

Clarenceville latch-key in the works

By Marie Chastney
and Tom Henderson
staff writers

A YMCA-run latch-key program will begin about

Nov. 1 in the Clarenceville School District. The before- and after-school program will be at Boltsford and Grandview elementary schools.

The "Schools-out" program will operate 7-9 a.m. and 3-6:30 p.m.

The district, which includes parts of Livonia, Farmington Hills and

Redford Township, sent out a newsletter two weeks ago asking parents if they would be willing to pay for such a program.

Just 21 responses were returned before the board of education meeting last Thursday, but 15 of the letter-writers said they would be willing to pay for the program. Four others said they would be

willing to pay when their children are old enough, Superintendent Mike Shulher said.

"Given the short time they had to respond, we were pleased," Shulher said. "We expect to have between 10 and 15 students in the program in each building."

THE PROGRAM would need 10 children in

each school to be financially solvent, said Shulher. Four of the Livonia YMCA.

The latch-key program will cost \$1.75 an hour for the first child with a maximum of \$3.50 a day.

The second child will be charged \$1.25 an hour, with a maximum of \$4.

Each additional child in a family would be charged \$2 a day.

In September, several

mothers criticized an earlier proposal in which the first child would be charged \$2.50 an hour.

"It's too high. I only

make \$10 an hour," said one mother. "It would be almost half of what I'm making."

Said another: "I don't

think you'll get enough to

make this run."

He's tuning up for Ironman showdown

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Even a birthday present member-
ship from his wife left DeRo-
ven unmotivated. He would go
to the Tampa, once every three
weeks, and just walk around, not
really working out.

"I started for myself," he said,
when he finally started running.
"The fitness craze (in the United
States) was just starting."

"I just wasn't feeling that great
(on the job and in his everyday
life)," DeRo-ven added.

AFTER RUNNING his first quar-
ter of a mile, he said, "I thought I
was going to have a heart attack."

After three weeks, DeRo-ven's
quarter of a mile run was increased
to a full mile and he stopped. Al-
though he was a non-runner, DeRo-
ven started thinking about the
annual Detroit Free Press
marathon.

"I never dreamed why or how
people did it (the marathon)," DeRo-
ven said. He set entering the race in
1980 as a personal goal. And be-
gan to enjoy it (running)."

"I was hooked (on running) after a
few weeks," DeRo-ven said. "I'm
very goals oriented."

Surpassing personal goals and
achievements are an important part
of DeRo-ven's approach to life. As he
put it, "Just let your mind do it (get
into running)."

• RUNNING IS "relaxing and a
relief from stress," DeRo-ven said.
"After a while you just get into a
rhythm."

Individuality and personal tri-
umph are most appealing to DeRo-
ven.

In 1982, DeRo-ven began reading
articles in Sports Illustrated about
the Ironman Triathlon in Hawaii.

"I thought it was a great idea," he
said, and the goal of participating in
the Ironman Triathlon took shape.

"Here's a new challenge," he re-
membered. "I never swam a lap in
my life."

Swimming and bicycling were
both unknown sports to DeRo-ven.
He had to master both before he
could consider the Ironman. "With
running, I had reached a plateau. It
(running) wasn't happening in terms
of competing."

"Triathlon was like starting
all over again."

IN FALL 1982, DeRo-ven started
preparing for his first triathlon the
next summer. He began swimming and
riding the same way he started
running, without any instruction.

In summer 1983, DeRo-ven
entered three Midwestern triathlons.
"It was the most fun I've ever had in
my life," he said. His triathlon
skills, he said, are "completely self-
taught."

"I saw the Ironman on TV,"
DeRo-ven said. "So far, it was out of
my scope. I never thought it would
happen."

For runners, a marathon is the
ultimate goal. In comparison, the
Ironman is the ultimate experience
for triathletes. About 12,000 applica-
tions pour in every year for only
1,250 places, DeRo-ven said.

Different routes to enter the Iron-
man are available.

You can qualify by placing in the
top half of your division or age
group in 60 qualifying triathlons on

the mainland. "That would never
happen to me," DeRo-ven said.

DeRo-ven CHOSE another route.
About 200 places are awarded
through a lottery. Glimmicky or bi-
zarre applications are the usual
ones considered for the lottery, he
said.

One day, DeRo-ven was reading a
money magazine when an ad for a
business called The Fantasy Group
caught his eye. The Scottsdale, Ariz.,
firm arranges the realization of peo-
ple's fantasies — for a price.

A woman walking through a shop-
ping mall with a lion on a leash, or a
mock bank robbery are two exam-
ples of the Fantasy Group's endeavors,
DeRo-ven said.

He contacted the company and
explained that his dream was not a
true fantasy, but desire to partici-
pate in the Ironman.

DeRo-ven was instructed to write
a letter citing his reasons for want-
ing to enter the Ironman. He sent a
10-page, single-spaced, heart-felt
letter with photographs to the Fantasy
Group. He also filled out the
regular lottery application.

His ACCEPTANCE letter arrived
the beginning of May. "I think a
race like this is mostly mental pre-
paration," DeRo-ven said. "You have
to be on top of your mental re-
sources."

DeRo-ven spends about 30 hours a
week in training and maintaining
equipment. A third of the time is
mental preparation, he said.

Every week, DeRo-ven watches tri-
odapes of past Ironman tri-
athlons. And he reads everything
he can get his hands on concerning
the race and triathlon preparation.

DeRo-ven's intense pre-triathlon
training includes running on his
own, coaching by Birmingham
Seaboard High School swimming
coach Dennis Carr and riding 50-
100 miles every Sunday with the
Wolverine Sports Club. He also
spends several hours each week rid-
ing and swimming on his own.

Charlie Blanchard, owner of The
Total Runner in Southfield and a
four-time triathlon master's division
champion, shares his expertise and
enthusiasm with DeRo-ven. Blanchard
has competed in the Ironman twice.

DeRo-ven ESTIMATES that
preparation for and participation in
the Ironman requires a \$10,000 in-
vestment. Last year, he had a cus-
tom bicycle designed and he foots
his traveling expenses.

Taking part in the Ironman will
be one-time opportunity. "My wife
has been really supportive," DeRo-
ven said.

What he calls an extremely in-
tense year will be over Saturday
when DeRo-ven fulfills his "one-time
opportunity" and "walks away with
a \$3.95 T-shirt and a piece of paper
that says I did it."

DeRo-ven enjoys what he calls
"the triathlon cult." He sees many
regular competitors at each tri-
athlon.

One of 15 Michigan triathletes
who will head for Hawaii this week,
DeRo-ven predicts everything will be
alright unless "a shark bites my leg
off" in the swim segment.

The main thrill for DeRo-ven "is
just being able to compete within
myself."

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