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BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP

Attorneys show documentary about divorce alternatives

By Monica Drake

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For many people, divorce is the most stressful life event they have ever experienced.

Bloomfield Hills family law attorney Danielle Smith is working to eliminate some of the stress by raising awareness about a different divorce option that many people haven't heard of — "collaborative divorce."



Smith

A collaborative divorce is when spouses are able to work out an agreement without going to divorce court.

Smith said the attorneys and the two people sign a contract that states the divorce will not be brought to court until after there is a settlement agreement.

"It's a very organized process where we meet in four-way meetings and hammer out the issues that need to be decided with the clients driving the outcome," said Smith.

Smith said mental health professionals have been hired as "divorce coaches" to help build back up the trust between the two individuals seeking divorce.

"Everyone is in a big traumatic, stressful, emotional state when they go through a divorce. It doesn't matter if they're the one who wants the divorce or the one who feels they had the rug pulled out from under them," said Smith.

She said that attorneys in a collaborative divorce try to help the two parties reach a civilized agree-

FYI

▪ Tickets cost \$8.50 and can be purchased at TheMapleTheater.com or at the door. For more information, call Danielle A. Smith PLLC at 248-519-2323.

ment, talk about their goals for the future and how their relationship will change — instead of pitting the two against one another.

"The attorneys work for the purpose of the family ... and help them through this transitional period," she said.

Smith gave an example of one couple, who had been married almost 30 years, inviting her to a ceremony — actually celebrating the end of the marriage.

"They still had respect for each other after going through this process," she said. "They wanted the ceremony to show they were letting go of the relationship but they were honoring the years they brought kids into the world and had happiness."

Smith will join Randy Pitler of Randy Pitler Law of Royal Oak; Executive Director of the nonprofit Moms & Dads of Michigan John Langlois and Southfield psychologist Dr. Judy Margerum, to bring the documentary "Divorce Corp" to the Maple Theater, 4135 W. Maple Road, Bloomfield, at 7 p.m. today. The professionals will host a panel after the film to answer audience members' questions about divorce.

"The public just isn't aware of it, and the screening of this film is our way of creating a springboard to start letting people know that this option exists," she said.

AUBURN HILLS

BOOKENDS FOR



The Quality of Life Adult Day Health Care Center in Auburn Hills Shoe project to support the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation. The "Home" project where the seniors paint bookends of different shapes and sizes for profits to a wide variety of charities. Close to 5,000 bookends have been sold. "We hope to see Juvenile Diabetes cured one day as well as Alzheimer's." For more information, call 248-364-406. Residents J. Gibson, Alberta O'Dell and Kathleen Formolo pictured painting the

COMMUNITY BRIEFING

Suburban Collection hosts garden show

The Novi Home and Garden Show is 2 to 9 p.m. Friday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday at the Suburban Collection Showplace, 46100 Grand River Avenue, Novi.

Walk through over 25,000 square feet of landscaped gardens with patios, outdoor kitchens, water highlights and plants. Tour a

home being built for Macomb Habitat for Humanity by the student of Dakota High School's building program. The "Green Thumb Theater" area will provide a variety of fun and informative seminars on gardening and landscaping. Featured presenter Don Engbretson, The Renegade Gardens will bring three great hands-on seminars to the show.

Live broadcasts with "America's Master Handyman" Glenn