

Involved

John Ginopolis is synonymous with charitable causes

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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John Ginopolis asks himself would he be as involved in charitable causes if his family hadn't endured tragedy of losing a son.

"I'd like to think the answer would be yes," said Ginopolis, whose family's Ginopolis Restaurant sits at 12 Mile and Middlebelt.

Those who know Ginopolis would answer in the affirmative. They speak highly of his tireless work for charities, which includes Children's Hospital of Michigan and CATCH.

The well-connected Ginopolis has helped raised nearly \$2 million through an annual golf outing at Oakland Hills Country Club and a social gathering.

Money raised goes to two endowments, including one named in honor of his 4-year-old son George, who died of a rare blood disease, hemolytic anemia, in 1974.

March of Dimes honored Ginopolis for such philanthropy with its Humanitarian of the Year Award. He was feted along with Mexican Industries President Pam Aguirre, UAW International's Ruben Burke and Walter Watkins Jr. during the Sweetheart Ball at the Dearborn Ritz-Carlton Hotel.

Edsel Ford cited the restaurant's community contributions in presenting the award.

"It's kind of embarrassing,

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John Ginopolis
—restauranteur

really," Ginopolis said while seated in a booth at his restaurant, which is often frequented by sports and local celebrities.

"It's all of the people who've donated to all the different causes I've supported — those are the humanitarians."

The 23rd annual golf outing raised \$275,000 last year, which went to the George Ginopolis Endowment for Hematology/Oncology and the recently formed Ginopolis-Karmanos Pediatric Cancer Research Endowment. Those benefit children, particularly in the area of cancer research.

Ginopolis' "Taste of Excellence" cigar social is 6 p.m. Monday, May 3, at Western Golf and Country Club in Redford. (Tickets are \$150 a person or \$1,500

for a corporate table. Call 313-745-5373 for information.)

"It's a bunch of guys who get together and have some fun," Ginopolis said.

That "bunch" swelled to 300 and has included such guests as Edsel Ford and Chrysler's Bob Lutz. Detroit area diva and chanteuse Karen Nowman will sing the National Anthem at this year's event, which has evolved from an \$8,000 fund-raiser to one that takes in \$150,000.

Instead of reaping credit, Ginopolis dishes it those who contribute generously and quietly.

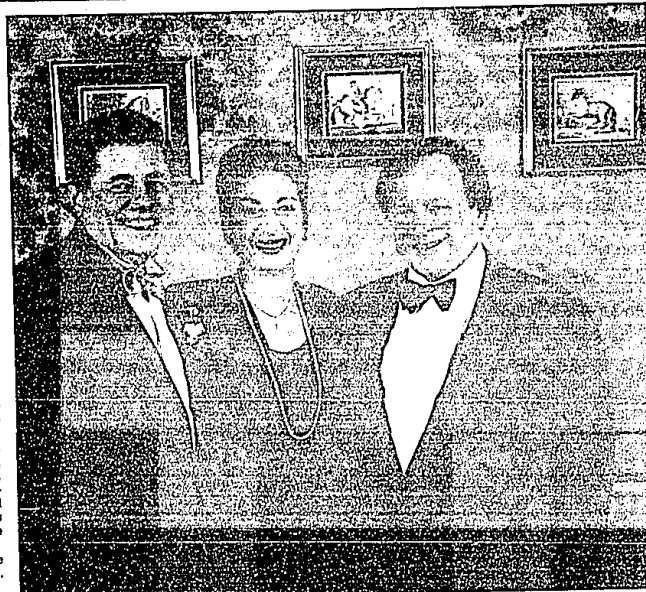
In rapid succession, Ginopolis lists Pat Tuman of P.E.T.S., Peter Karmanos of Computare, the Wine family of Pico Industries, and Peter Ministrelli and Art Maggee off the top of his head. There are more, he assured.

"They've all given without me having to ask," Ginopolis said. "Can you imagine if I asked?"

"They may know what my feelings are for Children's Hospital, and they are friends of mine. They just want to give back to the community, too."

While those have the resources to contribute, people who give their time make a big difference, he said.

"The thing with charities is people don't realize how important they are until you go through something yourself," he said. "You always think it's going to happen to the kid or the



Giving: John Ginopolis poses with his wife, Marion, and Edsel Ford who lauded the restauranteur for his community contributions. March of Dimes honored Ginopolis for such philanthropy with its Humanitarian of the Year Award.

family down the street, but when it happens to you. ...

"If we can prevent some of these childhood diseases, maybe we can prevent tragedies."

He is a board member at Children's Hospital and is on the executive committee of CATCH,

which was started in 1987 by Detroit Tiger Manager Sparky Anderson. CATCH has issued more than \$1 million in grants.

"Sparky called me up and that's how I got involved," said Ginopolis about CATCH, which also helps sick children.

Though he knows celebrities and the well-heeled, Ginopolis dismisses the idea that charitable deeds are done only through the wallet.

"It's not all money; it's donating your time," he said.

C'ville and Livonia schools oppose vouchers, tax credits

BY MARIE CHESTNEY
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One of the last things public school districts want to see is a change in the Michigan Constitution that would let public tax dollars flow into private schools. In an effort to keep that from happening, both the Clarenceville and Livonia school districts recently joined ranks with other Michigan school districts in voicing their opposition to changing the state Constitution.

The boards of education in both districts passed nearly identical resolutions against both publicly funded vouchers and tuition tax credits, funding plans that could take place in Michigan schools if the Michigan Constitution is changed.

If voters in the November 2000 state election lift the constitutional ban against spending public tax dollars on private and parochial education, educators fear the financial consequences would be devastating to public education.

"It's one of the worst things that could happen to public education," said Livonia Public Schools' Superintendent Ken Watson.

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"The ban is there for a reason," said Tom Tattan, superintendent of the Clarenceville School District. "There's a long-standing ban against vouchers in the Constitution. Public funds can't be used to support private schools."

Educators believe the conservative grassroots group "School Choice YES" will wage a petition drive next year to get the questions of a tuition tax credit amendment and a constitutional change on the state ballot.

The amendments have been proposed by the Mackinac Center in Midland.

When petitioners show up on

doorsteps and in neighborhood stores, Livonia's educators want voters to know what the campaign is all about.

"We want to convince people not to sign the petitions so that it doesn't get on the ballot," Watson said. "This will be well-funded and well-organized by groups that support the issue of vouchers."

Too often, Tattan said, people don't understand issues they are asked to endorse. "They think vouchers sound like a good idea. But they don't understand the impact. If you allow public dollars to pay for private education, money will get diverted to private schools and there will be less money for public education."

The bulk of all income Michigan school districts get comes from the state and is based on student enrollment.

If a student takes the money given by the state to a private school down the street, the public school up the street loses an equal amount of money.

By a vote of about 1.3 million to 1 million, residents passed the constitutional amendment banning public money going to non-public schools in 1970.

Proponents of the constitutional change believe families should have a choice where their child goes to school.

They also believe competition will be good for public education, forcing it to excel and be more

accountable.

Vouchers would let parents request that all or part of their child's school funds be transferred to the private school of their choice.

Tuition tax credits are not

vouchers. According to the Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB), they often get mingled together, leading to confusion.

Instead of transferring money to a private school, the state

gives parents a tax break on tuition paid on their income tax. But no matter what it's called, MASB said, "every dollar invested in a voucher scheme is a dollar drained from our public schools."

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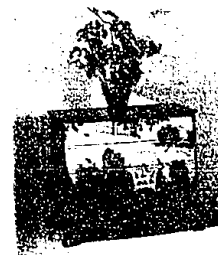
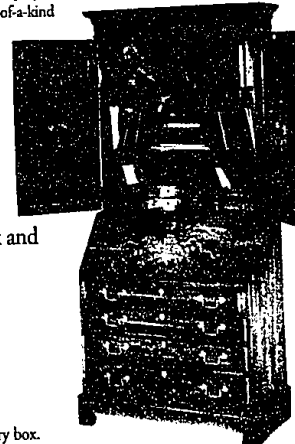
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Tragedy from page A1

said. "... Because of the media, it's as close to us as if we were the neighboring school district."

The horror that unfolded inside Columbine High — anywhere from 15 to 26 students were shot to death by two heavily armed 11th-graders — is sending shock waves throughout districts all across the country, Farmington Public Schools included.

It was an inevitable topic Wednesday across the district. Myers said principals at all buildings were informed Tuesday night to prepare teachers for classroom discussions and counseling sessions. Crisis intervention teams also are in place.

"Things are being done at all the schools," Myers said. "Whether we want it to or not, it's become a major conversation at all of our schools. ... We have to be sensitive to everyone's feelings and emotions."

Among those feelings and emotions is fear.

"There will be students threatened, thinking, 'This could happen here,'" he continued. "... The

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James Myers
—Executive director student services

footage I saw, the kids were the same age, there was fear in their voices. Those (images) conjure up visions that that could happen anywhere."

Myers said people "need to talk about it." After that, work will begin on what can be done to identify "those students who ... may have similar characteristics. We'll also talk with police

agencies."

But he insisted that there is no evidence in the district of students dressing like, or belonging to, the Trench Coat Mafia clique, believed to have been behind the Colorado tragedy.

"I know kids dress so they get attention, so they belong," Myers said. "Part of that belonging may be to look different. We have a variety of styles of dress and makeup."

But the former Farmington High School principal said kids shouldn't be misjudged because of what they wear. "There are so many wonderful, nice kids who may dress a little eccentric."

Myers did say that school officials, in the near future, will be "discussing things that can be done," including how students dress.

"What can we do ... that's appropriate, that still allows freedom of expression and maintains a safe, orderly school where kids can create?"