

Making time

Lathrup resident puts together community service group

By Jennie Miller
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LATHRUP VILLAGE — What it means to be neighborly has changed over the years, and Lathrup Village resident Kim Hodge wants to bring back a little of the good ol' days.

“I want to know my neighbors and not just wave to them when I see them,” Hodge said. “People don't help each other enough. We really need to get back to being a neighborhood.”

Fighting the technological age — with things like the Internet, cell phones and satellite television causing people to become more internal and less communicative — Hodge is putting together a community service group for people to share their talents with one another.

The national organization Time Banks is a way for people to give back to the community while also gaining access to a world of service.

“You can mow someone's lawn, pet sit for someone, take guitar lessons from another person, drive somebody to a doctor's appointment,” Hodge suggested. “Everybody's time is equal. You give an hour of service, you get an hour of service.”

The mission of Time Banks USA is “strengthening communities through reciprocity,” according to the Web site, www.timebanks.org.

With this in mind, Hodge spread the word to her own neighbors and organized a meeting last month, attended by 14 interested parties, including Lathrup Village resident Ed Blondin.

“I'm a joiner,” said the teacher of Lathrup Village's junior master gardener program.

Blondin said that after meeting Hodge and hearing about the proposed Time Bank, he immediately signed on to take part.

“I was absolutely enthusiastic — it's really a great idea,” Blondin said. “I think community is important. ... It seems a crime to me that neighbors don't really know each other anymore.”

At the meeting, attendees brainstormed ideas for how to run the organization and how to recruit other individuals. They also gleaned advice and information from a telephone conversation with a woman in Woodstock, N.Y., whom Hodge discovered had run a successful Time Bank in her community for the past year.

Hodge also purchased a start-up kit from the Time Bank Web site that gives her new organization access to the information and database.

“We're in the organizing stages,” Hodge said, adding that many more people are needed. “We have representation in the northeast part of Lathrup Village, and we're looking for more residents from other parts of the community.”

Residents of all ages are welcome to participate.

“I know everybody has talents and skills and needs, things they do well and things they don’t do well,” Hodge explained. “We all have something to offer. It might not be something you initially realize about yourself, but everybody’s got something to give. We have basic skills that we may take for granted, and other people who don’t have those skills would be really enriched if they had the ability or the access to someone who knew how to do them.”

Time Banking is a small group of committed individuals who are joined together for a common good, according to the national Web site. It creates a system that connects unmet needs with untapped resources.

“This really is what used to happen,” Blondin pointed out. “We’re just providing the guidelines for how to be good neighbors.”

The next organizational meeting is scheduled for Sunday, Feb. 10, at 6 p.m., at the Lathrup Village municipal building. All are welcome to attend.

For more information or to volunteer to take part in the proposed Lathrup Village Time Bank, call Hodge at (248) 424-7455 or e-mail hodgekim@sbcglobal.net.

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