

HOW TO REACH US

FEATURES EDITOR: Jim Bohan
(973) 428-6632
features@dailyrecord.com

LIFESTYLE



SECTION

E

TOP OF THE CHARTS?

Find out which musicians came away with an American Music Award and who didn't last night. E3

ON AGING

Theresa Davis offers senior citizens some information and warnings about how to have a safer winter season. E2

REMAKING WELLES

The A&E cable television network takes on film legend Orson Welles' most famous flop, 'The Magnificent Ambersons,' and makes it work. E3

60 Plus / E2

Entertainment / E3

Television / E4

THURSDAY, JANUARY 10, 2002

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FAMILIES

Taking the pain out of divorce

Families in Transition program aims to help people move through the system more calmly, efficiently

BY LORRAINE ASH
DAILY RECORD



Photos
by
Tyson Trish
Daily Record

"Remember there was once a relationship. The parents are people who once cared for each other and got married."

— Jill Soderman
psychoanalyst, Oak Ridge

Say the handwriting's on the wall and it's spelling "divorce." Families in Transition, a 4-month-old nonprofit agency, wants to be on the receiving end of the first phone call area couples make.

"One of our functions is to talk to people before they head off to the attorneys," said FIT founder Theresa Ambrosino of Augusta, a remarried divorcee, stay-at-home mom and Court Appointed Special Advocate. "Everyone is welcome, no matter where they live. There are no income requirements."

FIT's first six-week workshop, starting Jan. 16, is designed to help couples who want to split by presenting them with an overview of how the legal system works before they enter it and teaching them how to communicate well with the courts, each other and their children.

The six sessions are free because they're hosted by Newton Memorial Hospital, which views them as an extension of its parenting courses. They are taught by area volunteer experts committed to helping people move through the system more calmly, efficiently and happily.

One such volunteer is Chuck Markham, a Hamburg divorced man active in FIT's Father Support Services group.

"Once I went through the system, and it was so horrendous, I made a promise to myself," Markham said. "I told myself if I got through it alive, I would try to do something to make it better when I got to the other side."

The lineup of presenters includes profession-

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