

Farmington Observer & Eccentric

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Teacher Kathy Wood discusses a story with her students in the pre-school Early Learning Center.

It's encouraged

Children learn by exploring

Walk into the spacious room and you'll find a couple kids sneaking colored shaving cream all over the table top and letting it ooze through their fingers.

Against the wall a four-year-old is happily pounding away at the piano in dissonant, but rhythmic abandon.

This form of learning is going on at Farmington's inventive Early Learning Center, 28711 Farmington Road.

"That kind of noise is a happy sound of discovery and we encourage it," says the center's director, Kathy Wood.

The Early Learning Center employs the use of "interest stations" located throughout the room so pre-schoolers can learn from their play.

The children aren't all helped to gather around the teacher for story time. Ms. Wood may be telling a story with her hand puppets to a

small group of children while a boy hammers a small board on top of a larger board to make what he calls a boat. Throughout the room children are exploring different things.

Acorns, Indian corn, sea shells and animal pelts are just a few of the items that children investigate, smell and touch at the science station. There is also a (unisex) kitchen station and nature center.

THIS DOES not mean that students wander around aimlessly from station to station without supervision. There is one teacher for every four students in the program.

Since the Early Learning Center is affiliated with John Wesley College and Metropolitan Guidance Clinic, students from that college help supervise along with students from Oakland Community College and Madonna College.

There are three different sessions, one for 3-4 year olds, another for 4-6 year olds and a special kindergarten readiness session. But the sessions are flexible because they realize children don't all develop at the same rate.

This is the second year for the Early Learning Center and the next school begins Sept. 15. The center will accommodate 80 children and registration is going on now.

Ms. Wood, director of the center, left the public school system because she felt stifled by their insistence on a day-to-day lesson plan.

"Our program isn't rapidly structured but we do have specific goals we hope to accomplish," she said. "The most important goal, according to Ms. Wood, is to stimulate children. The filmstrips, seashells, monkey bars, scissors, and picture books are

there to encourage creativity of expression and promote a good self-concept in the child's mind and body.

"What some people don't understand," Ms. Wood says, "is that preschoolers can be as bored as an adult. And a bored child is a child who isn't learning."

The most intangible tool in teaching is love, says Ms. Wood.

"For example if a child comes to the center feeling sad, we don't tell him not to worry," Ms. Wood said. "We believe in hugging, loving, and talking to the child. We ask him why he feels bad. Maybe he's sad because his daddy went away on business. We say we're sad too but his daddy went away and tell him we understand why he feels that way. Then we explain that he'll be back and maybe he'll bring him something."

Crime skyrockets in summer months

By CRAIG PIEDHUSA

Daniel Byrnes, newly appointed director of public safety, called last month the worst for crime in the City of Farmington's history and said things do not appear to be improving in August.

"Vandalism is up 62 per cent over last year and has increased 36 per cent according to the department's figures. Bicycle thefts especially have reached startling proportions this summer," said Byrnes. Eighty bicycles have been stolen recently in Farmington by a local group of 15- and 16-year-olds, Byrnes says.

"JULY WAS AN EXTREMELY bad month for burglaries, larceny and auto delinquency," said Byrnes in his first report to the city commission as public safety director. "I know it sounds funny since we came before this board a month ago and told you crime was down 18 per cent from last year. But that was before we had the figures for July."

Byrnes complimented his investigative crew, saying it has solved nearly 50 per cent of the forcible entry burglaries and seven out of 25 attempted burglary cases so far this year.

"But this outbreak of vandalism is frustrating," says Byrnes. "Traditionally vandalism is the highest crime to solve. There's usually no motive other than the kick out of destroying something. It's usually done on the run, like the instances we've had where people in a moving car bang out their window and bash in the sides of cars with a tire iron. Unless someone gives positive identification all we can do is hit back and take reports. They don't follow a pattern."

IN THE PAST few weeks, business and home windows have been de-

stroyed by ball bearings shot from a high-powered slingshot. Among the damaged businesses are Federal's Department Store, the Professional Pavilion and the Burger King.

Byrnes says the estimated cost of some of these large windows is \$700 apiece.

In the Professional Pavilion, a ball bearing went through two plate glass windows and put a dent in the back wall," said Byrnes.

Byrnes told the council about increasing incidents of "lawn streaking." A lawn streaker drives his car on someone's lawn races his accelerator and puts the car into gear. This tears the sod up in the process.

"This is a serious problem when they pack a lawn that is equipped with a sprinkler system," added Byrnes.

Residents in Chatham Hills subdivision have reported this type of vandalism.

MUCH CRIME appears to have been committed by young people. The bicycle thefts, Byrnes says, can be traced to about four or five local youths. None of the bikes was recovered, but the youths have been picked up.

Stolen tape decks and radios from cars are often traced to young people, Byrnes said.

Byrnes is hard-pressed to find a reason for the summer jump in Farmington crime.

"Nationally there's been a 16 to 18 per cent increase in crime," Byrnes said, "but we've got a problem right now. I think partly it's because of the bad economic situation, but I also think there's a lack of morality in the country and a growing disrespect for property."

He repeated his call for residents to call in when they see something suspicious rather than trying to rationalize it away.

Council approves baseball marathon

Noon of Aug. 20 marked the scheduled start of a 24-hour 18-day baseball marathon for the American Cancer Society at Farmington City Park.

The city council approved the group's request to hold the marathon but warned its organizers that the game will be called on account of noise if the police department receives a number of complaints from neighbors about early morning cheers and jeers.

The marathon was held at the park last year and brought quite a few complaints from elderly residents of the

Riverland Apartment complex which is near the outfield, said city officials.

Diane Connetto appeared before the council Monday night and assured it there wouldn't be any problem with noise this year because of beefed-up adult supervision. The adults, she explained, are between 18 and 25.

The council told Public Safety Director Daniel Byrnes it was his responsibility to call off the marathon if numerous complaints were generated from noise.

"We'll put the monkey on your back Mr. Byrnes," said Councilman John Richardson.

Schools refuse to pay Gill costs

The City of Farmington Hills will have to do without financial aid from the Farmington School District when paving Gill Road.

The board voted this week again to pay \$32,000 for the paving project. The district originally was asked to pay a portion of the cost because Power Junior High and Gill Elementary schools are on the street.

The decision had been uncertain b-

cause district officials were waiting to see the financial situation at the beginning of the 1975-76 school year. The final decision came after the district learned it will lose an estimated \$120,000 in state aid because the state legislature recently changed the state aid formula.

The board has sent a letter to Hill's Mayor Earl Oppenheimer saying it is the district's main concern to educate, rather than pave roads. The let-

ter also stressed the district was holding a tight \$23 million budget.

In the past parents and school officials have expressed a concern over the road's condition, which they felt may hinder emergency vehicles and school buses. The potholed and rutted road has been recommended for paving since before Farmington Hills became a city more than two years ago.

District officials originally were quoted \$6,000 as their share of the \$90,000 repaving work. Later the amount was amended to \$14,000 because of the depth of the school property.

A decision to pave the road with concrete instead of asphalt and general inflation led to the percentage of school payment changed. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$200,000.

Help yourself

A motorist using a new self-serve gas station Sunday took the manager literally.

A driver in a red Mazda pumped \$7.35 of gasoline into his auto and then drove off without paying, the Livonia police reported.

The do-it-yourself incident was in the Speedway station, 27416 Seven Mile.



End of the line

Yesterday's sparkling, streamlined beauty is today's scrap steel. Peter Kivell loads a hunk of a former car on to a truckload of loose parts.

For the story and pictures of a Farmington Hills junkyard see page 3-A. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

inside

"TERRIFIC RESPONSE"

Mrs. Cindy Seal happily told us how pleased she was with the fast action we had placed in our paper. "The response was so terrific," she said, "that I could have sold 50 bikes!"

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