

# What do you want to be when you grow up?

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Alameda Early Childhood Center pre-schoolers have a long way to go before worrying about things such as jobs and careers.

But they were enthralled just the same recently, when parents visited their classroom to show-and-tell about their particular livelihoods.

There was Andrea Batten's father, Dan Batten of Delphi Automotive, demonstrating the wonder of the bar code. Batten incorporated the familiar vertical line-laden imprint, found on virtually everything these days, onto name tags for each child in pre-school teacher Debbie Licavoli's classroom.

When he used his bar code scanner on each "Hello, My Name Is" name tag, it revealed

that particular child's name on the read-out screen.

"I compared it to the bar code on a box of cereal," Batten said. "It says that this label has certain information, that this is a box of Fruit Loops, for example. Well, because I work at Delphi, the parts are too big to have in the grocery store."

But a bar code provides useful information, even for outside a grocery store — such as the part number and where it is to be shipped, Batten added.

And there was Robbie Kuutila's father, Eric Kuutila, talking about life as a carpenter and supervising the construction of exhibits for extravaganzas such as the Detroit Auto Show.

Eric showed the children what a tool belt looks like and handed out "giveaways," namely plastic cars and postcards of the auto

show, held each January at the Cobo Center.

"It's a lot of fun," said Eric, after his segment. "They seemed pretty interested."

Other parents came in to discuss everything from teaching sign language to neonatal nursing to driving a school bus.

"It's to learn about the world around us and the things people do," explained Licavoli. "At this age (3-4), they're grasping it."

In fact, the youngsters in her class often get together by the sandbox to chat. "They talk about 'What do we want to do when we grow up?' You know, inspirational sorts of things," the teacher continued.

Career choices already are taking shape.

Robbie Kuutila wants to be a daddy. Sarah Dillon wants to be a mommy. Rachel Demchuk's

dream is to be a princess, while Nathan Brackenbury looks forward to a career as a doctor.

Nate Weston apparently wants to follow in his father Paul's footsteps. His dad, one of the presenters, owns a medical equipment business and the younger Weston wants to own a company someday, too, Licavoli said.

So even at ages 3 and 4, the wheels are turning about the many-years-from-now future.

For the parents who visited Licavoli's classroom to show a little bit of what they do for a living, the experience was a rewarding one.

"I love this stuff," said Dan Batten. "This is what makes the whole kid experience fun. I like being involved with the kids."



**Digital age:**  
Daniel Batten, Andrea's dad, shows pre-schoolers how to read bar codes with a handheld scanner during career day. Parents helped students at Alameda Early Learning Center with career exploration.

STAFF PHOTO  
BY BILL BREWER

## CABLE CONNECTION

### TW requires switch to digital for premium channels

Do you want to continue to receive your premium services (like HBO or Showtime)? Then you'll have to make the switch to digital.

Time Warner Cable has made the decision to offer these services via digital only. This is not something that is regulated by the FCC or the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission (SWOCC). So, the cable operators can make what they consider to be their own best business decision when it comes to premium channels.

And most of the cable operators are going digital. It allows them to provide more channels. It also provides for interactivity. For instance, you may be able to order pay-per-view movies with the push of a button on your remote, rather than making a telephone call.

Now remember you don't have to make the switch to digital if you don't want the premium services. The basic and expanded basic channels (2-65, 95-96, 98-99) will still be available on your

"old" box. And you can still view ESPN, CNN, Nickelodeon, your local broadcast channels and your local access channels.

SWOCC has received some calls from unhappy subscribers, even though SWOCC has no jurisdiction in this arena.

For instance, you just don't see a Time Warner and a MediaOne in the same market. For many reasons, SWOCC, too, would like to see competition. In fact, more than two years ago, we were talking to Ameritech New Media (the only cable competitor in the Metro area) when they were bought by a new parent company which has made the decision not to expand at this time.

But that doesn't mean there isn't any competition. Some residents have turned to satellite dishes for their premium choices, retaining cable for the basic service only. Others opt to rent a video when they want to see a

first-run movie.

Carrie Collins is the executive director of the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission. The next SWOCC meeting is at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 1, in Novi City Hall. The next CAC meeting is at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 10, at SWOCC. The next Q & A session is 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 10, at SWOCC.

### OU receives alcohol alternatives grant

The Michigan Department of Community Health awarded Oakland University a \$21,000 grant to fund a social mentoring program for freshmen students that will provide positive alternatives to alcohol use.

"With a third year of funding from the State of Michigan, Oakland University will be able to continue its efforts to reduce underage and abusive drinking,

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**You've always known she was headed for Lawrence Tech... Who thought it would be in 11th grade?**

If your 11th or 12th grader has a career goal in engineering, computer science or management, he or she can begin courses now that will provide a jump start on a college degree — while still in high school.

Advanced Technology Academy, an innovative public charter school, opened on the campus of Lawrence Technological University in Southfield, this fall. The academy is designed to blend the last two years of high school with the first two years of college, with students earning up to a year of advanced college placement while obtaining a high school diploma.

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