

Turning back the clock
Home & Careers teacher Marilyn Mandigo from the Fulton Junior High School shows students how to spin wool at the recent Early American Festival. Mrs. Mandigo is using wool clipped from a sheep raised by her daughter Kristy.

New program helps homeless teens

Kevin's family kicked him out and he doesn't know where to turn.

Sue can't live at home, but she feels like she can't talk about it.

Rob can't return home because it's not safe.

Chris has no home to return to because of the death of a parent.

These are typical experiences of the over 500 teenagers that have been identified as homeless in Oswego County. Many teenagers in these situations have nowhere to turn and no one to support them through a difficult time.

Several years ago a group of concerned human service people came together to form the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program to provide a safe haven for these teens.

Opportunities, Inc. received a grant that allowed them to use the services of Vista Volunteers of America to conduct a survey on homeless youth in Oswego County. School districts, human service agencies and the juvenile justice system were surveyed to determine how many homeless young people were asking for help. During a one year period a starting 500 "creeps" were identified as homeless in Oswego County. As a result of this survey Oswego County Opportunities, Inc. applied for funding for a homeless youth program and received a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services in October, 1991.

Now help is available to homeless teenagers in the form of a new program called the PATH (Path to Homelessness) Program, which stands for "Program to Assist the Teenage Homeless." The goals of this program are to provide homeless young people in Oswego County with housing and to provide the transitional services needed for youth to achieve independent living.

The PATH is available to anyone who is:

- 16-21 years old,
- lacking a safe place to live, and
- willing to participate in a program that provides housing and other services to homeless teenagers.

Although the PATH receives 90% funding from the Department of Health and Human Services, the program relies on 10% in-kind donations, so donations of materials and services are welcome.

Anyone who would like more information may contact the PATH (202 Park St.) at 592-4716. Group presentations about the program are also available.

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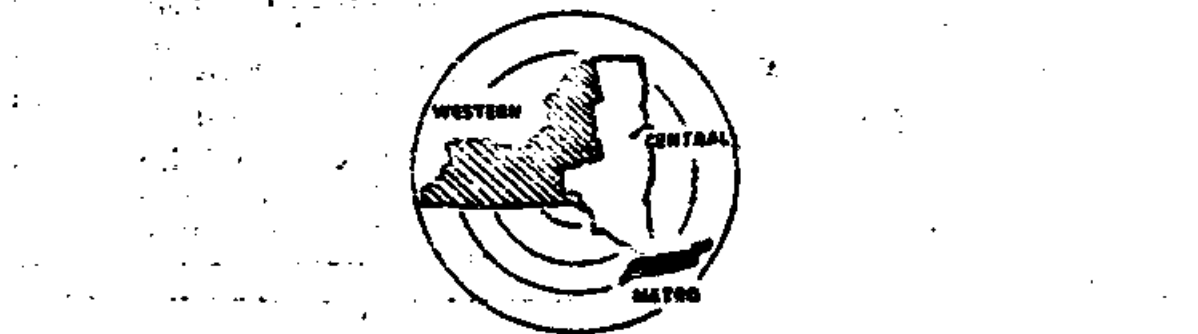
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