

Helping Hands volunteers gear for crime alert

By LYNN ORR

The suburbs are very vulnerable to crime, says Richard Murphy of the Farmington Hills Police detective bureau.

"Even if we had 100 men on the street, we'd still have crime," he says. But a group of Farmington area volunteers are attempting to be the "eyes and ears" of the community when the police cannot.

The "Helping Hands" program literally involves placing a poster of a hand in your window to alert children that your house is a safe place to go when they're in trouble.

But nearly 100 volunteers have discovered there's more to the job. In cooperation with the Farmington

Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) Council, Farmington and Farmington Hills police officers are conducting training sessions for the volunteers, and PTA president Donna Tupper is pleased with the turnout thus far.

The volunteers must be prepared to welcome the child in trouble, notify the police, and pay attention to anything the child says.

"Don't panic," is Lt. John Santamuro's advice. "When you panic, it's contagious," says the City of Farmington deputy director. And if a child has been accosted or molested, what he or she says immediately afterward may be crucial to the apprehension of the perpetrator.

It's very important to listen to

what the child says," Murphy told the volunteers this week in a session at the Farmington library. To make that job easier and more efficient, the volunteers will record information on police-supplied incident cards.

"Don't worry if what he or she says doesn't make sense," Murphy advises. "A child can report that someone looked like he was going to church. It's the child's way of saying he was dressed up."

The volunteer's primary job is to notify the police, who will in turn notify parents. But after that, the volunteer's job is to react like a good mother or father and attempt to keep the situation under control.

While both Farmington and Farmington Hills police have recorded few incidents of accosting and molesting, the officers believe strongly in the importance of preparing children for such occurrences.

Although it may seem that children couldn't be unaware of the dangers in trusting strangers, many children have misconceptions about what a stranger is, Murphy says.

"Do you know what a stranger is?" I ask kids, and they tell me 'A monster.' Make sure your kids know what you're talking about when you say a stranger."

ALTHOUGH TWO films aimed at warning children of the dangers of strangers have been shown in Farmington schools, Murphy believes some children fail to understand the reality of the situation.

"Some kids feel they can whip anyone," he says. "I ask them, 'What would you do if a guy came up to you?' and they tell me how they'll use karate. Those are the kids I worry about the most."

Scream, run and knock on doors, is what Murphy tells the children. And he advises parents to make sure children walk to and from school in pairs, as well as report suspicious activities to the police.

"If you're thinking about calling, then you should call," he says. "I'd rather check it out and have it be nothing than end up with a tragedy."

"You know what's suspicious," Santamuro advises.

The volunteers also learned about what to do if a confirmed instance of accosting or molesting is reported through the "telephone tree," the Helping Hands phone system.

The volunteers will keep an eye out for cars or persons fitting descriptions, as well as making sure they're available if a child should run into trouble.



John Santamuro



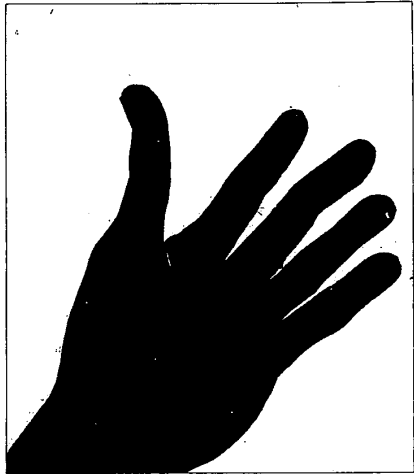
Richard Murphy



Donna Tupper



More than 30 volunteers turned out at the Farmington Library this week during one session of the "Helping Hands" volunteer training program.



This "Helping Hands" poster in a window of a home is a safety signal to children in need of help. (Staff photos by Harry Mauthe)

Houston confab scores a victory

By SHIRLEE IDEN

About the only loss the Michigan delegation to the Houston National Women's Conference experienced last week was when they lost one of their number in Dallas.

One of the women, weary from being confined to a convention and airline seat, got off the chartered plane in Dallas to jog and subsequently missed the flight home.

The Michigan women were part of a well-orchestrated march to the adoption of 25 out of 26 planks of a formal "Plan of Action."

Local delegates, like most others, compromised when necessary to pass the series of recommendations forwarded to Congress and President Carter.

A plank on minority rights was made more specific to the concerns of Hispanic, black, American Indian, Asian-American and native Alaskan native women as well as emphasizing the double discrimination minority women have experienced.

Other notable victories included passage of resolutions supporting ERA, abortion, lesbian rights, and government funded shelters for battered women.

THE CONFERENCE proposals included support of increased women's opportunities in business, government and industry provided low-cost, non-sectarian child care centers and federal government sponsored centers for the treatment and prevention of child abuse.

Women asked for progressive programs in the areas of credit, employment, health, insurance, rape treatment and prevention, prison condition and medical and social services for elderly women.

The conference agenda was passed over the objections of a vocal minority of anti-feminists (representing about one-fifth of the 20,000 in attendance) who said the conference recommendations would "destroy the American family." The conservative anti-feminists also objected to the \$2 million federal funding of the conference.

Post-convention reaction to the feminist proposals included that they were "pie in the sky" which will cost multi-millions.

Area congressmen seem to harbor no such fears.

William Brodhead (D-Detroit) said the meeting set forth an agenda for action on concerns shared by millions of women.

"THESE ARE concerns that the majority will agree with, such as equal pay for equal work and help for

battered wives," he said.

"Now is the time for the legislators to overlook the controversy, and to examine the program and debate and give it serious attention."

Brodhead said the Houston meeting was a productive time which produced a maximum amount of useful work.

"There were complaints that all views were not presented, but we should make any future effort representative of the views of all concerned," he said.

Congressman James Blanchard (D-Pleasant Ridge) thought the women were wise to reject a cabinet level agency strictly for women.

"In that type of agency, things seem to get buried," he said. "It's far better to think that all departments of the government would be concerned with the social problems that the Houston meeting addressed."

"Most of this is apple pie stuff, that is, these are things that should already be provided such as humane treatment in rape, credit and child abuse."

Blanchard does not consider the program costly.

"It's a comprehensive program but the social costs of not implementing these programs are far worse than seeing they are carried out."

HE SAID he is trying to keep an open mind on the abortion question still deadlocked in Congress.

"I've been voting with the senate on abortion because I think there must be provisions for such an alternative for women who are victims of rape or incest or whose lives are in danger," he said. "It's ludicrous to try to legislate morality."

Blanchard said he thinks the government should be out of the abortion controversy. "It should not pay for them but it shouldn't prohibit them," he said.

Blanchard said he has heard the charges that the women's movement is a captive of lesbians and extremists.

"It certainly doesn't appear to be the case when you watch mainstream women like Betty Ford and Roslyn Carter taking an active part in it."

Blanchard missed most of the coverage of the Houston meeting since he was in the middle-east where he witnessed Anwar Sadat's address to the Israeli Knesset.

"However, I plan to attend the ERA fundraiser on Dec. 9 at Orchestra Hall," he said. "The social costs will be far greater to this country if we don't allow women freedom of development than if we do. Such as not allowing a woman the opportunity to work because of the lack of child care facilities."

Math scores hit jackpot

More than one-third of the 53 Detroit Country Day School students who took Part I of the Michigan Mathematics Prize Competition in October scored in the 89th percentile or higher.

Mark Francis, a senior who is student council president, scored in the 99th percentile.

The statewide average of the 24,000 students who took the test was 14.3, and the average of the Country Day participants was 11.13.

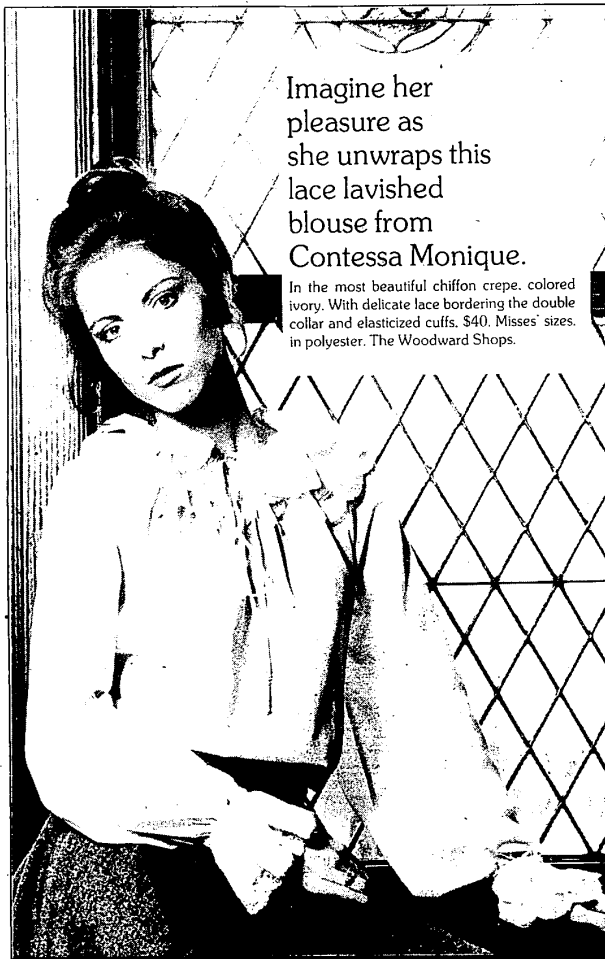
The following students are now eligible to enter Part II of the competition as a result of their high scores: Alex Begin, Eric Borman and Cindy Hoglund, all of Birmingham; Jeff Modell and Larry Webb of Bloomfield Hills; Sam Klein and Lou Millman of West Bloomfield; Scott Smillie of Orchard Lake; Steve Epstein, Tom Stuhlberg and Larry Williams of Southfield; Jim Sinar and John Sinar of Farmington Hills; Sam Sot of Livonia; Joel Ager of Pleasant Ridge; Mark Unger of Huntington Woods; Phil Stern of Pontiac, and Mark Francis of Detroit.

The annual competition is a statewide examination intended to foster a wider interest in mathematics and to identify and recognize students who possess mathematical ability.

The scores in Part I and Part II are combined to determine prize winners. Last year, \$7,300 in scholarship prizes ranging from \$8,000 to \$100 was awarded to 44 students.

Student teacher finishes school

Lorraine Mansfield, 23006 Frederick, Farmington, is completing a student teaching assignment this fall at Alexander Elementary School, Adrian.



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