

Garden party will benefit pregnant, parenting teens

By Loraine McClellan
staff writer

THE GATES TO the gardens on the grounds of the St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center swing open Sunday, June 4 for "La Fete au Jardin," a repeat of last spring's successful fundraiser to help pregnant and parenting teens.

Fare for the garden party comes from 50 of the area's finest restaurants.

Edward Jonna, who supplies wine for the party from Merchant of Vino, calls the event "The largest wine tasting party in the world."

The Jonna family, along with about 100 volunteers, staged the party last spring and will do it again to raise money for counseling and educational services provided by the center for teenage mothers.

The most recent statistics show that 56 out of every 1,000 girls nationally become pregnant between the ages of 15 and 19.

For the young pregnant woman, more often than not, battling overwhelming odds, the center gives prenatal and residential maternity care; offers a residential teen mother and infant program, offers a young mother and infant program in group

homes; and has a child care and nursery school on the grounds for working mothers.

At the base of all of its programs are the St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center staff is dedicated to strengthening family life and family traditions.

AT ANY ONE given time Merrill Hall will house 30 pregnant women who share the same problem. While waiting for their babies their entire families are helped in dealing with an unplanned pregnancy.

And while emotional, educational and medical needs are being met, sound decision-making and planning for the future are emphasized.

Marjorie is one of the center's success stories. Once a frightened and pregnant 15 year old, the poised mother of an eight-year-old son is a cadre of the center's volunteers how the help she received provided her with the wherewithal to move on with her life.

At age 15 Marjorie was a sophomore, an athlete and a cheerleader. She learned about Merrill Hall through Catholic Family Services in Detroit, and much of her success story hinged on the fact that she took advantage of everything that was offered her.

After her son was born Marjorie and her baby continued to live in the

center for a year while she completed high school. Transportation and a tremendous amount of support was given to her at the time, but Marjorie learned you can't go home again.

"There is no just going back and picking up your life," she told her audience. "There was a lot of judging for that mistake I made."

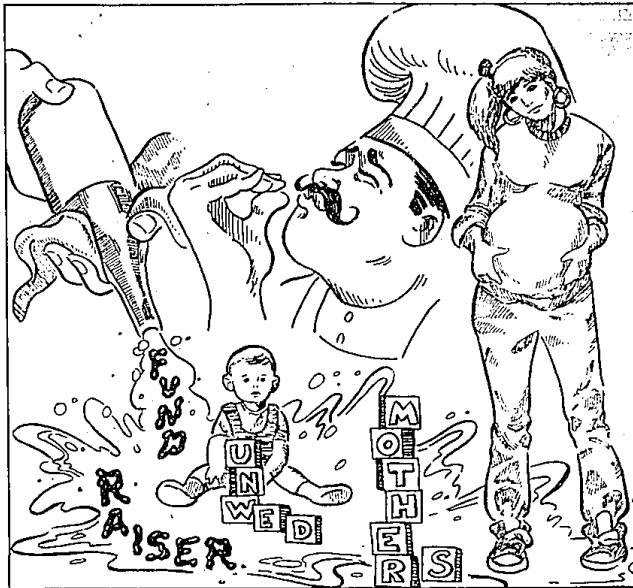
MARJORIE SAID she can still hear the words "you're somebody" that came from the positive help counseling she received.

She stayed at the center until she felt she would not be a burden moving back in with her own family. "And when I left," she said, "I knew what I wanted and I was ready to go after it."

Today she holds a certificate as a para-legal; is employed as a legal assistant and attends college with the goal of becoming an attorney.

Proceeds from the garden party will help the center tell more stories of young women like Marjorie.

The event runs from 2-6 p.m. Tickets are \$75, available by calling Sr. Mary Frances, 616-7521, ext. 260. The St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center, on the corner of 12 Mile Road and Inkster, provides services to children, adolescents and families who are in crisis or in need through its six different programs.



White cane traveler

Mildred Snitz received a new white cane delivered from Westtown Lions Club member Sid Brodie the day before she left on a 30-day visit to Israel. Blind for most of her life, Snitz said she doesn't walk across her living room without her cane and with it, she doesn't hesitate to go anywhere. White canes, as well as Braille watches, are supplied to sight-handicapped persons by Westtown Lions, who meet for lunch every Tuesday in Vladimir's.

French visitors will arrive in July

Diane K. McQuiston is still searching for Farmington and Farmington Hills families who will host a French student in their home this summer. Sixteen young Frenchmen will be arriving here in July.

The teens range in age from 14-19 and come under the sponsorship of Loisirs Culturels A L'Etranger.

Their English ranges from "fair" to

"good," but the thing they have in common is that they are all active in sports.

Dorothy Pfaff, executive director of The Community Center, has volunteered the use of the center for the visitors to meet their host families on the evening of their arrival.

For particulars, call McQuiston at 477-5611.

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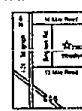
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