

Local is better for senior meals program

By Janice Brunson
staff writer

THE NUTRITION program provided by the Farmington Hills Senior Adult Program may outwardly appear the same, but a recent change in funding by the state Office of Services to the Aging has had significant impact.

For the first time since meals for seniors were launched in Farmington Hills 12 years ago, local managers are operating the food program.

The move ends "responsibility without authority," said Loretta Conway, supervisor of the Farmington Hills Department of Special Services Senior Adult Division. She said local control means a more flexible and responsive program.

Until now, the program has been administered by the Oakland-Livingston Human Service Agency. Following administrative hearings last year in Lansing, the Office of Services to the Aging rescinded an earlier decision and transferred federal funding from the regional level to the local level effective April 4.

The Farmington Hills program received \$55,895 for the remainder of 1988.

Funding at the local level is significant for many reasons, according to Conway.

"This is not just about eating," she said, illustrating the point with a story about an older woman who eats daily at the center because she can no longer tolerate the idea of eating alone in restaurants. More than nutrition is at stake, according to Conway.

"Holistic" is how Mary DiManno described the nutrition service, which she coordinates. "It is one more service in a continuum that takes into consideration the whole person — their mind, body and spirit."



DiManno
It's 'holistic'

Conway
Not just eating

SARAH GRIX, a spritely 86-year-old whose pink sweater matches her cheeks, is a case in point. Sarah has been spending the better part of Monday through Friday at the adult center the past two years, always taking her meals with the same group of friends.

"Congeniality and companionship," she said, are the best part of the meal and the reasons why she eats at the adult center.

In appearance, little about the food program seems to have changed with the switch in funding.

Fanny Hill, a Farmington Hills senior citizen who is employed by the human service agency, still manages nutrition. Her husband, Ken, and countless other seniors work as volunteers.

Mercy Catering still prepares the nutritionally balanced meals, some \$6,000 in 1988 that will be served to both those confined to home and those who attend the adult program at Mercy Center.

Judy Goran, 71, and her husband George, 73, who have been eating at the adult center for two years, say the meals are still "excellent and delicious." Nor do they mind the increase in the suggested contribution by those who are able, from \$1 to \$1.50.

THE REAL change in the program is that of control. Until the change from regional to local control, the human service agency contracted with Mercy Catering to prepare and serve the food. It was an arrangement that left Conway and her staff frustrated.

"There was just no way for feedback," Conway said.

She and her staff, constantly on the premises to oversee operations, were unable to affect change with the caterers because they worked for the regionally based human service agency. Now, Mercy Catering works directly for the Farmington Hills adult program.

"Now, we can get involved with the kitchen and Mercy Catering," Conway said, adding that full responsibility for the program is an enormous challenge she and her staff welcome after years of waiting.

"We are very excited about producing the best end result, the best nutrition for our seniors. We know we have to prove ourselves. We have to do a good job. It will take time to set things up. I just wish we'd had a full year."

Funding for the program is through December 1988.

CONWAY and DiManno maintain that many senior citizens are reluctant to describe their needs. Sharing meals is an ideal way to help identify what is needed and by whom.



Nutrition service volunteers Ina Ellis (left) and Stella Murphy, both from Farmington, help serve up the senior adult program lunch March 28 at Mercy Center.

"We tie our food services into other services. We are in touch with our people and we are aware of needs, whether they be financial, social or nutritional," DiManno said.

Grix, for example, arrives at 10 a.m. five days a week, attending classes in government, music, current events and arts. She always joins the same set of friends for lunch, sitting at Pete's table.

Pete is Pete Palajac, 87. He and Bob Schmidt, 70, Nick Schweickert, 74, and Gene Bartlett, 70, have gathered early for a game of cards.

Shortly before lunch is served, Schmidt and Schweickert excuse themselves. They are helping to serve the meal today.

LOCAL CONTROL of the program also means more flexibility, according to Conway, who said people have had to be turned away in the past because more than expected arrived for lunch.

On this day, there were 33 extras. They were accom-

modated. The city of Farmington Hills had provided temporary additional funding for a one-week period before April 4.

Flexibility also means caterers can now respond to recommendations from people like Gwen and Leonard Satz, who have been attending the adult program for a decade. Leonard is a volunteer for the food service and has watched it grow from 10 meals daily 10 years ago to "way over 100 most days now."

"They ask my opinion about the food, and I'm not bashful about speaking up. It's been pretty good all through the years. You know how it is. We don't all like the same thing."

"But I feel these caterers don't know about the needs of older people. They use way too much sodium (salt). I read labels on the cans and sodium is way up. That's not good for any of us here, what with kidney conditions, heart conditions and high blood pressure."

In addition to Farmington Hills, senior adult centers in Rochester, Southfield, Brighton and Waterford now administer their food programs.



Pat Walny, a nutrition service volunteer driver, loads food into her car for delivery to elderly residents.

business briefs

If you recently opened a shop, captured an award, earned a promotion, are planning a new venture or project, or have information about other business-related happenings — and there's a Farmington-area connection — we'd like to hear from you so we can share your news item with other Observer readers. Send items to: Business Briefs, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River, Farmington 48024.

● DISTRICT MANAGER

John Gardner of Farmington Hills was named district manager of the three new Mervyn's stores opening in Ann Arbor, Taylor and Warren later this year.

Gardner joined John Gardner Mervyn's in 1970. He has held various management positions, including operations manager, store director and manager of store merchandising support for home fashions, housewares and toys. He will be responsible for maintaining Mervyn's merchandising and operational standards.

He has the same responsibilities for Mervyn's eight stores already open in the Detroit and Lansing areas.

● NEW SOUNDSTAGE

Grace & Wild Studios has announced a mid-April debut for its new soundstage in Studio Center. Construction of the largest studio in Michigan and adjacent production support areas is part of Grace & Wild's ongoing expansion of its video production and post-production facility in Farmington Hills.

In making the announcement, Keith Neff, Grace & Wild's vice president and general manager, expressed excitement with the company's soon-to-be expanded capabilities.

"The new stage will give us the ability to package larger projects and better service a wider range of clients."

Final construction is being supervised by Grace & Wild's stage manager, Joe Parise.

"Our focus at this point is to get the stage operative as soon as possible," he said. "I'm interested in creating a safe, workable area that can easily meet the requirements of our clients."

After construction is finished, it will take a few weeks to complete final transformation of Grace &

Wild's new stage into one of the Midwest's largest full-service studios.

The stage is 15,120 square feet with a ceiling height of 50 feet and a grid/catwalk system at 40 feet. Features include a camera pit at the rear of the stage, plus a camera position for a wide-angle shot of up to 32 feet.

Production support areas include a vehicle/set prep area, a storage area, client viewing rooms on two levels, and full dressing rooms with makeup areas and showers, all air-conditioned.

A 45-foot articulating lift and a 14-foot crane will be permanent fixtures on the stage. For video productions, an adjacent control room will be capable of handling single-camera shoots up to multicamera teleconferences.

Trusses with chain motors for custom lighting needs and full lighting packages will be available from Victor Duncan, another tenant in the Studio Center Communications Park.

Grace & Wild Studios is in the Studio Center Communications Park, 23689 Industrial Park Drive.

● HE'S APPOINTED

Mike Solan, president and general manager at WQB/WNRS, Ann Arbor, has appointed Joe Urbel of Farmington as the station's operations manager.

Urbel comes to the station from WRIF-FM, Southfield, where he was assistant program director since 1985.

He also held programming positions at WLLZ-FM, Farmington Hills, and WWWW-FM, Detroit.

● INDUSTRY LEADER

Kenneth Rogers, an automotive aftermarket industry executive based in Farmington, was named 1987 Industry Leader of the Year by the Automotive Service Industry Association.

The Farmington resident, customer relations vice president for Long Island-based Standard Motor Products, is immediate past chairman of the ASIA Board of Directors.

He was honored for "over 35 years of selfless and dedicated service within the automotive aftermarket."

In addition to ASIA activities, he has been active in Automotive Advertisers Council, Automotive Market Research Council, Automotive Organization Team and Automotive Academy.

He has held executive positions with such other aftermarket corporations as Republic Automotive Parts, A.P. Parts, Merit Exhaust-Questor Corp., Champion Spark Plug Co., Mopar and United Delco.

● SHE'S HONORED

Kathy MacLag, a travel counselor at AAA Michigan's Farmington Hills branch, was among the top counselors honored at AAA's annual Travel Ambassadors award ceremony in Southfield.

She was cited for her skill and knowledge in all aspects of travel and for outstanding productivity.

● KEY AGENTS

The Gerald C. Grace Agency in Farmington was named to the Key Agents Club in 1988 by Citizens Insurance Co. It is the third year in which the insurance agency has achieved this honor with Citizens.

"The Key Agents Club is a special honorary group established by Citizens to recognize 'above-average premium combined with outstanding underwriting results by the independent agencies representing us,'" said James Coville, marketing vice president at Howell-based Citizens.

The Gerald C. Grace Agency placed \$125 million in premium with Citizens in 1987 and fulfilled all the other requirements to qualify for the Key Agents Club.

The agency was one of 44 selected from among 600 independent agencies that represent Citizens to receive the honor based on 1987 results.

● HOME IMPROVEMENT

"Homeowners are putting more money into home improvement than ever before. And, if they do it right, it's worth it," said Gerald Kosmetsky, president of Farmington Hills-based Southern Michigan Home Owners Warranty Corp. (HOW).

HOW is the nation's oldest and largest warranty and insurance program.

The Census Bureau estimates that \$91.3 billion was spent on home remodeling last year, up nearly 14 percent from a year earlier. Remodeling Contractor magazine estimates that this year, homeowners will spend another \$90 billion on home improvements.

Today's big winners are the addition of a fireplace or a full bath.

A recent study by Remodeling Contractor estimates that adding a fireplace at an average cost of \$3,350 adds an average \$4,600 to the resale value of a home. That's a profit of 38 percent. Adding a full bath for an average cost of \$8,200 adds an average of \$10,000 or a profit of 22 percent.

Other cost-effective home improvements include remodeling an outdated kitchen, adding a family room, bedroom or central air conditioning, and the addition of energy-saving features, such as insulation, siding or storm windows.

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Thursday, April 7

4 to 8 p.m., Birmingham

Friday, April 8

4 to 8 p.m., Livonia

Jim Curry will assist you with spring/summer suits, blazers and slacks. He will also show you the Hickey-Freeman collection of seasonal fabrics, which can be tailored to your personal specifications.

Pat O'Shea, representative for Johnston & Murphy, will present the latest shoe styles by the name that is famous for quality footwear.



Jacobson's

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Until 6 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday