

LANSING COMMUNITY NEWS



Serving the Town and Village of Lansing, Cayuga Heights, King Ferry & Genoa

"Not quite paradise, but a nice place to live."

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■ Congressional Candidates' Statements..... Page 6

Ithaca Montessori Moving To Lansing November 8

By Matthew Shulman

Far from the sound of craftsmen completing their new school building, the toddlers and pre-schoolers playing and learning at the Willow Avenue downtown Ithaca Montessori School nonetheless sense that something special is in the air.

On the Veterans' Day weekend of November 8 - 11, their parents, teachers and community volunteers will be moving the entire contents of their school to its new Ascot Place location. After 28 years in Ithaca, the Ithaca Montessori School is moving to the Village of Lansing.

The Ithaca Montessori School is a parent-directed cooperative that offers two early childhood education programs to approximately 70 area families. The primary program is a three-year pre-primary cycle for 3 to 5 year olds and includes the kindergarten year. The school also offers a half-day toddler program for youngsters as young as 21 months. An optional six week summer program is available for those desiring a year round program. The school is operated by an administrator and teaching staff trained in the early childhood educational philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori. [See the accompanying story on page 5.]

The school was founded in 1968 on Ithaca's East Hill in a Buffalo Street home. It moved into the first floor of its Willow Avenue location in 1970 and renovated the upstairs apartment into a second classroom in 1980.

Plans to relocate the school began in the spring of '92 when the Tompkins County Transit Facility was proposed for Willow Avenue. Parents became concerned about the changing environmental quality of the area which they felt was not conducive to an early childhood program.

"We didn't know it (the transit facility) was happening 'till it was pretty much a 'done deal'," explained the school's administrator Pat Remkus. "Though the public hearing hadn't yet happened when we learned about the project, we realized that the process was so far along that it was going to go through."

Parents were neither shocked nor outraged about the proposed transit facility, said Remkus, because there was already a steady flow of public works traffic on Willow Avenue. "We also recognized that Willow Avenue was a commercial street and that it wouldn't go the other way in the future," she added.

When the City of Ithaca presented the parents with a



FREEDOM WITHIN LIMITS - Montessori children work at their own pace with materials they've chosen, either alone or with others. Teacher Angela Feocco, of King Ferry, reads a story chosen by her student.

draft of expected traffic flows, it showed that the peak volume of bus traffic overlapped the children's arrival and departure times. "We were astounded at the volume of anticipated bus traffic," said Remkus.

Moreover, with the school's playground and classrooms situated scant feet from the roadway, parents and teachers were concerned about the effects of added noise pollution and degrading air quality associated with housing the county's entire transportation fleet just down the street.

Once the parents realized that a move from Willow Avenue was in the cards, they started looking at where the students' parents lived. "We looked back several years and found that over 75 percent either lived in the Northeast or worked at Cornell," said Remkus.

The decision to leave Ithaca wasn't made easily. "We've had long ties with downtown," regretted Remkus. "Ithaca's always been good to us and knows where we are." At the same time, parents knew that things were changing and that the school would move. "We had to ask ourselves, 'Who is our clientele? What location would be most convenient?' The goal wasn't to leave Ithaca, but to put us in the position to most easily serve the families," Remkus recalled.

At first, the school committee looked for an existing building. Members visited Cayuga Heights and the Town of Ithaca homes to find one suitable for conversion. They also examined existing commercial structures, but the cost of renovating to state licensing standards was too dear.

Once the decision was made to build a new school from scratch, the hunt for a site again focused on the Northeast. "When we saw the Ascot Place site just off Craft Road, people felt it was the right choice," affirmed Remkus.

"Somewhere along the line, I'd been looking at articles on Lansing," said Remkus. "We recognized that Lansing would put us in an area of growth where we could still be connected to Ithaca, but would be widening our reach."

The Lansing site was selected because it met all the desired criteria, said Remkus. Ascot Place is easy to access. It's not on , but is close to, a main road. There's very little traffic and the adjacent buildings are unlikely to create an additional traffic burden. The location is convenient for most parents and is close to commercial and medical amenities. The site itself has enough land to allow the building to be set back in the trees with plenty of outdoor play space around the structure.

Though there are no immediate plans for growth, Remkus would like to see the school's programs expand sometime in the future. "Lansing seems to be the right spot for us to do this," she said.

For the moment, however, Remkus and her staff of 13 must continue to teach at the same time that they crate books, paints and the other paraphernalia that's been acquired on Willow Avenue during the last 26 years.

On Ascot Place, the walls have been painted and the exterior fencing has been erected by parent volunteers. Outside contractors have laid the flooring, hung the doors

(Continued on page 5)

Lansing Bonnet Brigade Restores Patient Pride

By Marc A. Catone

The humming sound of a dozen sewing machines can be heard around Lansing on Peruville Road, Fiddler's Green and at Woodsedge Apartments. Behind each machine sits a Lansing bonnet. Known as the *Lansing Bonnet Brigade*, they create bonnets for people who have lost their hair due to the side-effects of receiving chemo-therapy treatments for cancer.

Sudden hair loss can be a severe blow to cancer patients' pride. Both men and women may become self-conscious, reluctant to be seen by friends or unwilling to venture out in public. For many, baldness becomes a stigma of the life-challenging battle within. Wearing the bonnets can restore an outward semblance of normalcy and boost confidence and independence.

Woodsedge resident Eileen Cundy formed the Bonnet Brigade this summer after meeting with her friend Nick Barra, of Ladoga Park Road. Barra showed Cundy a pattern for a "turban" used by a relative who had lost her hair during chemotherapy and asked Cundy to sew some "turbans." Cundy, who serves as president of the Woodsedge Association and is widely known for her organizational skills, agreed to make the headpieces, which she dubbed "bonnets."

The idea grew quickly. Fellow Woodsedge resident Shirley Benjamin donated the first bundle of fabric and a Woodsedge bonnet brigade consisting of Marion Thompson, Fran Pully, Dodie Krantz, David and Dorothy Braid and Cundy sewed the first batch of bonnets.

Additional volunteer workers from around town reinforced the original woodsedge crew and the renamed "Lansing Bonnet Brigade" now also includes Lansingites Ann Nedrow, Helen Thompson, Jan Nagle, Charlotte



DO UNTO OTHERS is more than a maxim for Lansing Bonnet Brigade members Marian Thompson, Eileen Cundy, Jan Nagel, Shirley Benjamin, Helen Thompson and Charlotte Howell, pictured with their Cayuga Medical Center certificate of appreciation..

Howell, Clarence Moore and Kathleen Wadell.

They started with a modest fifteen dollars, but through generous donations from Lansing Senior Citizens (as well as large anonymous contributions of elastic and thread) more than 600 bonnets have been made thusfar.

The bonnets are made from 24" x 18" pieces of fabric and come in a multitude of colors and patterns. After assembly, they are collected and distributed to local and regional hospitals and doctors. Recipients include the Cayuga Medical Center in Ithaca, Lourdes Hospital in Binghamton,

Wilson Memorial Hospital and the Flacks Cancer Center in Elmira, and the offices of Drs. Charles Garbo and Robert Hikes in Ithaca.

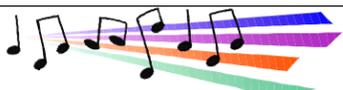
"The response to the bonnets has been tremendous" says Cundy. "We've received a number of thank you notes, including a certificate of appreciation from the Cayuga Medical Center. I never expected anything like this."

Another thing Cundy didn't expect was her reaction to seeing cancer patients wearing the bonnets. "A man came to my apartment and wanted a couple of bonnets for his wife who was in chemotherapy. A week or so later I saw him walking down the hallway of Woodedge. In back of him was a woman. I didn't know her, but I immediately recognized the bonnet she was wearing."

Cundy was overcome with emotion at the sight of this frail but proud woman, whose dignity had been restored by the handmade garment she wore around her head. "When the going gets tough, I try to be a 'Hard-Hearted-Hannah' to deal with the problems at hand," recalled Cundy, "but she was the first person I saw wearing one of my bonnets. My heart was touched."

Unfortunately, the woman did not survive. When Cundy attended the deceased woman's funeral, her father clasped Cundy's hand firmly and said, "Thank you. You'll never know how much that bonnet helped my daughter."

There is, of course, no charge for the bonnets. The value of boosting self-worth and morale can't be measured. Left-over fabric is donated to the Lansingville Fire Auxiliary who use it to make quilts. People who need a bonnet or who would like to assist the Lansing Bonnet Brigade in making and/or distributing the colorful "turbans" may call Eileen Cundy at 533-7105.



**Lansing Stands Together:
Help Brian get his
Bone Marrow Transplant
\$8.00 In Advance
\$10.00 At the Door**

Walawender Jamboree
Saturday, November 2nd Starting at 4:00 pm
At Crossroads Restaurant (No. Trip & Peruville Roads)
Entertainment: DJ Teddy Antrum & The Albany Street Band
Food, Beer and Soda Provided