

Be generous

Many ways to show you care

Every year, we make the same plea, but every year it bears repeating: Our neighbors and friends need help.

The year 1992 was a hard, mean one for many Detroit-area residents and, as it draws to a close, many people could use a hand. We encourage you to give generously this holiday season. There are many worthy institutions that could use a little financial help.

Gleaners Community Food Bank, for instance, is continuing its holiday food drive, allowing contributors to earmark their contributions for items ranging from canned goods to juice to peanut butter. Call 923-3535.

Forgotten Harvest seeks support to expand its food program. The Southfield-based agency picks up food from restaurants and wholesalers for distribution to homeless shelters. Money is needed to add a second delivery truck and driver, 557-4483.

Though homelessness, sadly, has faded as a pressing social issue, the homeless still need help. The Salvation Army, Detroit Rescue Mission (993-4700) and Pontiac Rescue Mission are but three area charities that help the homeless.

Coats for Kids and Toys for Tots are two other worthy organizations accepting donations at shopping areas throughout the metropolitan area.

This year, with layoffs both real and looming, we know it's harder than ever to come up with a charitable contribution.

That also means there are more people in need and there are plenty of local agencies that could use your help.

Even if you can't give financially, you can give of your time. In addition to looking for cash contributions, many area agencies are looking for people to drive seniors and disabled individuals to doctor's appointments or shopping centers.

There are other ways to help, too. Many agencies are also looking for old coats, clothing and furniture to give to the less fortunate.

Here's a community-by-community list for Oakland County:

Birmingham/Bloomfield
Christ Church Cranbrook is looking for people to donate clothes to its Clothes Closet. Winter coats, hats and boots are especially appreciated, 644-5210.

All area churches are also participating in the South Oakland Shelter's food bank program. Canned goods can be dropped off at any church throughout the Birmingham/Bloomfield area.

Farmington
Farmington Area Goodfellows are continuing their holiday drive under the motto, "No child or senior citizen without a Christmas." To find out how you can help, call 474-3440.

The Salvation Army office at 27500 Shiaswassee helps people throughout southwestern Oakland County, distributing food, clothing and other essentials, 477-1153.

Rochester
Rochester Clothes Closet provides coats, bedding and other items to needy area residents, 556-0230.
Rochester Neighborhood House provides help

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to needy area residents throughout the year, but especially during the holidays through its food basket program, 651-5836.

Southfield
Southfield Goodfellows are collecting canned goods at various sites throughout Southfield and Lathrup Village, 354-7426.

Salvation Army regional headquarters are also in Southfield, providing services to people throughout the area, 443-5500.

Troy
Troy People Concerned, a clearinghouse and referral agency, prepares food baskets and pays gas bills among other services, 659-9199.

Wayne County residents are encouraged to support these hometown charities:

Canton
The Canton Community Foundation, an umbrella agency for various community charities, is looking for help this holiday season, 451-5427.

Garden City
The area's Needy Family Fund, run through a local church, is looking for support, 525-8930. Garden City Goodfellows are also looking for contributions, 525-8930.

Livonia
Livonia Goodfellows has a special need this year for volunteers, especially those to help screen applications for help, 421-5660.

Livonia Heart Fund, though better known for its summer golf outing, raises contributions all year long, 522-2378.

Plymouth
The Plymouth Salvation Army office is making special pleas for help this holiday season, especially for its Adopt-a-Family Program, 453-5437.

Redford
FISH of Redford is in need of volunteer drivers to spend an hour or two per week to take people shopping or to medical appointments, 722-2830.

Redford Goodfellows depleted its cash reserves a few years back and will have to cut back on its food program this year unless contributors are generous, 937-9347.

Westland
Westland Goodfellows are looking for help with their holiday programs, 467-3185. The Salvation Army Community Center is also looking for donations, 722-3660.

This list is by no means inclusive. There are plenty of other groups that could also use your help.

Remember, there's no price on kindness. Especially at this time of year.

Foodline



Serving: Members of St. Leo's Church in Livonia serve food to the hungry during the holiday season last year. Area charities say the need is still great this year. Take time to fill that need by reading the editorial on the left side of this page and help create some real holiday cheer.

LETTERS

Reform campaigning

In response to Mr. Power's column on Nov. 15, in principle, I don't like term limitations. But I voted for them this past election as a means to an end.

A huge problem with our political system is that the current rules for campaign finance cause our elected officials, in general, to be more beholden to deep pocketed special interest groups and political action committees instead of the people who live or do business in their district. Many of these lobbyists represent powerful multinational corporations whose only interest is the corporate bottom line.

The rules must change. Most individuals can't possibly schmooze and woo politicians the way cronies for wealthy special interests can. Campaign finance reform has been debated for years. It's obvious the recipients (politicians) of those perks aren't going to bite the hand that feeds them year after year.

People who know they won't be in office forever would be more inclined to pass campaign finance reform legislation. No offense to those who are in office and trying.

I'll spend the next few years urging my newly elected representatives to pass comprehensive campaign finance reform. I hope others do the same.

Once passed, I'll be the first one to work on receding term limitations so that all choices for the best representation of the people are available.

Scott Heinzman, Livonia

Opinions are to be shared: We welcome your ideas, as do your neighbors. That's why we offer this space on a weekly basis for opinions in your own words. We will help by editing for clarity. To assure authenticity, we ask that you sign your letter and provide a contact telephone number. Letters should be mailed to: Editor, The Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336.

Test marks revolution in '94

A time bomb is ticking in every high school in Michigan. It will explode in May 1994.

That's when graduating high school seniors won't get a state-endorsed diploma unless they show "mastery" in the reading portion and score 50 percent or better on the math and science parts of the Michigan Education Assessment Program test.

It will start the biggest revolution in Michigan education in this century. The squealing will be wondrous to hear.

Why? For years a Michigan high school diploma has had no more meaning than a 12-year attendance certificate. It signified no academic achievement, no job readiness — not even the ability to read and write.

But beginning with the high school class of 1994, those kids who don't score well enough on their MEAP exam will not get their diploma endorsed by the state. And that, presumably, will have a real impact on employers interviewing for jobs or colleges looking at admissions applications.

Motivated readers of this column might find it interesting to call their local school and ask what percent of kids taking the MEAP test locally last fall scored above the 50 percent cutoff. I can assure you the figure is nowhere near 100 percent.

Readers might even wish to inquire of their local schools what they are doing to make sure their students understand just how important MEAP results are going to become by 1994 and how they propose to prepare students for success in taking the test.

For the squealers, the first move will be to attack the MEAP test itself.

As any parent of a kid in school knows, MEAP tests in reading and math are administered in fourth, seventh and 10th grades; those in science, in the fifth, eighth and 11th grades.

These tests measure children against an absolute standard of knowledge (the educationness is "criterion referenced") rather than simply showing how students did in comparison with each other ("norm referenced").

MEAP has been around for a long while and has been used by other states as a model for their own testing. It was originally sold to the school community as a way to diagnose prob-



Philip Power

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lems with teaching and course structure by showing how kids performed in various districts.

However, now that the Legislature has written an arbitrary 50 percent cutoff into the law, MEAP assumes big time importance.

I wouldn't be surprised to see somebody sue over MEAP results in 1994. Courts in other states have held that the key issue is "have students had the chance to learn what is being tested?" I wouldn't be surprised if the suit won.

A parent in Detroit, for example, might be able to argue convincingly the answer was "no."

Watch out now! Do not conclude, because the specific MEAP test may be vulnerable to a legal challenge, that any test is wrong, biased or unfair. If MEAP proves vulnerable, the thing to do is to fix MEAP, not quit testing.

America is unique among advanced countries in stubbornly refusing to assess the learning performance of its high school students. If we conclude that testing achievement is inherently unfair or biased, we will condemn our children to uncompetitive careers and a sliding standard of living.

I wouldn't want to bequeath that to my son.

Phil Power is chairman of the company that owns this newspaper. His voice mail telephone number is 313-953-2047, Ext. 1880.

COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION:

If you saw a penny on the sidewalk, would you bend over to pick it up?



'Yes. Otherwise it'd be bad luck.'
Judy Saarni
Dearborn



'Yes. I have three children and we need all the money we can find.'
Sara Kelmenson
West Bloomfield



'Of course. It's good luck. You put it in your shoe.'
Janet Basford
Farmington Hills



'Yes. A penny saved is a penny earned.'
Pogy Kozsa
Livonia

The Farmington Observer

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