

Sensory delights await the mentally-impaired

By Diane Hofness
staff writer

Farmington Hills Boy Scout James Dohr is leaving a trail of good deeds behind him.

In an effort to become an Eagle Scout, Jim is spearheading the design and construction of a sensitivity trail for severely mentally impaired students at the Cloverdale Developmental Training Center on Freedom Road in Farmington.

"Jim came to us wanting to know what he could do to help the center," said Doug Smith, supervisor of special education.

Dohr explained to Smith that he wanted to give a gift of community service and finish a project that would require leadership and supervisory skills. A project of this sort would fulfill one of a list of requirements to achieve Eagle Scout rank.

Dohr, 15, is a sophomore at Detroit Catholic Central and a member of Boy Scout Troop 389, chartered to Nardin Park Methodist Church. He is the son of Paul and Elaine Dohr of 25514 Kilreigh.

He said he thought of approaching the center because his mother works there as a substitute aide.

Together Dohr, Smith and occupational therapist Dorothy Magee developed the sensitivity trail idea.

"The idea interested me and it seemed like it would help the students at the school," Dohr said.

The 60-foot trail, which has been under construction since Aug. 9, will offer a potpourri of sensual delights. The

barefoot pathoer will walk through sections of sand, gravel, pebbles, bark, and wood chips. Bordering the trail will be aromatic and ornamental non-toxic shrubs.

Jim also plans to put an eye-level bird feeder beside the trail and build railroad-tie seats beside the path.

Some of the training center's 72 students are blind, others are deaf, others have deficient tactile senses. This nature walk, Dohr says, will offer something everyone can experience and enjoy with the senses they do have. The trail also will help develop weak senses.

"Listening, seeing, feeling — our kids need more of these sensory experiences than the average child needs," said Magee. "Before we can develop higher thinking, we must develop our senses first."

"Planning has been the hardest part for me," said Dohr. "I've had a lot of help from the boys, and I appreciate that."

"It's a big job for a 15-year-old to undertake," said Smith. "Every time Jim organizes a work group, he has to call and see who is around from his troop to help him."

Funding for the sensitivity trail is coming from varied sources. The center donated funds it collected from parents and friends. In some cases, local businesses are donating or discounting needed materials.

"This is a fine example of community spirit and service by young people," said Smith.

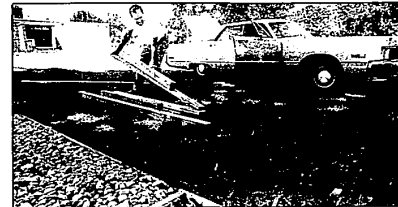
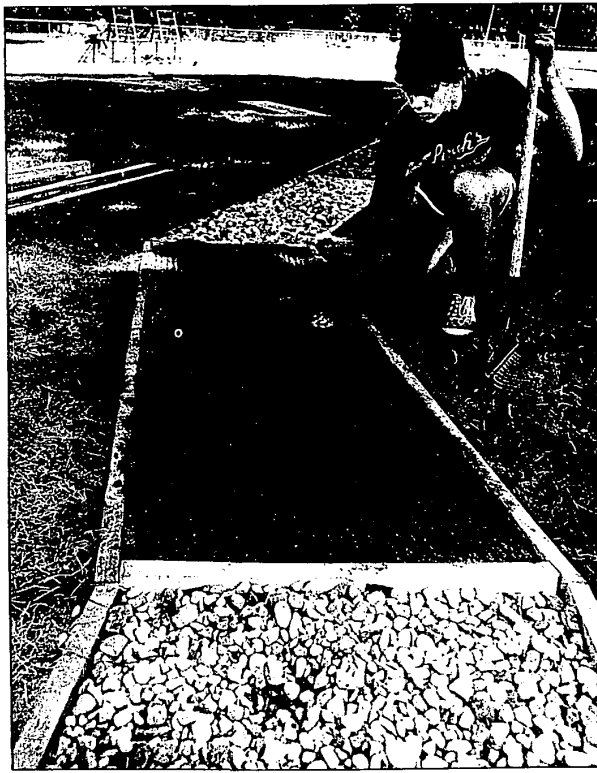
"It's good to see a young man accepting responsibility and offering himself."



A variety of materials are used on the trail, including small stones.

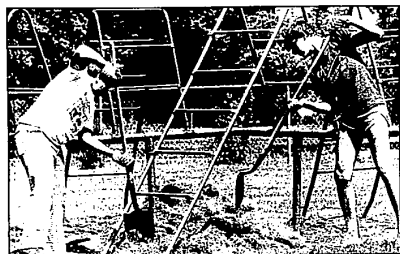


James Dohr designed and helped construct the sensitivity trail.



Using his hand and a rake (above), James adds some finishing touches to the 60 foot trail. James' father Paul Dohr (left), helps unload lumber that will be assembled into railings and benches along the path. Work is expected to be completed by Labor Day.

Staff photos



James Stephens and James Dohr also helped refurbish some of the playground equipment at Cloverdale.

INSIDE ANGLES

THE FARMINGTON Founders Day Festival is history but the contest results have just trickled in. In the July 27 pet show judges Jan Dolan (former Farmington Hills mayor), Jerry Horner (assistant city manager in Farmington) and Steve Barnaby (editor of the Farmington Observer) judged in 10 different categories. In the most exciting matched pair of pets competition, Scott Worthington won with his Himalayan kittens, Dolly and Molly; Lisa Ingram came in second with schnauzers Fritz and Heidi; and Pamela Schack's cats Franklin and Franky C.C. took third place honors. Most talented pet was Jim Godwin's beagle, Herbie, who showed his stuff in the 30 seconds he was allotted. Julie Kiels' mixed breed dog, Tawny, came in second with Melinda Pantiedodie's poodle, Snoki, in third. In best presentation of a caged pet, Kevin Jankowski's hermit crabs, Larry, Moe and Sam, took top prize with Mike Kennedy's albino hamster, Alfie, placing second and Shawn Smith's teddy bear hamster, Herbie, coming in third. The laziest pet (rules state all entrants must be live animals) was hamster named Teddy Bear placing second in the yawn category. The pet with the waggiest tail was Kara Karbu's cocker spaniel, Buffy; Steve Palajac's mixed breed dog, Bo, came in second and Elizabeth McConaghe's cockapoo, Buttons, came in third. Most unusual pet was Vincent Bergamo's Nubian goat, Tina. Second most unusual was Tiffany McPhail's sheep named Elizabeth and in third was Traci Newton's cockatoo, Sinbad. Shaggiest pet honors went to Mandy Briezman's Tibetan terrier, Melong; Niki Poirier's miniature sheep dog, Bean, came in second and in third, was Tina Kraus' mixed breed dog, Flecky. The tallest pet in competition was Kristen Cianciolo's Appaloosa named K.C. with an Arabian horse named Ganymede owned by Michele Hockett coming in second and Troy Cordes' Rottweiler, Brax, coming in third. Best dressed pet and owner honors went to Kelly Benefiel and her guinea pig, Schucky. In second was Amy Tarazan and her mixed breed dog, Heidi, followed by Michael Kaiser and his Chinese Pug dog, Puddy. The smallest pet (insects not included) was Randy Galbraith Jr.'s brine shrimp, Bruno. Tony Perkins placed second with his zebra tetra fish, Stripper, followed by Michelle Kaiser's salamander named Rex. The pet show was sponsored by the Plaza Veterinary Hospital and Pets in Particulars pet store. Trophies were awarded to the winners in each category.

IN THE DRAWING held at the festival 30 prizes were awarded to lucky ticket stub holders. Tom Loomis won first prize of three days and four nights in Las Vegas or Atlantic City, a \$650 value. Second-place prize of three days and two nights in Chicago was won by W.J. Mauder, a prize worth \$250. Third prize of \$100 cash went to Scott Fetzer. Twenty-seven more prizes were awarded. Winners in the smaller drawings were John Szostkowski, John Fromhart, David Morrese, J.F. Keast, Lydia Nordstrom, James Kemler, Ludwig Moe, J. Johnson, Wayne Swartz, Edinger, M. Craig, Shirley Cady, Elizabeth Wielsted, Alex Kozosky, Cath Carter, Helen Geoffron, F. Kanrik, Paul King, Janet Kristoff, Tom Loomis, Leon Kohls, Bob Smith William J. Ruskin, Sarah D'Ascenzo, Dennis Butler, Susan Ehlly and Ann Wasserfallen. Total value of all 30 prizes was close to \$1,600, according to chamber of commerce officials.

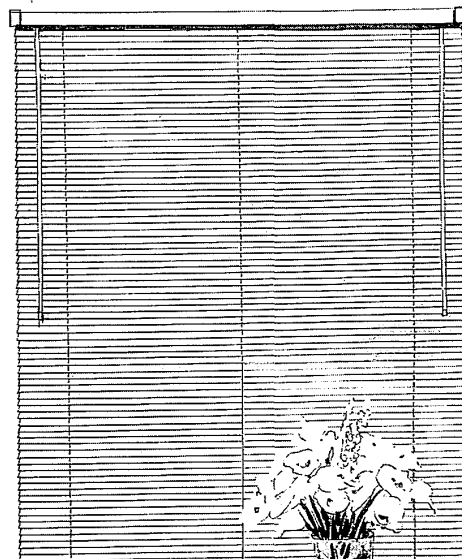
LARRY NOZERO of Farmington will perform with jazz legend Alberta Hunter at the Music Hall 8:30 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 4 during the Detroit-Montreux Jazz Festival. Tickets are \$10 and \$13. Nozero plays saxophone, flute and other wind instruments.

MUSIC LOVERS or just plain lovers can attend a free concert by the Tony Russo Jazz Combo featuring wedding music from around the world. The concert is 6:45 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the center court of Twelve Oaks Mall at 27500 Novi Road, Novi. Russo, a conductor, trombonist and violinist has performed with the Detroit Concert Band and is a former member of the Johnny Tradell Band. He's presently a music teacher in the Dearborn Public Schools. The mall wedding selections will include nuptial music from Germany, Italy, France, Austria, South America and traditional American ballads — possibly even "Spanish Eyes."

THE GARTER SNAPPERS musical group, directed by Dorothy Whaley of Farmington Hills will entertain the American Legion auxiliary at its national convention on Aug. 25. They will play at an all-states dinner during the convention held at the Hyatt Regency, Chicago.

MICHAEL G. NASSAR will enter the University of Michigan school of dentistry this fall. The son of Fred and Mary Nassar of Glouster Circle, Farmington Hills, Nassar was accepted in the school after taking a pre-dental exam and completing the first semester of his junior year at U of M.

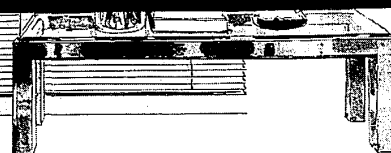
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Professional volunteer help needed The help of professionals is needed by Farmington Youth Assistance (FYA). The service organization is sponsored by the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills, Oakland County and those with leadership qualities are Juvenile Court and Farmington School District. Its aim is to reduce juvenile delinquency and enhance family life. Interested lawyers, teachers, CPAs and those with leadership qualities are asked to contact the FYA office, 476-3840.



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