

Suburban Life

Lorraine McCallah editor/477-5450



Thursday, May 11, 1989 O&E

(F18)

For Mother's Day

Older Women's League asks care to be given to caregivers

Caregiving is an act of love, but with consequences. That's the message in a report released by Older Women's League that will be delivered to members of the U.S. Congress on Mother's Day.

The average woman spends more time caring for her parents than she spends caring for her children, according to "Falling American's Caregivers: A Report on Women Who Care."

"It is a myth that families in Michigan or anywhere are sending their parents or spouses to institutions for care," said Virginia Nicoll, a Farmington resident and president of Michigan OWL.

"Falling American's Caregivers" documents the impact of the complete cycle of caregiving from motherhood to elder care. Using government and private data sources, the report contrasts and compares caring for children and parents. It concludes that elder care will be our nation's crisis in the 1990s and beyond, unless the public and private sectors act quickly."

NICOLLS PREDICTS that thousands of OWL members throughout the nation will be signing Mother's Day cards and sending them, along with copies of the report, to the Na-

tional OWL offices in Washington, D.C. for personal delivery to members of Congress.

The cards, designed by OWL, carry the message "Women who care need care too."

OWL members ask Congress to take action on legislation to make available long-term care services, increase and improve day care and respite care, protect the jobs of employed family caregivers, and improve the working conditions of paid caregivers.

"As a society we place a high moral value on caring for our families at home, but we have yet to translate that moral value into government or private dollars and cents. We have been getting by off the backs of women's unvalued caregiving too long," Nicolls said.

"While providing care can be rewarding, the physical, emotional and financial strains should not be borne by women alone. Caregiving should be shared between men and women; the business community must do more to accommodate caregivers' needs; the federal and state governments must provide greater support," she said.

SOME STATISTICS taken from the report:

• Fully 90 percent of the nation's disabled elderly are being cared for at home.

• The number of caregivers of the elderly has been estimated at 7 million. Three out of four of these caregivers are women.

• Child care costs an average of \$3,000 a year. Nursing home care is averaging \$25,000 a year. Home health care assistance can run from \$50-200 per day.

• About 1.8 million American women make up the "sandwich generation," facing elder care decisions while caring for their children.

• Eighty percent of informal caregivers provide care seven days a week, and one out of every five has been providing that care for five years or more.

• One study indicates that more than 27 million days of unpaid informal care are provided every week by caregivers of the elderly.

• Paid caregivers to the elderly are 80 percent women, disproportionately minorities, have received little or no training, and earn just above the minimum wage.

• Full copies of "Falling America's Caregivers" are available through the Farmington Chapter of OWL. Inquiries are taken by Nicoll, 474-3094.



For Mother's Day, "Women who care need care too," reads the card designed by Older Women's League, which asks the U.S. Congress to support the nation's caregivers.

Groups join to make possible a special afternoon of music

FARMINGTON COMMUNITY Band director Paul Barber called Sunday's concert "A Family Affair." It might well have been called "A Community Affair" for all of the many community groups who joined efforts to make it possible.

The concert, held every spring, was initiated approximately 12 years ago for those who live in the area's nursing homes. The idea is to bring the residents to the concert on a (it is hoped) sunny Sunday afternoon, breaking the mold of taking music or entertainment to them.

"This is always a heartwarming day," said Kay Briggs, a member of

the Farmington Area Arts Commission, which sponsors the concert.

"For many of these people here it is the only time they get out of their rooms and out for an afternoon," she said of the audience filling up Harrison High School's auditorium Sunday.

FARMINGTON PUBLIC Schools furnished the bus transportation, many equipped with electrical contrivances to handle the wheelchairs. Members of Farmington, Farmington Gold, Farmington Hills North and Novi South Kiwanis were the escorts on the buses.

The honored guests for the day

were met and ushered into the school by members of Boy Scout Troop 389, from Nardin Park United Methodist Church.

Once inside the school, guests picked and chose from long tables of party foods for a pre-concert snack prepared by Farmington Community Band members.

OTHERS TAKING part to carry on the tradition of the concert were Pam O'Malley of Farmington Public Schools, David Foelke and Mark Phillips of Harrison High School, Harrison High School Stagecraft and Farmington Jaycees.

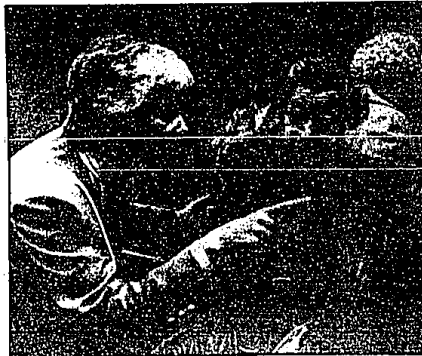
Fern Barber, first clarinetist in

Farmington Community Band, coordinated all of the bus transportation. In addition, civic, business and corporate sponsors helped.

THE CONCERT, designed specifically for those in nursing homes, is part of Farmington Community Band's regular concert season.

The season continues with "Stars in the Park" at 7 p.m. Sunday, June 4, in Heritage Park, when the guest performers will be Farmington Youth Band.

More summer outdoor concerts are scheduled for 8 p.m. Thursday, June 29 and July 27, in Heritage Park.



Farmington Community Band conductor Paul Barber (at left) welcomes guests to the concert programmed for residents in the area's nursing homes. Above Penny Trabbic, vice president of Farmington Community Band, points the way to the sweet table for guest Sarah Khean. Above right, Yovonne Biobin is escorted by the bus by Kiwanian Russell Hunt. At right, Jeff Green escorts Fern Mitchell into the auditorium. Green and Clay Comiskey, holding the door, are both from Boy Scout Troop 389 and helped make things go smoothly during the afternoon.



Staff photos by Brian Toovallan