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Conference today at Western Michigan University focuses on family's role in stopping drug abuse

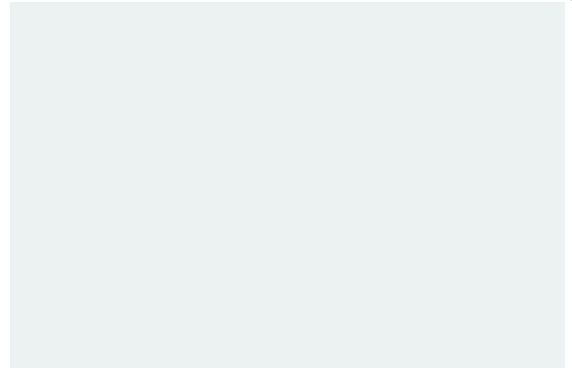
Wednesday, October 15, 2008

Kalamazoo

Young people focus of conference today at WMU

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BY LINDA S. MAH

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KALAMAZOO -- Therapists cannot help substance abusers who walk through their doors unless they also help the abuser's family, a substance-abuse-prevention advocate told a Kalamazoo group Tuesday.

"The clients you are paid to serve are not alone," said Sis Wenger, president of the National Association of Children of Alcoholics, during the Community Healing Centers Tuesday luncheon at the Radisson Plaza Hotel & Suites.

The event was a preview of the Community Healing Centers conference Substance Abuse and the Family, which is being held today at Western Michigan University. Wenger, a former adjunct faculty member at the University of Detroit Mercy, is the keynote speaker.

The event is expected to draw more than 220 community members, including parents, clergy, doctors, teacher and counselors.

Although the conference will address the spate of heroin and opiate-related deaths that has recently plagued the area, it is not designed to generate a community solution to the deaths, said Sally Reames, executive director of Community Healing Centers. It will aid discussions of the problem and help the center refine its services, she said.

"We have been looking at how to work more with families and how to engage kids at earlier stages rather than waiting for tragedy to happen," Reames said.

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- Solve and dine: Murder Mystery Dinner benefits charity 1:31 p.m. ET
- Portage native Scott Parse is glad to be back skating, not channel surfing 1:30 p.m. ET
- [More updates](#)

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- Son saves dad by raising car off his chest with forklift
- Michigan man admits to having Molotov bombs at RNC
- Panel focuses on voting rights and voting myths; Event featured John Conyers, Woodrow Stanley, Inez Brown and others
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Kalamazoo Talk

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- Huh. by lowgenius 10/22/2008 10:56 a.m. ET
- darricksf, just to be by Dutton 10/22/2008 10:06 a.m. ET
- Can't help it, gotta... by Dutton 10/22/2008 6:47 a.m. ET
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