

Course PEPs up communication skills

Thursday, October 30, 1980 (F8A)



Jane Williams, FAAC's prevention and education coordinator, handles the Personal Effectiveness Project (PEP). (Staff photo by Randy Boist)

Improving personal skills is the goal of a five-week course taught by staff at the Farmington Area Advisory Council (FAAC), the local family counseling agency supported by government.

Called Personal Effectiveness Project (PEP), the course deals with a different topic weekly: communication, resolving arguments and relaxation, positive thinking, decision-making and problem solving.

PEP is run in small groups for youth and adults in an informal setting at FAAC, 23450 Middlebelt. Staff organizer Jane Williams says the class is for everyone.

"I don't know of anyone who couldn't benefit from some assertiveness training, relaxation, or decision-making," says Ms. Williams, a former high school counselor with a master's degree in guidance and counseling.

Ms. Williams, FAAC's prevention and education coordinator, is training professional staff volunteers to teach the course so that demand can be met.

This is the fifth year of PEP, which is funded by a state grant.

It began as an idea for dealing with prevention of drug abuse, but it's grown more encompassing.

"In the 1970s, a scarce tactics approach was used regarding drug experimentation," Ms. Williams said. "Kids were told if they smoked marijuana, they were going to die. That didn't work because it wasn't true, obviously."

Other referrals came from churches and schools.

"A lot of normal persons are taking the program," Ms. Williams said. "We're getting a lot of adults who want to learn how to deal with their youngsters."

The sessions are two hours long, one night a week. Audio visual equipment is used to highlight lecture material. Group participation and discussion is also an important part of PEP.

"We want people to use these skills in daily things they do: to learn decision making, to express their feelings, to solve daily problems."

Eight to 15 participants is an ideal group size, Ms. Williams said. Adolescents are grouped together, but younger and older adults are mixed.

Participants can pay for the class on a donation basis. Church or other organizations can make a group contribution.

"Adolescents would benefit most from the course," Ms. Williams said. "Parents would also benefit, as would anyone in-between looking for skills."

For more information on PEP, call Ms. Williams at 477-6767.



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As a loan representative, DeChants arranges commercial loans for businesses in the metropolitan Detroit area. With the bank three years, DeChants has worked as a credit analyst, loan representative, assistant loan officer and loan officer in the bank's credit administration division.

He holds a BA in economics from Claremont Men's College and an MBA in finance and accounting from the University of Chicago.

"THE NEXT TAC was to inform them of the dangers of drug use on the pretense that education would curb abuse. That only gave us well informed drug users."

The third effort was to look at why people abuse drugs. Reasons ranged from a lack of personal skills, not knowing how to make decisions to not knowing how to say no to friends.

"At first, the class was made up of referrals from the Farmington Hills Police juvenile division," Ms. Williams said. "These were good kids, not juve-

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