

# COMMUNITY LIFE

## Charter schools offer new options

By ELEANORE BLUM  
SPECIAL WRITER

Charter schools and the controversy surrounding them are being discussed widely throughout our state. I wanted to find out exactly what is a charter school.

With the passage of Public Act 362, charter schools were born in Michigan. They are one of the cornerstones of Gov. John Engler's educational policy reforms. In his October 1993 Education Address to a Joint Session of the Legislature he stated, "We are bound only by the limits of our creativity. Charter schools could literally redefine educational opportunity in Michigan."

Focusing on a particular area of study such as science, math or journalism may be one direction that a charter school wants to travel. The advantage, as I see it, is that this new look at education allows for a great deal of creativity and innovation in teaching. The schools are smaller with a very specific goal and have greater freedom to try new ways of educating young people.

From Dr. Daniel E. Schooley, chief deputy director, governor's office for charter schools, I learned that there are several ways for a charter school to come into being:

1. The board of a school district can facilitate. However, the charter school must operate within the school district's boundaries.
2. An intermediate school board can facilitate. The school needs to operate within the intermediate school district's boundaries.
3. The board of a community college can facilitate. It may not grant a contract for more than one public school academy and the school must operate within the boundaries of the community college district.
4. The governing board of a state public university can issue contracts statewide. The charter school can be located anywhere in the state.

If a school is chartered by a college or university, students could attend from all over the state and teachers would not have to come from that university. Teaching staff could be chosen from all educators who wish to work for that charter school and staff would not be affiliated with a particular union or teacher's association.

See SCHOOLS, 15A

## 'Tis the season for holiday cards

While stores and malls have begun to deck the halls for the holiday season, local charities are showing their spirit with cards and gifts that help raise much-needed funds for research and services.

November is here. Time to shift gears and get ready for the biggest family time of the year.

And as you begin to deck the halls and shop the malls, remember to take the time and send your season's best wishes with cards that benefit a variety of local charities.

By buying the cards, you can make life a little brighter for youngsters cared for by agencies like the Christ Child Society, Methodist Children's Home Society and Angel Place to name a few, organizations that help animals like the Michigan Humane Society and Michigan Animal Rescue League, and groups that train canines to help the blind - Leader Dogs for the Blind - and the physically challenged - Paws With a Cause.

The cards cover a variety of styles from traditional religious depictions to stylized drawings and caricatures, depicting the Christmas season, and several groups like the Alzheimer's Association also have a selection of cards for Hanukkah.

There are several ways to find the holiday card that's perfect for you.

Once again The Community House and The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers are co-sponsoring the Holiday Card Display and Sale Day 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 8, at The Community House.

See CARDS, 15A



Reaching out: This card from the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation International offers a happy holiday season message. A box of \$25 is \$17.50.

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