

## CHAT ROOM



Eleanor Blum

### Educational alternative works at Maxey

Imagine living in a room the size of a small closet with only the barest of essentials. At night, your door is locked and you have restricted access to the outside world. Where does this take place? In the maximum security area at the Maxey Training School near Ann Arbor.

This is but one picture that remains in my mind after visiting the facility last summer. Another brighter one is the young man to whom the room was home, sharing with me his pleasure in having been accepted as a student at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

With help from Donna Whitehead, educational director, he had a chance to make a new life for himself. Life was looking promising and he had a beautiful smile as we spoke. In a few weeks, he would be released to begin his journey to success.

As a member of the special education advisory committee, I have learned from Craig Sparks, of the Family Independence Agency, about the need for this type of educational alternative.

There are several youths from Farmington at the Maxey Center. They are involved with the business of rehabilitating their young lives. Because of their ages, their names

Please see CHAT ROOM, B2

After seeing her two children off to the bus by 7:45 most mornings and pouring a second cup of coffee, she switches on her lamp and reads the paper. While this ritual is likely replicated countless times over in many Farmington households, Megan's situation is decidedly different.

The lamp she switches on is her lifeline, nearly as essential to her as air and water. Megan (not her real name) suffers a depressive illness called seasonal affective disorder, known as SAD. The lamp she uses is a specialized lighting unit which may alter the flow of chemicals in her brain.

"I think I have always felt more depressed as the fall set in," she admits. A 32-year-old native Michigander, Megan blames the disorder for the loss of her job two years ago.

"My kids were four and six at the time. I could barely get out of bed in the morning. I had a great daycare situation, but by October, my job was on the line because I missed so much time."

For more years than she can remember, Megan recounts feeling profoundly fatigued, even lethargic as days grew shorter each fall. Her quality of sleep at night was poor. She lost her ability to concentrate, and every task related to caring for her children became overwhelming. She describes crying all the time and says she became pessimistic and negative. After numerous visits to her physician, a psychiatrist was recommended.

"I tried several antidepressant medications, and though they worked to some extent, I was still very fragile. I tried holistic remedies, but nothing made me feel better. I just wanted to give up, and I began to have suicidal thoughts. One doctor wanted me to go through electroshock therapy, but I said no way."

In September, 1997, Megan's psychiatrist recommended light therapy via a specialized lamp. The results are nothing

## LIGHT THERAPY



ILLUSTRATION BY STAFF ARTIST

### DOCTORS USE HIGH INTENSITY LIGHTING TO DISPEL THE WINTER BLUES

BY KATHLEEN O'DONOHUE, SPECIAL WRITER

ing short of phenomenal.

"I try to get 30 minutes (light exposure) in each morning, and sometimes, if I have a chance, I'll sit with the lamp in the evening. It has turned my life around. I have more energy, and I feel rested. I lost some of the extra 20 pounds I carried the last several years. My mood is much better, I feel hopeful."

According to Dr. Cecelia Astorga, a Bingham Farms psychiatrist, seasonal affective disorder is not new. It affects those who live in geographic areas where winters are long and dark. It is a true clinical depression, with one significant feature distinguishing it from other types of major depressive disorders: "There is a temporal relationship

between the onset of symptoms and the season it occurs. There must be documentation regarding occurrence every season at that time."

Astorga describes one of her patients, a 60-year-old woman with a longstanding history of clinical depression. The doctor noticed marked improvement in the patient's clinical status whenever she returned from visiting family in Arizona.

"My prescription to her is to spend the fall and winter in Arizona with her family. When she returns to Michigan in spring, there will be more sunlight."

"This has changed the patient's life. This woman, once so severely depressed she couldn't get out of bed each day, now functions normally."

Obviously all SAD sufferers cannot move to a sunnier region. For them, light therapy, also called "phototherapy" is one option. Astorga explains that the lamp attempts "to simulate the intensity of light outside. Indoor light is not intense enough."

Several dozen companies in North America offer lighting units for SAD. Northern Light Technologies, of Montreal, Canada, provides a desk-type lamp unit for under \$250 dubbed the "Satellite." It provides 10,000 Lux (a unit which measures light intensity) compared to indoor light which ranges from 200 to 700 Lux. On a sunny day outdoor light levels may range from 2,000 to over 10,000 Lux. Side effects that may occur with phototherapy include headaches, eye irritation or sunburn.

By gradually increasing lamp use, these problems can be minimized. Broad spectrum bulbs which fit into any incandescent light fixture are also available through some companies. While expensive, these bulbs last several years.

Some practitioners believe as many as 90 percent of patients who use phototherapy will be successful in decreasing depressive symptoms. Studies estimate that SAD has a higher incidence the further north from the equator one is. In Florida, less than 1 percent of the population has SAD, while in Alaska as many as 10 percent may suffer winter blues. The majority of sufferers, as many as 75 percent, are women.

How does light therapy work? For a prescribed amount of time each day, the SAD sufferer sits in front of the lamp, allowing light to enter the eyes.

"In depression," Astorga says, "there is a lack of neurotransmitter, specifically serotonin, in the brain. The light, after entering the eye, undergoes a process whereby certain receptors are stimulated to produce more serotonin."

According to Astorga, "Suicide rates are high in Scandinavian countries, Please see LIGHT THERAPY, B2

## Bavarian Village

### PRE-SEASON GOLF SALE

Get ready to golf now & save! You know the brands, but know the quality. \$2,500 worth of Bavarian Village!

**Callaway**  
BIG BERTHA  
BIGGEST BIG BERTHA DRIVER

**Armour**  
X-12 IRONS  
\$599

**Spalding**  
Power Mallet  
\$9.99

**FootJoy**  
DryJoy  
\$119

**First Flight**  
BY PALMER  
\$39

**Nicklaus**  
AIR BEAR TI WAPOR  
\$199

**Callaway**  
BIG BERTHA X-12  
Irons • Armour 845 Titanium Irons  
Nicklaus Air Bear Beta Titanium Woods, Pro Carbon & M' Irons  
TaylorMade Burner LCG Irons • Adams Title Uti Irons

**A TREMENDOUS SELECTION OF GOLF BAGS \$49.99**  
Nylon • Canvas • Leather • Vinyl • Polyester • Micro • Cordura • More!

**TRANDERSTOCK IRONS \$499**  
LOW CARBON

**TOP-FLITE \$15.99**  
XL 18 Ball Pack

**COBRA II IRONS \$499**  
2-PW \$219.99

## Bavarian Village

### INTERNATIONAL SKI & GOLF

NOV 1 meetings at 9 • 3001 TOWN CENTER & OFF 104 on Hwy 10 • 348-347-3313 • BLOOMFIELD HILLS 3340 WOODWARD RD at Square Lake Rd • 248-338-0883  
FARMINGTON HILLS 2747 ORCHARD LAKE RD. at 12 Mile • 248-353-5352 • BIRMINGHAM 101 TOWNSEND Center of Point • 248-444-9158  
MT. CLEMENS 3218 S. GRANT ST. 1/2 mile North of 16 Mile Rd. • 810-443-3420 • CROSSE POINTE 18455 MAXX AVE. just North of Skanska • 313-851-4308  
DEARBORN HEIGHTS 2411 FORD RD. 1/2 mile W of Telegraph • 313-541-7000 • CAIN ABBOTT 3334 WASHINGTON West of U.S. 23 • 734-973-9340  
FLINT 2511 MILLER RD. across from Center Valley Mall • 810-732-5566 • EAST LANSING 346 E. SAGINAW at Main • 313-537-9636  
TRAVELERS CITY 107 E. FRONT ST. (Bypass Exit) • 810-941-1999 • GRAND RAPIDS 3013 23rd Street S.E. bet. Brown & Kalamazoo • 616-451-1199

**SATURDAY 10-6 • SUNDAY 12-5 • DAILY 10-9**  
AMERICAN EXPRESS • VISA • MASTERCARD • DISCOVER • DINERS

**THE GREAT MICHIGAN GOLF SHOW**  
at the Pontiac Silverdome

**The Biggest & Best Indoor Consumer Golf Show in the World.**  
**February 27 - March 1, 1998**  
1 Off Admission Coupons Available At Bavarian Village

# REDUCE PAPER CUTS BY 98%

Open fewer envelopes when you consolidate bills with our Home Equity Loan.

**SAVE UP TO \$500 ON YOUR FIRST MONTH'S INTEREST**

Everyone knows the leading cause of paper cuts is opening monthly bills. Let NBD reduce the risk by consolidating your bills with a home equity loan. You'll pay no application fees or closing costs. Your interest may be tax deductible. And NBD will refund your first month's interest, up to \$500. Best of all, fewer envelopes mean fewer paper cuts. Visit any branch. Or apply over the phone, seven days a week: 1-800-CALL-NBD

**NBD**