Library seeks patrons in shopping mall

By Joan Adamczakstaff writer

Shopping with small children and impatient spouses can be a trying experience. One solution to this problem is to leave the children and the spouse and fly to Bermuda. If you can't afford this, an alternative would be to leave them at the newest branch of the Farmington Community Library located in Muirwood Square.

Located on the northwest corner of Grand River and Drake Roads, the library contains a circulating paperback collection for readers of all ages.

"We consider this branch to be promotional, to see if residents in Farmington and Farmington Hills would like to use this when they shop," says Beverely Papal, assistant director of the Farmington Community Library.

The concept of the library originated with Jerry Beznos, one of the owners of Beznos Corporation who is providing the space free of charge to the library.

"I have always been interested in reading and have even built libraries in our apartment complexes such as Muirwood Apartments in Farmington and Aldinghrooke in West Bloomfield,"says Beznos.

The idea is to make libraries more accessible to the community and to make more people aware of Muirwood Square.

"The Farmington Library people are so dynamic — they picked right up on the idea and it took right off," Beznos says.

Papal agrees the branch will be advantageous for both the Beznos Corporation and the Farmington Library.

"The library will attract people to the shopping area and we will be able to reach more community members and get them involved with the library.

"Demographically it's a great place for a library," says Papal. "There is a high concentration of people for such a small geographic area."

Staffing the library is accomplished entirely through volunteers from the community like Sharon Negus.

"It's relaxing here," says Negus, "and I like working with people on a one-to-one basis."

Negus estimates that 250 books have been checked out since the library opened on April 7. "Once the weather gets better people from the neighboring apartment complexes will come in," she adds.

The library buys very few paperback books because a majority of the books are given as gifts from residents.

"We've been very lucky," says Papal. "We've had a large cortege of volunteers from the community who are willing to work."

Papal sees the Muirwood branch as another avenue to address the people of Farmington and Farmington Hills who presently are not using the other libraries.

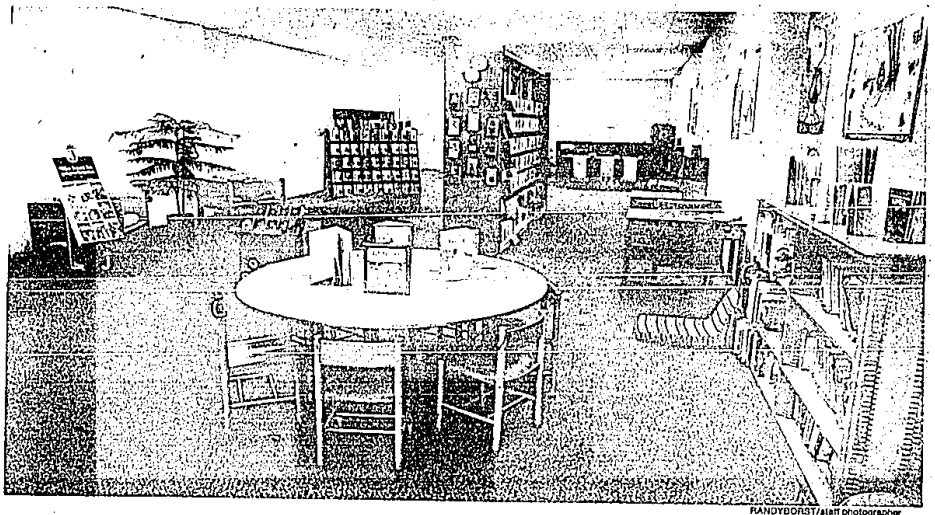
"This community has always been supportive of library services and very active in programs and services provided by the library," says Papal.

In addition to providing paperback books, the Muirwood branch also offers a storytime featuring Sesame Street characters beginning at 10:00 a.m. April 26 - June 14. More programs will be added depending on how long the branch will be open.

"This is strictly a pilot program," Papal says of the library. "At the end of three months we will meet with the Benzos Corporation and if it's been mutually advantageous for them we will that discuss continuing the library."

Benzos shares her optimisim.

"We are thrilled with the prospect of the library and hope they will stay for a long time. It really depends on how much traffic the library generates in the shopping center," he said.



RANDYDORST/staff photographer

The newest branch of the Farmington Community Library is located in Muirwood Square at the northwest corner of Grand River and Drake Road. The library offers a large selection of paperback books for readers of all ages in addition to several reading programs aimed at preschoolers.

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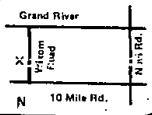

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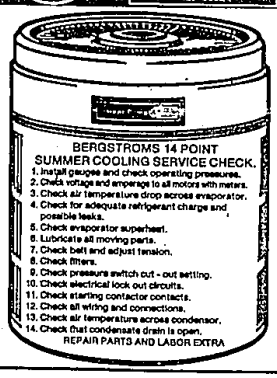

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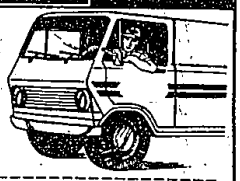

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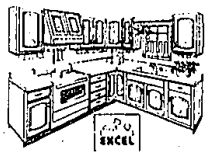

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