

# Economy crunch causes vicious circle for FYA

By LORAIN McCLISH

The Farmington Youth Association (FYA) is looking for money, people and materials to pick up the slack caused by federal budget cut-backs which filter down to effect the local agency and the people it serves.

The sagging economy causes a vicious circle for the FYA volunteers. While they have less money to work with, the tensions that surround unemployment and inflation contribute heavily to unrest and frustration in youth. So as the money is going down, the caseloads are going up.

Pat Prendergast, now in his second year as chairman of FYA, said the organization has been running just level with the water in its programs designed to prevent juvenile delinquency in Farmington and Farmington Hills.

With the recent cut-back at the county level that caused the lay-off of four youth counselors, the program is in

danger of floundering.

"The first cut-back gave us one less staff member to work with in our Summer Activities Center (for teens)," Prendergast said.

"Now we've been informed of the loss of county youth counselors when all the indicators point to the fact that our caseloads are going to be heavier."

"There are people in the community that can help us and we need them. We'll make it if we can reach them."

FARMINGTON Youth Assistance is composed of about 65 persons who volunteer their time and talents which touch the lives of about 120 families at any one given time.

The volunteers work with one paid case worker and one paid secretary, funded by the county.

"With about 100 new referrals a year, we're strapped without more help," Prendergast said. "We're extracting all that can be expected of

them. Now one more grant has dried off, the referrals are still coming and we have been asked by the (Oakland County) Juvenile Court Administrators to absorb the cases of those they have who live in our district.

"If we can't do this it will mean something like 60 kids and their families hanging in limbo."

Prime purpose of FYA is to prevent juvenile delinquency in the community. If it had a motto it would be "Prevention by Intervention."

The agency does this through its programs of individual counseling, sponsoring classes to improve parenting skills, and sponsoring the activities center for the teens through the summer.

MONEY COMES from the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills and the Farmington Public Schools.

"We've thought about organized fund-raising, of course," Prendergast said. "But our sentiments are not wholeheartedly behind fund-raising. We'd be diverting efforts and manpower from the real business at hand."

"We have a large number of our group working on a Program Development Committee to develop new and creative ways to create good mental health here and that is our purpose."

"Manpower and goods might be just as important to us as money to get the job done."

Prendergast asks clubs, businesses and individuals in the community who wish to help to call the FYA office, 476-3840.

"We'll get back to you," he said. Prendergast works with FYA vice chairman, Jay Murray. John Pinkerton is the FYA case worker whose offices are in the downstairs room of Farmington City Hall on Liberty Street and Grand River.



The horseback riding trio are Patty Hope (left), Bob Brown and Scott Earehart. They are three of 50 who boarded a Tuesday bus for a day at Highland Lake Stables, one of the every-Tuesday field trip days scheduled throughout the summer from the Teens Summer Activities Center. (Photo by Sandi Horne)

## Teen center attracts about 70 every night

By SANDI HORNE

The Farmington Summer Activities Center opened late in June to offer area teen-agers a place to spend evenings and is now attracting about 70 persons every evening.

Located in Shawwassee Recreation Center on Shawwassee Road, between Orchard Lake and Nine Mile roads, its program is organized on a drop-in basis. Teens are welcomed from 4-8 p.m. and from 7-10 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Tuesdays are set aside for field trips.

The activities center is sponsored by Farmington Youth Assistance (FYA) and funded by United Community Services, Farmington Public Schools and the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills. There is no charge for participants. All teen-agers need to attend is a signed permission slip.

DARREL EMERSON, the center's new director, says things are running smoothly.



Duane Moody mugs for the camera during the Tuesday field trip that took teens to Bonaventure for a roller skating party. (Photo by Sandi Horne)

"A lot of teen-agers are turning out. We've had very little trouble. The kids have been very cooperative."

The center is bigger this year, space-wise, since its move from William Grace Elementary School. The staff has been able to amass more sports equipment and electronic games than last year.

"The economic situation has a lot to do with the amount of teens that come every night," Emerson said. "They have little money so the free center offers an opportunity to do things they might otherwise not be able to do."

The Livonia resident added, "I wish we had one where I live."

Activities in the center include pool, pinball, air hockey, ping pong, an open gym and various types of arts, crafts and dancing.

Those who choose to work with clay, paint, draw or learn a few new dance steps.

The bus is always filled to its maximum of 50 for the field trips, and trips still in the offing are booked solid.

OF THE CANOE trip scheduled for mid-August, Joanne Alle and Chris Andres are both sure it would be the best of the lot.

"I went canoeing last year and had a good time. This is a good place to go because all of my friends hang out here," Ms. Andrews said.

Other comments from the center's regulars were similar.

"It keeps kids off the streets and it gives everyone something to do," said 17-year-old Carl Zatsick.

"It's a lot better than being bored all night," said 14-year-old Rhonda Koglin.

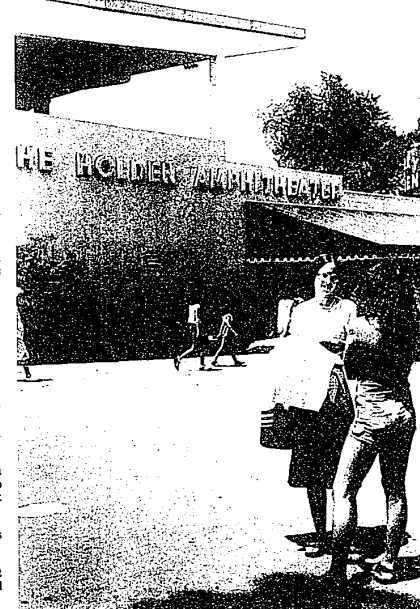
"There are no drugs here, no bunches of punks, and I come here to play pinball," said Larry Burns, 15.

"I like the field trips and coming here to play pinball," added 13-year-old Steve Kedzierski.

Assistant director Elizabeth Dennis believes the casual atmosphere of the center is the reason for its success.

"Kids want freedom to relax and be with their friends," she said. "They don't want any pressure on them and the center is serving the community by channeling a lot of energy in positive directions."

She's at work now, "selling the kids on what's available to them in the creative arts and dancing classes, and they have to be sold on it."



Elizabeth Dennis, assistant director at the summer activities center, checks the map in Detroit Zoo for center regular Ann Rouse during a Tuesday field trip. (Photo by Sandi Horne)

## Daily head count up

John Pinkerton, caseworker for Farmington Youth Assistance (FYA), says that as the summer has worn on, the daily head count has steadily gone up at the teen summer activities center.

"It'll probably average out to about 85 a day," he said.

The agency had a proposed budget of \$8,000 to run the center this year, but received \$6,500.

"That does not include in-kind ser-

## 'Children: The Challenge' classes open in September

"Children: The Challenge," offers parenting skills to area residents by Farmington Youth Assistance (FYA). The class takes its name from its textbook, by Rudolph Dreikurs.

Former class participants lead discussions groups sharing techniques that will motivate children to function cooperatively, to respect themselves and

others, and take responsibility for his or her own actions.

Classes begin late next month in several locations. Parents have the option of attending afternoon or evening sessions.

Registrations will be taken after Labor Day, by calling the FYA office, 476-3840.

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