

SC's Day Care Center Has Unstructured Fun

By KATHY MORAN

Cardboard boxes are great fun when a group of three- and four-year-olds get hold of them.

A big, brown box that once housed a refrigerator is the center of attraction for a group of preschoolers in Schoolcraft College's day care center.

The box started out as an art project when it was decorated into a house; then it was used

by the little "mothers and fathers." When it collapsed from so much attention, it became an ideal slide for the youngsters.

With winter weather coming, children at the center spend less time outside and more playing with the toys—but mainly the box—and listening to stories.

LORRAINE LOFTON, a student at Eastern Michigan

University, watches as few as one, and as many as nine, youngsters. The center was started this fall for married Schoolcraft students.

Growing interest in the center, housed in the Pilgrim United Church of Christ at 36075 Seven Mile, has won it the stamp of approval for the winter term. Registrations are coming in now and can be made during class registration.

Miss Lofton watches the children with a sparkle in her eye and infinite patience. And as the children compete for her attention and sneak her a hug or two, it's apparent they care for her as much as she does for them.

"I try to keep it pretty unstructured," she said. "If the children are in an excited mood, there's not much sense in trying to get them to sit down and listen to a story."

THE CENTER has the same programs found in nursery schools, but it isn't structured as tightly because children are coming and going all the time.

"That's the only problem—the constant interruptions," she said.

Their activities include art projects, story telling, spontaneous plays and dancing to records.

"They have so much imagination—so much more than we do. And what is especially good is that they all help each other. If I am working with one child and another wants some help, the others will help him until I am free."

Kids being kids, there are always a few squabbles. But Miss Lofton tries to let them resolve the dispute themselves and only steps in when all else fails.

WHEN THE CENTER was first started in August, it was put together with donations, Rev. James Shaeffer of the church donated a Sunday school room, and others donated toys.

While the weather was good, they could play outside and feed the horses next door to the church.

The center is about to close for the holidays but will be back in action at the beginning of the college's winter term in January.

It will be open between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. Parents can register their child for a \$5 registration fee and 60 cents an hour.



THE CARDBOARD BOX—turned slide is a favorite attraction of the children at Schoolcraft's day care center, housed in Pilgrim United

Church of Christ, 36075 Seven Mile, Livonia. (Observer photos by Kathy Moran)



BIG ED, better known to Schoolcraft personnel as Vice President of Student Affairs

Edward McNally, chats with some of the children at the center.

EVER SINCE THE children fed the horses next door to the day care center, they have played "horsey" during their free time, says Lorraine Lofton (seated in background) who directs the center. Party hats and horns are remnants of a birthday celebrated earlier that day.

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Madonna Plans Yule Concert

"Bells at Christmas" will usher in the Christmas season at Madonna College at 8 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 12, in the Residence Building.

Performing in the concert will be the College-Alumnae Chorus and guest male singers, accompanied by a string ensemble and a dance group.

Admission to the concert is \$1.50 for adults and \$1 for students. Tickets may be obtained by calling the college.

DAV Plans Party Dec. 18

A gala Christmas banquet is being planned by the Disabled American Veterans' Livonia Chapter 114.

It's set for Saturday, Dec. 18 at 7 p.m. in the Senior Citizens Center, Farmington Rd. at Five Mile in Livonia.

Tickets at \$3.25 per person may be obtained from John Hickey of 14170 Park, Livonia, and Jerry Tolin, 39500 Warren, Plymouth.

Rejects Gas Firm

The Marathon Oil Co. ran out of gas again in front of the Westland City Council Monday night.

The company was denied permission to build a new gas station on the northeast corner of Cherry Hill and Newburgh Rds.

The planning commission had earlier refused to grant the rezoning request, and Marathon was trying to convince the city council of the merits of its case.

The commission based its recommendation on the condition that the rezoning for a gas station wouldn't comply with the city's master plan and that it would constitute "spot zoning" since adjacent land is zoned for single-family homes.