

Timebank lets folks do their best, while others do the rest
By Pat Murphy • ECCENTRIC STAFF WRITER • March 1, 2009

Lathrup Village resident Kim Hodge doesn't care much for mending - or cooking for that matter. She doesn't mind (and sort of likes) cleaning basements, washing windows and similar chores. That's why she enjoys - and is the coordinator for - Timebank, an informal program that allows Lathrup Village residents to swap chores. Specifically, the program enables Hodge and other Lathrup Village residents to do something they enjoy in exchange for somebody else doing what they don't.

"It's not direct bartering," Hodge said. When she or other residents do things, Hodge said, they get credit for hours that are recorded and "banked."

Residents cash in those hours in the form of services from other Timebank depositors. Last Saturday, for example, Hodge and other depositors painted another resident's basement. In return - sometime in the future - they will have something done for them.

Last month, Hodge cashed in several of the hours she had deposited over the last year by having clothes mended. On another occasion, a depositor cooked her a spaghetti dinner. "It was delicious," Hodge said. "I'm hoping to have him cook dinner once a month, or so."

The chef, by the way, was 10-year-old Cole Skory, whose whole family participates in the program. Other depositors have redeemed hours with computer services, yard work or personal tutoring. Nobody has requested it yet, but Hodge, who majored in German in college, also offers tutoring services.

On the third weekend of each month, Timebank depositors earn hours on group projects. For one such project in December, for example, depositors helped a neighbor with Christmas decorations. On another group project, six depositors in February went to Kettering High School in Detroit for two nights, where they assisted another resident who teaches there.

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So far, there are no deadbeat depositors, said Hodge, and no overdrawn accounts. As a matter of fact, depositors have put more hours on the books than they've collected. "We have more givers than receivers," she said.

Ironically, Hodge - the program coordinator - said she likes Timebank for yet another reason. "It has helped me learn more about the community and to connect with neighbors," she said. "I real enjoy it." Timebanks is a national program with a Web site: www.timebanks.org. Information on the local program is available at (248) 424-7455.

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