

## Au pairs flavor child care scene

If you have a spare bedroom, small children, the need for child care services and a sense of adventure, consider bringing an au pair into your home to help care for your children.

French for "on par" or equal, an au pair is expected to be treated as a member of the family, rather than a maid or nanny.

Au pairs are typically European women (and men) from 18 to 25 who reside with an American host family for a 12-month stay.

For a modest weekly salary, the au pair provides child care services to the family.

In addition, host families pay fees to the sponsoring organization to cover health insurance, air fare and other program-related expenses. Total weekly expenses average between \$160 and \$180.

The Experiment in International Living, a non-profit, Washington, D.C.-based organization, sponsors a legal au pair program called Au-Pair/Homestay USA. The visa issued to these young men and women allows for a 12-month placement with a host family.

**HOT FAMILIES** go through an application and interview process and extensive screening. They must agree to abide by the terms and conditions of the program.

They speak basic English, are non-smokers, have a driving license and have baby-sitting experience. However, they have no formal child care experience.

Most au pairs come to improve their English skills, see something of America and attend some classes. Between 5 and 10 percent of The Experiment's au pairs are male.

The family pays the au pair \$100 per week, provides a two-week paid vacation, one full weekend off per month and 1 1/2 days off during the other weeks.

The family must allow time for study and classes and provide a minimum \$300 tuition subsidy.

**IN RETURN,** The Experiment's au pairs agree to provide up to 45 hours of child care and light housekeeping — bathing, feeding, driving, etc. They must attend periodic meetings.



child care  
**Marcie Walker**

ings with the local community coordinator.

A local community coordinator — one is in Birmingham — helps resolve misunderstandings and any difficulties that may arise.

Placements are scheduled for late January, mid-March, late June, late August, mid-October and mid-November.

While the application deadline for the January group arrival has passed, there is still time to make the Jan. 11 cutoff for the March group.

**THE AMERICAN** Institute for Foreign Study, based in Greenwich, Conn., has two au pair programs.

The Au Pair in America program has terms and fees similar to that of The Experiment.

The AIFS also sponsors the American Family Companion Program, a 12-month program that brings a young American into a host family for up to 55 hours of work per week. The costs of this program are slightly higher.

These organizations may be reached at the following addresses:

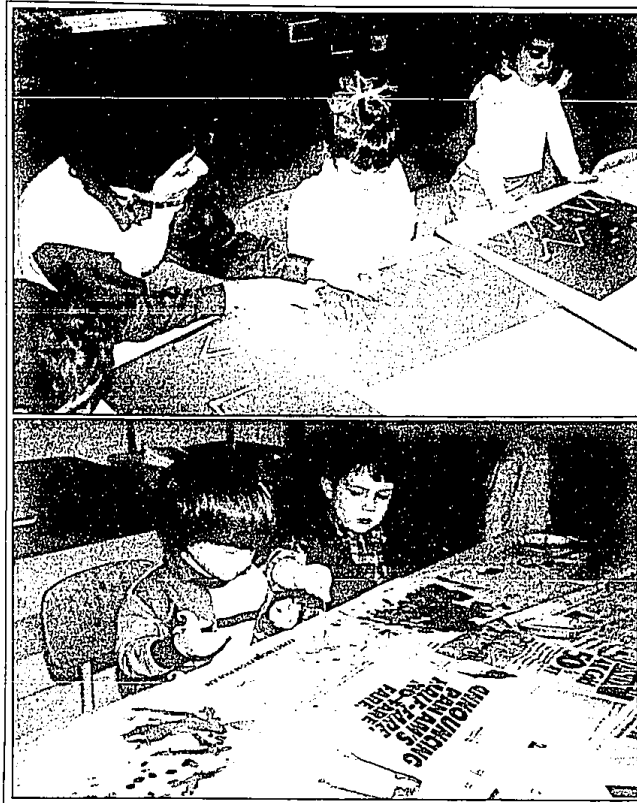
Au Pair/Homestay USA, The Experiment in International Living, Suite 1100, 1411 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005, telephone (202) 628-7134. Au Pair in America, 102 Greenwich Avenue, Greenwich, Conn. 06830, telephone (203) 869-5090.

If you have an au pair story that you would like to share, please write us. Write to Marcie Walker, c/o The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 605 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009.

Marcie Walker is a free-lance writer who has researched the subject of child care in the metro area.

## Teaching through the arts

Teacher Nancy Berger (above left) helps Kristina Raymond with a patterning activity, and (below) Matthew Bizer and Chad Herberer have a session in painting dots. The children are students at Artstart where the program is developmental in nature, is play-based, and the teaching is done through the creative arts with segments in art, music and drama every day. There is one other group offer for 4-year olds where the accent is on science. The preschool, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs for children from 2 1/2 to 7 years take place on two acres of land at 31195 13 Mile Road. Artstart was initiated with a grant from Farmington Arts Council and is the only preschool of its kind.



## Personal Wellness seminars are listed

Madonna College is offering a series of Personal Wellness seminars for the winter term. Each seminar will consist of both lecture and guided small group discussion. Sessions will meet at 7 p.m. Tuesdays in the college on I-96 and Levan, Livonia.

The cost is \$10 per session or \$55 for all six sessions. Pre-registration is required. Instructor will be Sandy Benigna.

Jan. 23: "Putting The Cake Aside"

— Overcoming Compulsive Overeating," tells about physical, nutritional and emotional causes of compulsive overeating.

Jan. 30: "What, Me Worry?" — Spells out the biological, emotional and spiritual basis of emotions and gives practical tips for emerging into peace.

Feb. 13: "Making Anger My Friend." Tips for recognizing the hidden ways anger manifests; letting

it out in non-destructive ways; using anger to improve relationships.

Feb. 27: "Help! I Want To Stop Getting Sick." Tunes in to the physical, emotional and spiritual causes of pain and illness. Practical tips on using nutrition, journals, dreams and visualization as aids to healing.

March 13: "Overcoming Fear And Anxiety." Finding the roots of the most common fears and anxieties. Concrete tools for letting go and ex-

periencing peace.

March 27: "I Forgot Where I Put My Memory." If you are losing track of items or events, you are overloaded — not old. Session gives practical ways to improve memory for names, places, events and items.

For further information or to register by phone with credit card, contact the Continuing Education Department, 591-5188.

## Families Anonymous gets under way

A new Families Anonymous (FA) group will meet at 7:30 p.m. Thursday evenings in Farmington Hills Church of Christ at 35500 11 Mile Road.

Families Anonymous is a self-help group of families of drug abusers and those with behavioral problems. FA was founded in 1971 by a group of Los Angeles families. Families Anonymous is based on the Twelve Step Recovery Program of Alcoholics Anonymous. When a young person is in trouble, the whole family is also in trouble and needs help. The purpose of the group is to help the family, not the drug abuser. Members include parents of chronic truants, run-aways, drug users and social drop-outs of all ages.

Drug abuse is a pervasive problem in today's society disrupting the life of the drug abuser, and devastating and destroying family relationships. The daily stresses of living coupled with family pressures or problems may lead to drug abuse by one or more individuals, as their means of coping. To change or relieve the distressing effects in the family, an exploration of the behavior patterns of

all the family members is necessary.

There are groups meeting in almost every state and several other countries. At meetings, members come to realize that they are not alone. They can learn how families in similar situations have dealt with their present plight.

Members use first names only. Meetings begin with basic FA readings, followed by discussion of a topic

chosen by the leader for the evening. It is a program of a spiritual nature. It is not religious. Anyone who feels that he or she might benefit from an FA meeting is welcome. No prior arrangements are necessary.

Families Anonymous is a non-profit organization which does no solicited outside funding. There are no dues or fees.

## Class offered to diabetics

A series of six diabetes classes begins at 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 18, in Oakland County Health Division's South office, 27725 Greenfield Road, Southfield.

The classes are for adult diabetics and their family members. They are taught by a public health nurse and a registered dietitian. Topics that will

be discussed include the nature of the disease, dietary management, medications and suggestions for coping with everyday problems.

There are no fees charged for these classes. Registration will be accepted until Jan. 16.

To register, call 424-7042.

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