

March of Dimes strides at recruiting corporations

By TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

The bottom line mission at the March of Dimes South-eastern Michigan Chapter in Southfield is to improve the health of babies and eliminate birth defects. Bottom lines usually mean something else as far as metropolitan Detroit corporations are concerned.

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*Maria Dell'Isola
March of Dimes*

But that isn't stopping the two entities from teaming up for WalkAmerica, the March of Dimes annual fund-raising event slated for April 27-28 throughout the region.

According to March of Dimes' Maria Dell'Isola, in charge of corporate recruiting for WalkAmerica, and a Troy resident, there are mutual benefits for aggressively going after businesses.

"The reason we go after corporations to get them involved," said Dell'Isola, during the recent kickoff reception at the Fox Theatre, "is because so many people are in the work force and we need to reach out to them in the office and tell them. . . about the importance of their support for WalkAmerica. We're able to walk in the doors of a thousand companies."

When it's time to call on the corporations, they often are more than receptive: A different kind of bottom line — helping the community — might be the reason.

"It's a big trend with corporations today that volunteering for community events is really important," said Kmart Corp. Community affairs manager Leslie Kota. "And that's what really shines with WalkAmerica."

Concurring was Patricia Murphy, who manages the Farmington Hills-based branch claims office of Farmers Insurance, among national teams supporting WalkAmerica.

"We are from the community," Murphy said. "All of us live in the area and work in the area. It's

just part of being a responsible citizen."

Virtually all employees who work out of the three metropolitan Detroit branch centers (two in Farmington Hills, one in Southfield) will participate "in some way, shape or form" for this year's two-day walk, Murphy said.

Philosophy pays off

But nobody has been bullied into doing it — nor promised bonus money if they do.

"I suppose it's just a philosophy of our company," Murphy said. "It comes down to management."

Farmers Insurance raised about \$650,000 for last year's WalkAmerica.

But even more impressive was Troy-based Kmart Corp., which last year collected \$1.5 million and has been the top national retail sponsor of WalkAmerica since 1993.

According to Kota, the decision to become a top corporate backer of WalkAmerica was easy to make.

"We agreed it fit nicely with our focus — children, families and programs that benefit them," Kota said. "And we already had a group of thousands of volunteers who backed the program."

Kota said Kmart, since 1985, has reigned as the nation's largest money-making WalkAmer-



SHARON LEMMON/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

If the shoe fits: Jane Stachurski, personal manager at the Kmart store on Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills, proudly displays paper sneakers customers can buy for \$1 to benefit March of Dimes WalkAmerica. The Kmart Corp., which has stores throughout Oakland and Wayne counties, again is the top national retail sponsor for the event.

ica team, with nearly \$1 million raised in each of the past 11 years.

In fact, Kmart employees will comprise about 500 of 4,000 expected WalkAmerica participants at the Troy site alone, with "a strong presence" at the Farmington Hills and Auburn Hills locations. Leading the Troy Kmart team will be model Kathy Ireland and Kmart chairman Floyd Hall.

The corporation's support of the March of Dimes isn't limited to headquarters, either.

At Kmart's 2,200 stores nationwide, including many in Oakland and Wayne counties, customers can sign up to walk, pledge — or even purchase a paper sneaker for \$1, with proceeds earmarked for the cause.

Although community pride is a leading reason the corporate world rushes to back WalkAmerica, it's not the only one.

Bottom-line benefits

"Unhealthy babies cost a lot of money," said the March of Dimes

Dell'Isola, noting that employers and employees pay about \$5.6 billion dollars a year in health care costs associated with premature deliveries and care for sick babies. "We all would like to see babies born healthy."

Concurring was Kmart's Kota. "It's obviously important. Health care is an important issue for all businesses today. . . It's one we don't ignore."

With that in mind, March of Dimes has a program called "Babies & You," which features

workplace seminars and informational materials dealing with prenatal care and health tips for adults.

"It's to educate men and women about the things they can do to have healthier babies," Dell'Isola said. "And we know that healthier adults have healthier babies. Companies can actually see bottom-line benefits by doing some health promotion in the work site."

For more information about WalkAmerica, call 810-423-3200.

Farmington Public Safety awards officers, citizens

Officers and citizens alike were honored at the Farmington Public Safety Department's annual awards ceremony in City Council chambers April 2.

Those receiving awards included: Officers Matt Krumbach and Richard Hennessy received Life Saving awards for their response in a medical emergency involving a 87-year-old woman at Chatham Hills Apartments Jan. 15.

Hennessy and Krumbach started CPR and emergency breathing respectively when they arrived to find the woman had no life signs. They continued life support measures and assisted the ambulance staff enroute to the hospital.

Officer Anthony Gubacz received a Department Citation for his role that led to the arrest of three teenage males involved in an armed robbery at Lono Star Restaurant Nov. 28. Gubacz, who has since retired, heard a radio dispatch and took up a position on Orchard Lake Road.

With little information, Gubacz saw a Ford Explorer and followed the vehicle. When he

pulled along side, one of the passengers tried to hide his face. He then heard on the radio that the vehicle matched one used in the robbery. He called for assistance and pulled away.

A chase ensued involving Farmington, Farmington Hills and Livonia police reaching speeds of 85-miles an hour. The suspects abandoned the vehicle and were apprehended after fleeing on foot.

Gubacz recovered the vehicle in which two semi-automatic guns were found.

Officer Terry Purves received a Director's Commendation award for his enforcement of drunken driving laws. Purves conducted 87 drunk driving arrests, which accounted 27 percent of the department's total operating under the influence arrests.

Purves has been involved in Teaching, Helping, Involving, Noticing, Kids (THINK) program and has been influence on younger officers through the Field Training Officer program. Oakland County Mothers Against Drunk Drivers has honored Purves four times through its Life Savers Program. He re-

ceived a certificate of appreciation from the state MADD chapter this year.

Officer James Madigan was honored with a Department Citation for his role in rescuing a 72-year-old woman who had fallen into a four-foot deep window well at a Robinwood Street residence July 8.

Madigan responded after Bryan Campbell, who was 12 at the time, heard cries for help, found the woman and called police. Campbell received a Civilian Citation for his persistence in finding the woman, who had been stranded for four hours.

Madigan, with the help of an ambulance crew, used a rescue rope to pull the woman from the well.

Business owner Dennis Nagy received a Civilian Citation for extinguishing a vehicle fire outside Cratique Craft and Antique Mall June 30. Nagy saw the fire from inside the mall and ran out with an extinguisher and put out an engine fire in the 1988 Ford Aerostar, preventing significant property loss.



SHARON LEMMON/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Having her ear: Officer Chris Guinan talks with students Jaron Betts and Karinne Chatman between classes at Farmington High School.

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Safety Director Gary Goss said. "She has a reputation of being tenacious. She is certainly an asset to the department. . . When she gets ahold of something, she doesn't want to let go of it."

However, Guinan belies the image of a hard-driving, tenacious officer. She is petite at 5-foot-2 and rather soft-spoken. Students find her approachable at Farmington High where she works as the school liaison officer and as a cheerleading coach. She's been able to counsel students on date rape and other issues facing teens.

She was able to solve a recently string of burglaries on the buzz going around school. In those situations, being a woman helps, she said.

"People don't look at you as you're being tough," she said. "I think it better helps relate to the kids."

APRIL 15 IN STORE

fashion, faces and dates to note

SHARON MEYER JEWELRY COLLECTION SHOW

Friday, April 26
Noon to 7 pm
Fine Jewelry Salon

Meet designer Sharon Meyer and select from a collection of beaded pieces with shimmering 14k yellow gold and sterling silver accents.

HALCYON DAYS PRESENTATION

Monday, April 29
11 am to 4 pm
Fine Jewelry Salon

INTRODUCING LEYLA MITRA HOSIERY
Luxurious beauty and durability...all you've been waiting for.

SOUTH OF THE BORDER

A celebration of the style and taste of Mexico and our own Southwest. Food and home decorative items are featured.

NAME OUR SHEEP DOG

Children's Shop
Stop in and offer a name for our adorable 18" stuffed sheep dog and you'll be registered to win one of your very own.

APRIL IS SWIM MONTH

Register at Jacobson's by Saturday, April 27 to win a travel gift certificate worth \$1800. Drawing to be held Wednesday, May 1. Complete rules and regulations available at Jacobson's.

JACOBSON'S CHINA BONUS

Enjoy an extra helping from Jacobson's with your Fine China purchase. Another place setting, or a serving piece is your gift when you purchase 11 or 8 complete place settings. Choose from our extensive collections of fine and casual china patterns. Available through June 30, 1996.

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