

BELIEFS Values

Young Life group attracts youths

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As a teenager growing up in Bloomfield Hills, Julie O'Brien couldn't relate to the scriptures and lessons she heard in church.

"Basically I didn't see the applicability of anything in the church; nothing spiritually toward me, my life or people my age," O'Brien explained.

The youth group at Kensington Community Church in Troy offered insight into religion.

"They took the time to spend time with me so I could look at my life and see how the message of Jesus Christ can be relevant to me," said O'Brien, a 1994 graduate of Lahser High School in Bloomfield Hills.

Now, at age 23, O'Brien is taking her feelings as a teenager and using them to help new teenagers' faith in God. She is starting a Young Life branch in the Plymouth and Canton areas.

Young Life is a nationwide, non-denominational Christian organization committed to reaching the adolescent youth of the community with the message of Jesus Christ.

She is hoping to formally begin a group with students at Plymouth Salem and Canton high schools in the spring. Soon, O'Brien explained, groups should pop up in Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills, Walled Lake and Farmington and Farmington Hills.

For now, kids who are interested in Young Life in these cities meet with others in neighboring groups in, for example, Novi and Northville.

The primary goal of Young Life is to connect with kids in a way that's relevant to them and introduce them and walk with them as they learn about Christ and learn about God," said O'Brien, the assistant coach of Plymouth Canton High School's cross country team.

The thing that makes it unique is it ends up being a



STAFF PHOTO BY PAUL HURSEMAN

school thing. It's targeted toward public schools. The way it becomes a school thing is kids are able to experience it with all sorts of their friends who go to church, who don't go to church, kids that are in their biology class, everyone."

O'Brien, the director of Young Life in Plymouth and Canton, has met interested students through networking, other Young Life leaders, spending time at high schools and going to the schools' sporting events.

She encourages kids to visit the Club, a weekly meeting held at members' homes.

"It has a big 'everyone's invited' party time kind of atmosphere. It ends up being a come-one, come all kind of thing."

The kids get together and talk, play games and share in a short message at the end of the meeting.

"It ends up being really fun," she explained.

Joan Noricks, president of the non-profit Canton Community Foundation, said area parents agree and she's pleased that Young Life has come into the township.

"What I'm understanding is that the Novi/Northville group that started two years ago, they've got 80 to 100 kids who are very active. It's not just a denomination kind of thing. It's very focused in helping young people develop their Christian morals and things like that," Noricks explained.

"It's just a nice positive thing. I have not heard anything negative. Some churches may feel threatened with their own respective youth groups. They may be afraid of it but that's not their (Young Life's) intent at all. They're trying to reach out to kids who are not involved ... those who would not go to a church youth group."

Decades-old Club

Young Life is nothing new to the United States. It was started 60 years ago by Jim Rayburn, who is quoted in Young Life literature as saying "Christ is the strongest, grandest, most attractive personality ever to grace the earth. It is a crime to bore anyone with the gospel."

O'Brien said there are several active Young Life branches in the western part of Michigan and in Washtenaw County. She should know. O'Brien got her start as a University of Michigan student volunteering with the Pioneer High School Young Life group in Ann Arbor.

In June 1998, she was hired to gather a team of volunteer leaders and to facilitate the direct ministry with the kids at Plymouth Canton and Salem High Schools.

"To get the ball rolling, a group of teenagers from the area

attended Young Life's summer camp, Castaway Club, in northern Minnesota in the summers of 1997 and 1998. O'Brien's goal is to begin weekly Club meetings by the end of the 1998-1999 school year.

O'Brien, who earned a degree in psychology and economics from U-M in 1998, sees several benefits to joining Young Life. "First of all, it's not like a club where you have mandatory participation. It's not like a club where you pay dues. It's very informal. The benefits are kids have a ton of fun. That's any kind of kids - the athletic ones, the super academic ones, the artsy ones, the popular ones. They all have a great, great time."

Also, kids get to learn about what I think is a vastly important part of life. They get to do that in a non-threatening way and in a way that's relative and applicable to their life. They get

to do that with their friends. That's a huge plus."

It's a two-way street. It's also a plus for the leaders, like O'Brien.

"They (the kids) get to develop a mentor relationship with someone who's older than them and not out-of-touch older than them. That's really neat to see. Those leaders walk with those kids for four years of their high school life and beyond."



YoungLife

Reaches out to teenagers

Young Life is a nationwide, nondenominational Christian organization committed to reaching the adolescent youth of the community with the message of Jesus Christ.

The organization will be reaching out into Plymouth, Canton, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Walled Lake, Birmingham and Bloomfield Hills.

Young Life's activities include weekly club meetings and visits to Young Life Camp.

Julie O'Brien works out of Young Life's Farmington Hills office. For more information about the group, write to the group at P.O. Box 269, Plymouth 48170-0269, or visit the office at 37630 Interchange Drive, Farmington Hills. She can also be reached by calling (248) 477-5001.

Messenger from page B5

Following programs:

■ "Appreciating Shabbat Shira - Poetry, Music and Torah," in honor of the new month of Shevat, taught by community educator Susan Krakoff, will be at 7 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 17, at Borders Books & Music, 30995 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills. The free, drop-in series meets one Sunday each month. Nehama Glogower will discuss "The Humanity of Moses: A View from the Midrash," during the next session, Feb. 21, in honor of the new month of Adar.

■ "The Call of the Prophets," a free, drop-in study session, will be at 8 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 20 in the Beit Midrash at the Laker Education Complex, 2075 Walnut Lake Road, West Bloomfield, facilitated by Rabbi Steven Weiss. Students pair up to read aloud and discuss classical texts and commentaries during these sessions. No knowledge of Hebrew is required. The program is co-sponsored by Eilu v' Eilu and Congregation Shaarey Zedek. The next session will be "Messianism and Jews," at 8 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 27, with Rabbi Leonardo Bitran.

Everyone is welcome to attend regardless of affiliation, background or Jewish study experience. For information call (248) 737-1931.

B'NAI MOSHE

The B'nai Moshe Sisterhood and the Rekindling Shabbat Committee of Congregation B'nai Moshe will host a three-part Lunch 'n Learn series open to the community. The first ses-

sion is Jan. 23, immediately following Shabbat Kiddush. The topic is Parshat Bo, led by Daphna Feldman. Other dates are Feb. 20, "Triggor Vignettes," and March 27, a book review of "As a Driven Leaf" by Milton Steinberg, led by Debra Darvick. Cost is \$6 per session. Reservations are required and baby-sitting is available on request. For more information, call Susan Leibow at (248) 788-7772.

■ On Feb. 1, the second of a three-part learning series for adults will feature the topic, the Tu B'Shevat Seder. The last session on March 8 is "The Rabbi Tells a Story or Two."

All sessions begin at 11:30 a.m. at the synagogue, 9300 Druka, West Bloomfield. Teachers are Rabbi Elliot Pacht and Carol Earl Beris. Cost is \$6 per session. Reservations are required. Call Pearlina Bodzin at (248) 367-1167 for more information.

COMIC MINISTRY

Life's dramas can be laughing matter with Jim Custer and Bob Hosse, a premiere music, comedy and drama team who have entertained together for 20 years at churches, universities and conferences across the nation.

The team will perform at 4 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 24, at Faith Lutheran Church, 37635 Dequindre Road, Troy, north of Big Beaver Road. Tickets are \$10 for gold seating, \$8 for general admission, and \$6 for groups of 10 or more. Call (248) 689-4664 for tickets.

Correction Notice

In our January 14th ad, we advertised No Interest Flagging 'till February 2000.

The correct month listed in the offer and the referenced disclaimers should be January 2000.

We apologize for any confusion or inconvenience this may have caused.



CNN Jan 14

Observer & Eccentric HomeTown JobFair

Laurel Manor in Livonia
Wednesday, March 24, 1999
11:00 a.m. - 7 p.m.



Observer & Eccentric and HomeTown Newspapers Job Fair, September 1998

- ★ "Great Job! Well organized!" - Kohl's Department Store
- ★ "We received 400 resumes; thought it was great." - Employment Connections Personnel
- ★ "Very organized and professional!" - Parisian Department Store
- ★ "The advertising was wonderful, we were very pleased with the turn-out." - Performance Personnel

These are just a few of the positive comments we received following our first Job Fair in September '98. This March, you will have an opportunity to participate in our second, which promises to be even better.

This general job fair is open to all professions and occupations. So, if you wish to add or replace with competent personnel, our Job Fair is the place to be on March 24, 1999.

Commit now! Space is limited—Don't miss this chance to find the help you've been searching for!

To reserve your space, call 734-953-2070.

Your participation is only \$625 and includes:

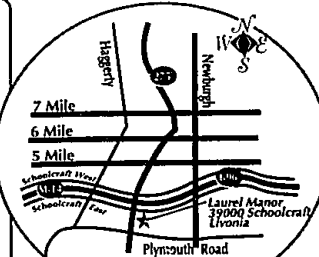
- An 8-foot skirted table and chairs (no booths, please)
- Box lunches for two (2) staffers
- Inclusion in all fair advertising and editorial in

The Observer & Eccentric and HomeTown Newspapers

- Inclusion on our Web Sites promoting the Fair
- A QUARTER PAGE AD IN OUR OFFICIAL JOB FAIR

SUPPLEMENT with distribution to more than 255,000 households

- Radio promotion of the Job Fair
- An excellent opportunity to meet prospective employees



Plan for our next Job Fair on Wednesday, September 22, 1999!