

## Chatroom



Kathie  
O'Donohue

## Mom of teens is never the same

**M**y mom always said it was the thing that changed her hair to white, but I just laughed. I am certain she is having the last guffaw now.

Because suddenly I am the one with three teens in my home at once — along with the bottle of hair color to cover those aging follicles.

Having been through this experience twice before, I could succinctly describe this phase as "another one gruntheth." I heard it the other day, just after the peach-fuzz appeared: a half-mumbled, half-growled response to a simple question, and I knew. I was in for it again.

I knew then in this child's eyes I would no longer be cool. I realized at that moment I am not to acknowledge him in front of his peers, and God forbid that I would ever dare to cast a smiling glance of admiration his way if by chance our visual paths crossed from waaay across the soccer field. I have learned my place.

The "horse-to-water" proverb is all wrong. It should simply be stated,

"You can get a 15-year-old boy to put on a jacket, but you can't make him zip it up." Intuition tells me as soon as the bus is out of sight, that jacket sits in a crumpled pile next to him. I have also learned hats and gloves are "for freaks," and/or "no one wears them," and/or "I never get cold."

For the third time, it's insinuated just how incompetent and "un-bright" I am, and many days I wonder myself how I've made it this far in life without an adolescent expert giving me advice. "GEEEEEZE, MOM!" has actually become a term of endearment to me.

Your child is definitely a teenager when, although you may not see eye-to-eye philosophically, you are suddenly viewing each other at eye-level. There is at least one teen in your home when you resort to hiding snacks in your washer and dryer, because you know that two bags of potato chips are devoured in 10 minutes which results in the incessant chant: "There's never anything good to eat around here!"

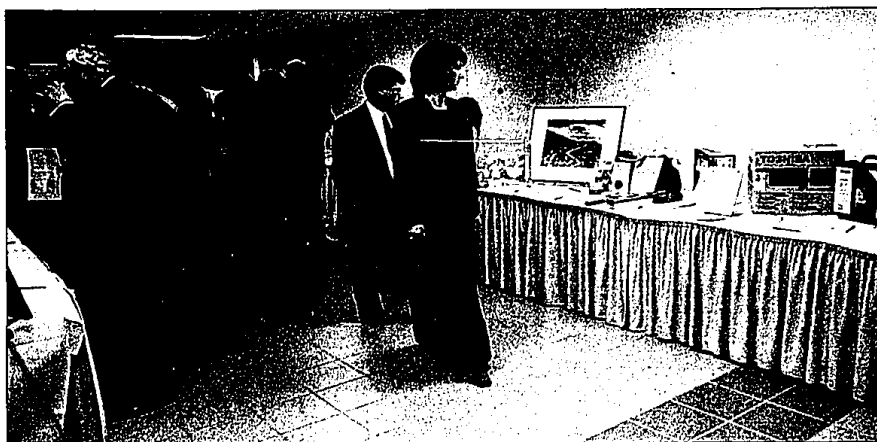
I have come to understand that everything — and I mean everything — is SWEET! Unless of course I attempt to use the term to fit in. (Why the heck am I worried about fitting in?) It is a wise parent who has mastered the art of "robotic posture," while avoiding the urge to say, "that does not compute." One would also be well-advised never to report any sighting of the opposite gender noticing your child in a positive way. And don't ever, ever say, "hottie."

I am also required NOT to interpret words into an adolescent/peer conversation, though I have learned later around age 16 it then becomes acceptable to acknowledge and possibly even share a few words with the friend.

## BIRTH ORDER

Let's face it. Every parent of more than one child

PLEASE SEE O'DONOHUE, C6



PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER/OBSERVER

Guests at Saturday night's Cornucopia Ball, held at Bosch Corporation in Farmington Hills, bid on a variety of silent auction items.

## Change of direction

### Organizers hope endowment fund replaces Cornucopia Ball

BY JONI HUBRED  
STAFF WRITER

Members of the Farmington Hills/Farmington Community Foundation wouldn't mind at all if Saturday night's Cornucopia Ball was the last of its kind.

The eighth annual event, held in the Bosch Corporation's expansive employee dining room, raised funds that will in turn support grants to causes that enrich the lives of youth and families. Recent grants have gone to the after-school program, Farmington Families in Action's BABES program, GRIP-Students and Parents Together, the Multicultural Multiracial Community Council and YMCA summer camp scholarships.

According to foundation trustee Bob Heinrich, fund-raisers could one day become a thing of the past.

"This foundation has really had a change of direction," he said, explaining that the goal now is to establish an endowment that would subsidize grants through the interest it generates. "It's our hope once our endowment is funded, events like this will be unnecessary."

More than 100 guests turned out for the evening, which featured a strolling

dinner with stations for shrimp and oysters, a variety of sliced meats, roasted vegetables, fruit and cheese and dessert trays. Couples hit the dance floor later in the evening, to the music of Sheila Landis and Top Drawer.

The party atmosphere was created by volunteers, said Judge Maria Parker, who is also a foundation trustee. People who work and live in the community, school kids and senior citizens worked together starting Saturday morning to decorate both the dining room and display area for silent auction items.

"While enjoying the evening is important," Parker said, "the work we support is much more important."

To emphasize that point, after school program coordinator Todd Lipa presented a brief videotape highlighting after-school program activities — from bumper cars and skateboarding to tutoring help with homework. Volunteers are needed to make certain the atmosphere is as safe as possible, Lipa said.

These are life-changing opportunities," trustee the Rev. Mark Jensen commented of the foundation's work.

"Together we can, if we will." Honorary hosts for the event were Paul Gross, a



Edward N. Hedges III, chairman of the board at Botsford, and Margaret Lightner of Botsford Commons share a moment of conversation at the Cornucopia Ball Saturday.

weather forecaster for WDIV-TV-Channel 4; Harry Hairston, anchor for UPN-50; and Diana Lewis, new to the event this year, an anchor for WXYZ-TV-Channel 7.

Introduced by trustee Joanne Smith as a "celebrity," Lewis replied, "This is an honor for me. Celebrity, no.

Farmington Hills resident, all the way!"

Gross, Hairston and Lewis assisted with the live auction, which included dinner for two at Tribute, four "club level" Pistons tickets; U.S. and Michigan flags; a fire truck ride with Hills Fire Chief Rich Marinucci; a day

with Hills Police Chief Bill Dwyer; an opportunity to be assistant coach at a Harrison High football game; and a ride with paramedics on Botsford Hospital's mobile intensive care unit.

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## Mercy High School girls make a difference in Detroit

BY SUE BUCK  
STAFF WRITER

Mercy High and other students traveled to the Mercy Education Project in Detroit to befriend a group of young girls on Make a Difference Day.

For the third year, high schoolers hosted a Halloween party for about 30 girls from the Corktown area of Detroit. Mercy Education Project is located inside the St. Vincent de Paul School on 14th Street, south of Michigan Avenue.

"The project is run as an after-school program," said Pat Atchinson, service learning coordinator at Mercy High School. Atchinson annually leads the group of volunteers.

The Mercy Education Project, which serves an area of southwest Detroit, provides a variety of programs for girls and women.

For girls from local Catholic and public schools, there's an



Students from Mercy High School worked with young girls in Detroit on Make a Difference Day.

after-school program that runs from 3:30-7 p.m. There's one-on-one tutoring for women along with a GED program and computer training.

Some girls who came to the party dressed in costumes. The

first- through fifth-graders arrived in three vans.

Student volunteers were Mercy High seniors Lauren Walsh, Tessa Kuykendall, Jenna Beras, and Maria Palmer; juniors Kaitlin Risk,

Allica Woods, Cassandra Varcoe, Sara Larson, Melanie Naimi, Rebecca Nikodem and Kacey Hare.

Emily Rodrique, a junior at Plymouth Canton High School, and Sherrie Houghland, a junior at Thurston High School, also volunteered that day.

"The older girls interacted with the younger girls by making crafts and painting pumpkins."

"We made popcorn hands," Risk said. They stuffed rubber gloves full of popcorn and tied the wrist area with colorful ribbons. A candy corn was used to create each fingernail.

Larson mentioned the paper plate masks and games that served as ice breakers.

"It was a good day for the students to interact and learn something about each other," Atchinson said.

This was the 12th anniversary of the national Make a Difference Day, which encour-

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Pat Atchinson  
service learning coordinator

ages volunteerism on the last Saturday of October.

According to published reports, more than 2 million people across the United States annually take part in activities ranging from collecting food for the needy to raising funds for a myriad of causes.

Mercy High School is located on 11 Mile and Middlebelt in Farmington Hills.

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