

True advocates

Community Living Centers marks 40th year

BY SUE BUCK
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Debby Raspbury loves going to work at Sunflour Bakehaus in Farmington. Her enthusiastic conversation immediately centers on her eight-year employment at the bakery.

Raspbury has met the goal of many people who have developmental disabilities who are members of the Community Living Centers assisted independent living program. She lives independently and holds a permanent position.

"I love it," Raspbury said. "If I live to be 90, I will never give up that job. They are good to me. I was there when all of the babies were born."

She referred to the three children of bakery owners Jeff Pavlik and Becky Burns — Rossie, 7, Hank, 3, and Zak, 5 months.

Raspbury cleans the bakery

and brings back free samples to the CLC office on Grand River in Farmington. Community Living Centers executive director Laura Pollaccia-Scanlan talks about the center's plans to celebrate its 40th anniversary.

Pavlik said that Raspbury has become a part of their family, too.

They have celebrated her birthday with her and appreciate her help around the bakery.

"We're happy to be able to give her this opportunity," Pavlik said.

Raspbury has a list of tasks



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Community Living Centers executive director Laura Pollaccia-Scanlan, right, and administrative assistant Dawn Thomas stand outside the center's Farmington office. The organization is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year.

which she completes. She greets customers and when the bakery is busy, she tends to the children, too.

One year, CLC presented Pavlik and Burns with the

Employer of the Year award.

Raspbury lives at Farmington Manor apartments on Nine Mile with her cat and guinea pig.

Working hand in hand with

the community by helping every resident to achieve his or her personal best is a reason for CLC and the parents of these adult children to celebrate.

They will do just that as they mark their 40th anniversary this year.

The annual dance was held

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on May 31 at Laurel Manor in Livonia. A picnic is planned in August and an auction in October.

"We want to celebrate our 40th anniversary with the community," said executive director Laura Pollaccia-Scanlan.

Dawn Thomas, administrative assistant and fund-raising coordinator, is looking for ways to attract more participants from the community.

Founder Mary Wagner has a developmentally disabled son, Tony, who is still in the program. The first home opened in 1969 on 13 Mile Road, in an old nursing home, Pollaccia-Scanlan said.

There are 118 residents and nine group homes in Farmington, Farmington Hills, Southfield and Royal Oak. Residents must be at least 18 years old.

The main office has been located in downtown Farmington for about 40 years.

CLC was a private organization for many years, until Macomb Oakland Regional Center took over responsibility for funding the home.

The centers contract with MORC which provides referrals for adults who live in Oakland County.

In order to live independently, the clients must be able to care for themselves. That means grooming, cooking, acting appropriately in the community and paying bills.

They need to be able to identify an emergency so they can call 9-1-1.

Most of the residents have jobs and transportation is provided to jobs. They work at Kroger, Pizza Hut, Taco Bell and sheltered workshops.

Wagner, who died in 2003, had also worked as a special education teacher in Farmington Public Schools before she started CLC. She retired in 1992 and moved to Florida.

Pollaccia-Scanlan became executive director two years ago. For more information, call (248) 478-0870.