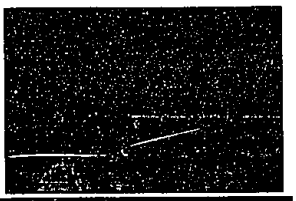

ELIZABETH MCCULLOUGH

This column contains 'all natural' information

We are constantly bombarded by ads for "natural" products: a soft drink removes its dyes to appear more "pure," food labels proudly proclaim that they contain "all natural ingredients," and now health food stores carry herbs billed as a "natural high."

Advertisers have misled the public to believe that "natural" products must be healthy. But is natural necessarily safe?

All "natural" means is that a product is made from ingredients found in nature, but this says nothing about whether these ingredients are safe to ingest. None of us would eat every wild mushroom, leaf and berry we find in the woods. (If we did, there would be a lot of poison control calls) So why is it so easy to convince us that the word "natural" somehow means "good for us?"

The newspaper recently reported on teenagers who tried to get high with jimsonweed seeds, believing that they could get a "safe, natural high." Cocaine, marijuana and mescaline also are made from plants, yet we are all aware of their health

See MCCULLOUGH, 12A

A shop worth discovering

Every sale cashes in for cancer research

BY MARY RODRIQUE
STAFF WRITER

SHARON LEMIEUX/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Group portrait: *Discovery Shop volunteers (in frame) include Lenore Foster, Nila Alberts, Delores Mazurek, Bev Madden, Beulah Gray; (out of frame) Pat Firu, Ina Mae Wilcox and Sandy Fraze.*

The Discovery Shop in the downtown Farmington Center currently features a red and white Valentine's Day window display that helps it blend in with its retail neighbors.

What makes it stand out is twofold. It's an upscale retail shop featuring a revolving inventory of designer clothes and unsold merchandise from malls ranging from Somerset in Troy to Twelve Oaks in Novi. And every penny of revenue generated by the all volunteer operation benefits the American Cancer Society.

"We took in $90,000 last year," said Beulah Gray, who has worked in the store every Wednesday afternoon since it opened on Jan. 28, 1992. The store is currently celebrating its fourth anniversary with a sale, going on now through Feb. 3.

One of five Discovery Shops in the state and the only one in Oakland County, the Farmington store takes in the most money in Michigan. There are 200 Discovery Shops across the U.S.; the Beverly Hills, California shop leads in revenue. It took in $300,000 last year.

"Staff have come from Grand Rapids and Lansing to see how we run our operation," said Gray.

Although it stocks primarily womens clothing, from suits to jeans, sweaters to coats and shoes, there is some men's and some children's clothing as well as housewares, books, small furniture and collectibles.

"You don't think of it as a resale shop," said Gray, who became involved after reading an article about it in the Observer.

"They were looking for volunteers."

Gray has had a family member touched by cancer.

"In 1985, my daughter, who was 32 years old with an 18-month-old baby and living in Grand Rapids, felt a lump in her breast," she said. "Two doctors thought it was a plugged milk duct caused by breast feeding."

Gray encouraged her daughter, Carol Ann Cranston, to see a cancer specialist at William Beaumont Hospital. Her lump was cancer and a mastectomy was followed by a grueling regimen of chemotherapy at the M.D. Anderson Tumor Clinic in Houston, Texas. The North Farmington High School graduate went from a 30 percent chance of survival rating to being cancer free today.

"She began a support group in Grand Rapids for other breast cancer survivors," said Gray. "Today

See DISCOVERY, 12A

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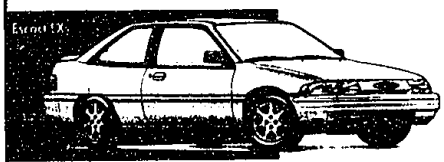

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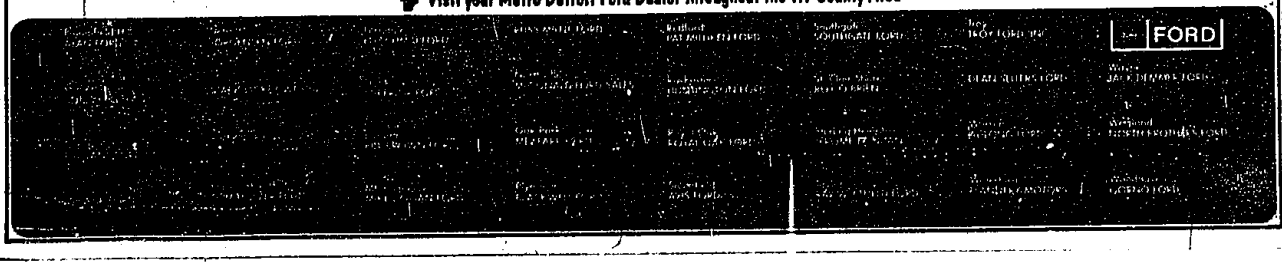
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