



"School is a waste of time. I'd rather be working," said Linda Husband, a baker at the Sarah Fisher Home and an 18-year-old senior at North Farmington High.



"It's interesting working with people and learning their needs," said Sandy Enders, Farmington High School senior and nurse aid at the Oak Hill Nursing Home.

Students learn of life by working in business

By HOWARD RONTAL

The 35 co-op students at Farmington's three senior high schools bring home a combined weekly income of at least \$10,500. To the work study student it can mean a new car, a college education, new clothes, a trip out west. It can also mean the beginning of a career in the work-a-day world.

As far as Jim concerned the money is incidental, said Richard Caton, the trade and industrial coordinator for the Farmington schools cooperative work study program. "I'm concerned about the training."

Cooperative education offers the student who has a desire to pursue a particular vocational high school based training in the skills of that vocation and then a job in which those particular skills are used. A student taking a drafting course might be placed in an architect's office. Students in the nursing arts courses would spend half their day in a hospital or nursing home. A student who works in the Farmington High School printing department learning the trade by doing the school system's printing may run an offset press after lunch.

The Farmington high schools offer 15 different vocational training programs spread across the three Farmington high schools and the Southwest Oakland Vocational Education Center.

THE AFTERNOON JOB is treated as an extension of the student's formal education. The job boss is expected to use his co-op student in work related to his training, not sweeping the floor or running the coffee machine. The boss also grades the student on his work record.



Richard Caton, a coordinator in the Farmington Cooperative Education Program, "Co-op is a training program, rather than a job placement service."

We don't just send him out on a job and forget about him. For all practical purposes, he's attending school," said Caton. Four of the six credits the student earns are applicable to graduation.

To get in the work study program a student must take a vocational training class, have transportation to and from work, and have his parents' consent.

We don't take any student who walks in the door. There has to be a direct correlation between the job and the training," said Caton.

Perceptive employers, too, are scrutinized. Co-op coordinators, there are three of them besides Caton: Rich Fernald, Jane Kilmer and Hildegarde Gross, must put an unofficial seal of approval on working conditions, both physical and moral. They must also decide whether the job really offers the student real experience in his vocation.

I wouldn't place a kid who wanted to be a chef in a pizza parlor because there isn't sufficient training that takes place there to give credit as a chef," said Caton.

STUDENTS START WORK at the minimum wage—around \$2.10 per hour in most job classifications—with each according to Mrs. Gross, some employers start their co-ops at a slightly lower rate to justify the expense of training a new employee. Rules are negotiable.

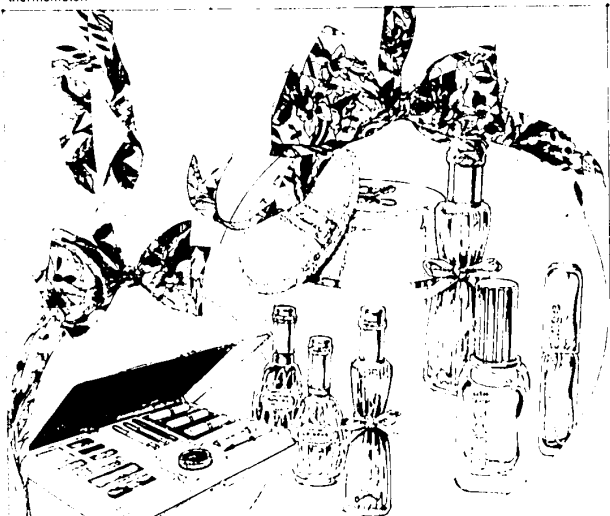
Some students stay with their co-op employer after graduation. Caton lists 14 co-op student graduates now in college getting a degree in engineering, who still works for the same firm—making \$10,000 a year.

Students in co-op still have to take all the high school's required academic courses. When they return the graduate in gown and mortar board they are still a ready for either a college education or life in the school of hard knocks.

Staff photos by Harry Mauthe



A nursing instructor at Farmington High School shows a student how to find the mercury in a thermometer.



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"Good experience. I like printing and I'd like to go to California to school," said Dale Thornton, a 17-year-old senior at Farmington High School who works afternoons at the United Northwestern Realty Association.