public service program aimed at misbehaving teenagers and their parents.

Presently, the shows are aired on Channel 18 which reaches Southfield and Lathrup Village serviced by Continental Cable TV and also in areas served by Booth Cable Television and Tribune United.

Areas where "Get Tough with Love" will be shown by February include Birmingham, Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, Franklin, Rochester, Avon Township, Troy, Farmington Hills, Livonia, Farmington, and Redford.

February will mark the first time an hour long show will be broadcast. The first 60-minute show will present high school and middle school counselors and principals, and other experts.

"It will be shown on the second, third, and fourth Mondays in February," says Devone. "Drugs, alcohol, teen pregnancy, and absenteeism are some of the areas we'll get into."

DEVONE got into Toughlove herself when her own two sons, the eldest of her four children, began to give her problems. She formed the Oakland

**'We tell parents not to throw the kids out, but to hug them. Then at the end of the meeting we make a regular ceremony out of the parents and kids hugging.'**

— Amy Devone

County chapter of Toughlove, a national parent-teen support group.

"Draw the bottom line for behavior and don't go below it" is the credo of the group which, while sounding tough, works through positive support.

"Sometimes parents have to back away and let others handle a situation with a youngster, no matter how painful," she explains.

"For instance, Toughlove parents may draw their line by forbidding use of the family car or telephone or refusing to intervene when a kid is in trouble."

More drastic measures may be locking a youngster out if he consistently breaks curfew, then directing him to another Toughlove family who will shelter the youth until he or she agrees to live by the rules.

"A teenager on drugs could come home to find bags packed and a note with advice to get into a rehab program or find another place to live," Devone says.

Devone contends her three year old chapter has had a great measure of

success despite the toughness, because a lot of love is radiated.

BOTH in the Toughlove chapter and with the television program, Devone, employed at an area hospital, has reached out, not only with support for others, but requesting support with the work of the organization.

Ron Greenberg, who took cable television classes and then needed an outlet for his new training, first suggested the series of programs on "Get Tough with Love."

Presently, he is the producer of the project, now filming a new show each month. The shows are taped in the Southfield facilities of Continental Cable.

"We videotaped an actual Toughlove meeting," he says. "Now we're doing our eighth show and they're looking pretty professional."

In addition to Greenberg, Devone goes to a natural source of help, the teens she is trying to help.

"I think of problems and try to emphasize the positive," she says. "We're always trying to get input from the

kids. They help with make-up and cue cards and all sorts of things."

DEVONE says for most teenagers, the biggest source of problems is the negative influence of peers.

"What we try to do is focus on positives, on talents and abilities to counteract those influences. One thing we do is have a meeting the third week of every month for both parents and kids," she says.

"We seem to get about 35-40 percent kids and that's really a positive. When you get the kids and their parents communicating, that's progress."

"We tell parents not to throw the kids out, but to hug them. Then at the end of the meeting, we make a regular ceremony out of the parents and kids hugging."

Toughlove advances guidelines to those who come for help, not a tight structure, according to Devone. Both the national and local organizations are non-profit.

"We have to undertake fundraising sometimes," Devone says. "But when people are in crisis, they aren't usually in a frame of mind to go out and ask for money."

"Also, we can't appeal for funds on the public access television."

OCCASIONALLY, she explains, they get a donation of stamps or a few dollars. They will attempt to get a grant for the production of the television show.

Devone has had a liberal education organizing the Toughlove chapter and



MINDY SAUNDERS/staff photographer

Amy Devone is writer and producer of "Get Tough With Love," a public service program aired this month aimed at misbehaving teens and their parents.

producing the television show. She runs the weekly meetings at the Oak Park Community Center and helps get all the loose ends ready for taping when taping time in Southfield comes around.

In addition, she coaches her daughter Rori, 14, in basketball, and keeps her daughter, Carrie, 16, busy with school and positive chores for her support group projects. Sons Gregg and Jeffrey have grown up and left the nest.

Devone contends the TV shows are very informational and good for parents or anyone having problems with teens. When someone needs a place for a troubled teen, she admits it's usually her place they come to.

But she's receptive to help from those of any age. Persons who have a problem with a teen or would like to help others or be part of a television project can call her at 968-1127.

## When Bad Things Happen

### A book whose title is often misread

By Loraine McElish  
staff writer

"When Bad Things Happen to Good People" was reviewed for United Methodist Women of First United

Methodist Church of Farmington, by librarian Jane Alstrom when she was a guest speaker for the group at the request of one of its members.

Written by Rabbi Harold Kushner, librarians and booksellers have said that

the book is often asked for as "Why Bad Things Happen to Good People."

"Maybe that's because our society is most comfortable with explanations, and we are eager for someone to tell us the 'why' of the crash, or the cancer or the earthquake," Alstrom told her audience.

Kushner faced both the "why" and the "when" questions in depth when he learned that his infant son, Aaron, was a victim of progeria, an illness commonly described as rapid aging. Along with this knowledge he learned that Aaron would be short-lived and very likely unsightly.

As to the "why," Kushner concludes that it is nothing more than chance that one is afflicted and another is spared.

As to the "when," rather than searching for explanations that have no satisfactory answers, Kushner asks the reader to concentrate on his or her responses and reactions to the bad things that happen.

THE AUTHOR pours out a stream of questions for the reader to ponder, many of them, if faced squarely,

comprise a test of capability in forgiving others or oneself. Then he asks the ultimate question about the possibility of still loving a God that allows bad things to happen to those people considered as good in the eyes of their families, their church, their community and society as a whole.

He goes to great length in writing of the futility of blaming others or oneself, and the futility of harboring guilt.

Comments from the audience revealed that some women in the group, notably those who were involved in a prayer circle for the church, had some problem with the stance that bad things happening to good people come by chance.

Other comments from the floor suggested that it was not a book to read while one was in the midst of a tragedy, but rather one to read to arm oneself, so to speak, praying for the strength to be able to face what may happen.

Many thought of it as an "uplifting book" or "upbeat book" that pointed out the responsibility that one has to himself to go on living.

Alstrom's feelings were that it was a book to help the reader "give a good hard look at how we are conducting our lives and see if we have the ability to forgive and keep on loving."

The audience's "uplifting" and "upbeat" comments stemmed from Kushner's thoughts that zeroed in on the good times of Aaron's life; the love that came to the family from others; and the few healthy children who went out of their way to make friends with his son.

Through all of the soul-searching he put down on paper, the author concludes that "yesterday is not as painful as it was," and that "I am not afraid of tomorrow."

ALSTROM WAS asked to review the book by Marge Conover, a member of United Methodist Women, who is also a member of a book discussion group the librarian leads.

"She was specifically requested to review a specific book, which is the way most of our requests for reviews come to us," said Clara Bohrer, senior librarian for the Farmington Hills Branch Library.

Bohrer said there is no written policy the libraries have for loaning out a reviewer for a few hours. Requests are responded to as part of the library's outreach program.

Margaret Itchew is president of United Methodist Women of First United Methodist Church of Farmington. The women's society is part of a network of global ministry with emphasis on mission work, rather than as an auxiliary to the local church.

## Few tickets left for dinner dance

Farmington Community Band is once again sponsoring what promises to be a sellout dinner dance wrapped around a Valentine Day theme. The band's fifth annual dance begins with a cash bar at 6:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 8, in Glen Oaks Golf Club, followed by a buffet dinner and then dancing to the music of Farmington Community Band until midnight.

"I have about 20 tickets left out of 230," said Mary Orwig, who is the band's business manager, doubling as

reservation taker. "The tickets are going faster than in previous years. I started getting phone calls about the dance late in October."

Sticking to a successful format, the all-you-can-eat buffet includes three entrees, and the music for dancing comes in the Big Band style of the '30s and '40s.

Tickets at \$20 each are available by calling Orwig, at 477-3596, or Paul Barber, conductor of the band, at 661-4604.



## Valentine Card Party

Elaine Dorocak (seated at right), a Farmington Hills resident, is the chairwoman for Catholic Central Mothers' Club annual Valentine Card Party which begins this year at 8 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 13 in the school. Among her committeewomen are Marina Abunassar (seated at left), and standing from left, Jo Garcia, Maureen

Redding and Dona Gene Gorauch. Abunassar and Redding are both Farmington residents. Tickets are \$4 each, at the door, for the evening of card playing, a chance at winning door prizes and a choice of desserts. Advance reservations are taken by calling Redding at 553-9242.

## Valentine Day music planned for concert

Farmington Musicale presents "With a Song in My Heart," a concert of music suitable for Valentine Day, at 1:15 p.m. Wednesday in Farmington Hills Branch Library, on 12 Mile, east of Farmington Road.

The concert features two Musicale members, pianist Ann Turoos and soprano May Arvo.

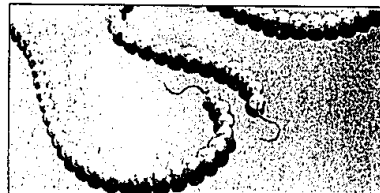
Arvo will sing the title song along with Victor Herbert and Jerome Kern

love songs accompanied by Eleanor Peets in the first half of the program.

During the second half, Turoos will perform original compositions. The program will conclude with a medley of "Wonderbar," "Begin the Beguine" and "What Is This Thing Called Love."

The concert is free. Those wishing baby-sitting services should call Florence Kaston, 476-0100.

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