

CHAT ROOM



MAX ABELMAN

Course gave needed push in confidence

Dale Carnegie is a corporation that is designed to improve a person's self-esteem and his or her ability to speak publicly.

Before I took the teen-adult Carnegie course (in Farmington Hills) I certainly needed help in this area. No one ever encouraged me to speak up or simply participate in my classes.

I had trouble making friends because I feared rejection and ridicule from others. There were many stressors in my life, but moving around the country as a result of my father's job left me feeling alone and isolated and sort of like a failure because I hadn't really been able to sustain any long-term friendships, other than one friend in California. By seventh grade, my self-esteem was really in the Dumpster.

My low self-esteem took a toll on my mother and she became determined to help me. One day, I found myself in the car with her and didn't know where we were going. A few minutes into the trip, she finally told me that we were on our way to the Dale Carnegie teen-adult course. I flipped out and begged her not to make me go. My pleas fell on deaf ears and I walked unwillingly into my first day of the course.

At this point in my life, I had a great fear of new experiences and preferred the safety and comfort of the familiar. The Dale Carnegie course helped me to overcome this fear. The course forced me out of the safety of my shell and taught that new experiences are something to be celebrated, not feared.

Since taking the course, my life has drastically changed. I joined a hockey team and played goalie and ended up working as a skate guard at the ice arena. I started a gaming club at my school and have watched it grow into a major extracurricular activity.

Social impact

The teen-adult course also had an impact on my social life. Quite simply, the course taught me how to make friends. My relationship with my family greatly improved due to the increased level of communication and honest emotional expression.

I have come to firmly believe that the key to relationships is communication. In my life, I strive to make the world a better place by listening deeply to others and by authentically expressing myself.

As I reflect on my decisions for college I see clearly how much I have changed. Whereas before I would have backed away from the idea of going away to school and all the new and unfamiliar experiences it would bring.

But now I delight at the prospect of opening myself up and immersing myself in a new community and with new experiences.

Max Abelman is a senior at Farmington Hills School who previously took the Dale Carnegie Teen-Adult Course.

92-year-old athletes persevere

Top-ranked swimmer leaves OCC program

BY MARY RODRIQUE
STAFF WRITER
mrodrique@oe.homecomm.net

Family, friends, coaches and former students came to Oakland Community College - Orchard Ridge H Building Friday afternoon to honor Jewel Cooke, U.S. Masters Swimmer and multiple world record holder. In a room across the hall from the swimming pool where she has spent countless hours, they sang the praises of a true hero and friend.

At age 92, Cooke is moving on. But she's not hanging up her water wings yet. She's moving in with her daughter in Naperville, Ill., due to declining health.

"I can't wait to get back in the water," she said Friday. "As soon as I do, I know I'll feel better."

Cooke grew up on the shores of Lake Michigan near Chicago "with waves coming up to my house. I had to learn to swim fast. The waves were fast."

She began her competitive swimming career in 1980, after retiring from coaching a swim team in Garden City to 15 city championships. She attributed her success to emphasis on stroke technique and the practice of recruiting only those girls who were competitive in nature.

More motivation

She preferred younger sisters for this reason. They seemed to have more motivation to win than their older siblings, according to Cooke.

"The older sisters sometimes were nicer to work with, but they just didn't get (finish line) first."

After her retirement from coaching in Garden City, Cooke taught swimming at West Bloomfield High School by day and Livonia adult education by night for nearly 20 years, passing on her exquisite stroke technique to her

students.

And she practiced what she preached. Her record with U.S. Master Swimmers includes nine time All-American title holder, three-time All-Star, 24 world records, 47 national records, 33 No. 1 world swims, 70 No. 1 national swims, five national championship meet titles, and Michigan Masters high point winner at the 1996 Long Course Nationals held in Ann Arbor.

Fellow swimmer Mary Williams recalls that Jewel didn't like competing out of state.

"But we snuck in a few competitions in Ohio by diverting her attention as we drove over the state line," she chuckled.

Cooke, still svelte and articulate, swam for the South Oakland Seals. Her record performances consistently contributed to their 12-year state-championship-winning streak. She was included in the Michigan Masters Swimmers of the Century team, a list compiled in 2000 from a study of USMS national, state and world record statistics.

Mary Williams recalls visiting Jewel in the hospital recently, on the mend after a flair-up with a burstitis condition that has kept her out of the water the past several weeks.

"She was already weight training," recalled Williams. "She had weights stashed under her hospital bed."

That can-do attitude is typical of Cooke. Last year, she had hip-replacement surgery. She returned to swim practice and deep-water running exercises just a few weeks after the surgery. Subsequently she broke three world records and five national records.

Skip Thompson, South Oakland Seals coach, recalled how awestruck he was the first time he met Jewel Cooke decades ago.



Goodbye: Jewel Cooke accepts warm wishes from Sue Peck. When she was 9 years old, Sue swam with Jewel. Sue's son, Matthew, 9, joined the festivities at OCC.

"She was in a national meet and set a couple of records," said Thompson. "She has such a love of aquatics. All the coaches came to her retirement party 26 years ago. But since then, she's taught kids in West Bloomfield, adults in Livonia, and swam here at OCC."

"And she's the No. 1 swimmer for all women in the state of Michigan. Over the years, she suffered injuries, but she always came back. I'm impressed by her commitment and her initiative. She is a great inspiration. We wouldn't have won the 12 national titles without her. I never would've gotten the National Coach Award without Jewel Cooke."

Barb Greenberg of Novi and Debbie Hopper of Northville swam in Cooke's classes in Livonia adult education. Both had been on their high school

swim teams. They came to her party to say goodbye to a special friend.

"We were Jewel groupies," said Hopper. "We followed her around the city from pool to pool."

Greenberg remembered how kind her coach was.

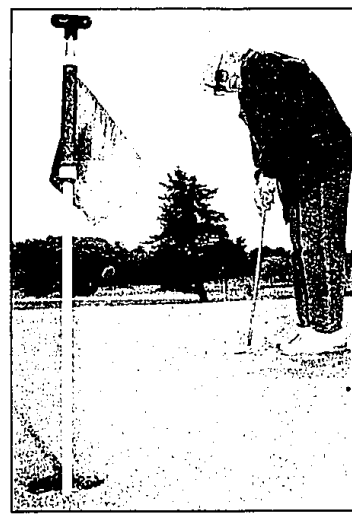
"She never yelled or scolded. She had such a gentle way of encouragement," she said.

The two found out a few years ago that Cooke was doing water aerobics and deep-water swimming at OCC and joined the program to be with her once again.

In the midst of the celebration, which included a litany of testimonials from friends and former students, Cooke looked serene.

"I'm so happy to see everybody here today," she said. "It brings back so many memories."

Senior league veteran golfs every Monday



Putting in: Mona Armstrong gets ready to sink a shot at San Marino.

BY MARY RODRIQUE
STAFF WRITER
mrodrique@oe.homecomm.net

Retiree Mona Armstrong sandwiches her weekly golf game at San Marino in between an active schedule that includes line dancing classes in Novi and numerous bridge games in her Kendallwood apartment.

At 92 years old, she is the senior member of the Farmington Hills Senior Ladies Golf League.

"She hits the ball straight as an arrow," said Mary Anita McHugh, league chairwoman. "Without a doubt, she's a tribute to the team."

McHugh, a 15-year veteran of the league, first met Armstrong when the older woman signed up five years ago.

"I thought it was so great when she joined. She only started riding a cart two years ago," said McHugh. "And she drives up here by herself. She plays bridge three times a week. She keeps as sharp as a nail."

There are currently 62 members in the league, which is open to women 55 years and older. The league was started by Phyllis Mulkey and Loretta Conway in 1978. San Marino is the city-owned, nine-hole course on Halsted north of 11 Mile.

"You don't have to be a good golf player," added McHugh. "It's the companionship that's fun."

Needs new partners

Armstrong, a short, physically-fit athlete who looks 20 years younger than her age, said she decided to join the senior women's league when "I lost all my golf partners."

"I used to play with my husband, Donald, my brother-in-law and his wife," she said last Monday in an interview on the patio of Top of the Tee, the restaurant attached to the golf course.

"My husband died, then my brother-in-law, and then his wife moved to Plymouth and she doesn't

drive (a car) anymore."

That necessitated finding new golf buddies. "I began looking for golf partners. The main thing is to get out in the fresh air. And these ladies are a lovely bunch," she added.

Born and raised in Detroit, she worked for the Detroit Board of Education and many years ago for Chrysler Corp. The Armstrongs left Detroit in 1980, resettling in Farmington Hills.

"When I retired in 1974, that's when I started to play golf," she said.

Her husband was a plant manager and a Realtor. They have two children, a son in Maryland and a daughter in Troy, three grandchildren, and a great-granddaughter born late last year.

"You have to keep exercising and moving around," said Armstrong. "I get stiff with my arthritis. As soon as I start moving around, I feel so much better."

Farmington Hills senior adult programmer Chris Hebert reinforces that belief.

"I'd say our average age (at the Costick Center) is at least 75," said Hebert. "Many have been attending programs for twenty years. I've got a few in my dance class who are in their mid-80s. It is so important to keep moving."

In addition to golf, bridge, and line dancing, Mona Armstrong makes frequent trips to the Twelve Mile branch library near her home.

"I read a lot, too," she said.

The golf league started May 7 and will continue weekly until after Labor Day.

"We golf every Monday," said McHugh. "We'll have our luncheon and give out prizes at the end."

McHugh says women 55 and older are still invited to join. "We have three members who are still working," she added. "They take off Monday mornings to play golf."

For more information on the senior league, call McHugh at 477-6523.

Party supports St. Vincent / Sarah Fisher Center kids

Recognizing that today's children are tomorrow's leaders, Ford Motor Co. announced it will once again support the St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center's biggest fund-raising event of the year, the "Nurture Some Dreams" Garden Party on Sunday, June 3.

The center is at 27400 W. 12 Mile Road, at Inkster in Farmington Hills. Call 626-7527.

The center is a special place in the metro Detroit community, one that actually existed (founded 1851) before Ford Motor Co., said Susan Moore, Ford's Trustmark Marketing Programs manager.

"We take great interest in the suc-

cess of this center, which offers comprehensive residential and community based services to children and families who otherwise may be lost."

This marks the Garden Party's 14th year and Ford's ninth year of involvement. Guests will stroll among the gardens of the center's 35-acre campus, sample cuisine from more than 40 area restaurants and enjoy more than 100 international wines.

Aside from purchasing individual tickets for \$150, four ticket packages are available:

Advocate Ticket Packages - \$1,000, includes six tickets for the Garden Party, admission to the VIP reception,

and complimentary valet parking.

Supporter Ticket Package - \$1,000 includes eight tickets for the Garden Party (group rate)

Benefactor Package - \$750, includes four tickets, admission to the VIP reception and valet parking.

Patron Package - \$500, includes two tickets to the Garden Party, admission to the VIP reception and valet parking.

"We're grateful to have the loyal support of the Ford Motor Co. for this important event," said Jean Vickers, St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center's executive director. "Each year, as a result of the Garden Party, the center

is able to purchase vital necessities and undergo a series of needed improvements, which would not be possible if not for a presenting sponsor of Ford's caliber."

Last year, the Garden Party raised more than \$250,000, some of which was used to update the children's cottages, purchase computers for the library, equip the recreation room, and add a new full-size kitchen.

The schedule of events June 3 include:

Noon-1 p.m. VIP reception; 1-3:30 p.m. Food and Wine sampling; 3:30-5

Please See GARDEN PARTY, C7

Teen-adult class set

The next Dale Carnegie Teen-Adult Course begins Thursday, May 31, in offices on the northwest corner of 11 Mile and Orchard Lake roads in Farmington Hills.

Students will attend from 6:30 to 10:30 p.m. each week, for 12 weeks.

The course will be taught by Carnegie instructors Kathy Tosolan and Sue Dahlmann.

Tosolan said, "As a parent of two teenagers, I know that we often plan our children's summer schedules around sports and camps."

"While those kinds of things are important, they will probably never have the impact on our kids that this course will have."

The course provides teens with "deeper appreciation for adults, school, life. They begin to communicate on a deeper level."

For more information, call Tosolan (248-478-5318) or Dahlmann (810-229-5314). Those interested in enrolling should call as soon as possible because space is limited.