

Teens' drop-in center off to a good summer's start

By Sandi Horne
special writer

The Farmington Summer Activities Center is off to a good start this year, with many teens taking advantage of the free drop-in program.

Located in the Shawwassee Recreation Center, on Shawwassee between Orchard Lake Road and Nine Mile, the center is open 4-8 p.m. and 7-10 p.m. daily, with a field trip each Wednesday. Teens 12-17 are welcome to drop in and participate in the many activities the center has to offer.

The activities center is sponsored by Farmington Youth Assistance and funded by United Community Services and the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills. This is the center's seventh year in operation.

So far in the 1984 season, the teens have enjoyed dances with a live band, pizza parties, movies, horseback riding, a zoo trip, putt-putt golfing, and different arts and crafts activities. Upcoming events include a trip to Bob-Lo Island Amusement Park, Four Bears Recreation area, and a canoe trip.

Many parents and community members attended an open house at the center early this month, and several city officials and policemen were among the guests who talked to the staff, saw pictures and found out more about what the center offers area teens.

Director Darrel Emerson, in his fifth season at the center, is pleased with this year's strong turnout. Emerson said more teens are involved with the program this year than in the last two years.

"The teens have been very co-operative," he said. "We've had no major problems, and we've been getting good support from the Summer Activities Committee."

RETURNING STAFF member Lori Blight, 21, says this is the best job she's ever had.

"The kids are terrific and involved," she said. "This is a great outlet for them. I don't think there's anyone I'd rather work with."

Blight says that many people have misconceptions about teen-agers.

"Contrary to what many people think, teen-agers are not monsters to be avoided at all costs," she said. "The teens I've worked with here are creative, involved, caring individuals with a lot to offer to society."

This year's staff is an experienced one. Along with Emerson and Blight, Lonnie Ford and Carolyn Mulkiten also returned to work at the center. New staff members include Shaun Riney and Dave Blackmer. This year's CEBA worker is 14-year-old Candy Schoenber.

Lonnie Ford, a three-year veteran, said he feels that the center is one of the most important aspects of the summer for the teens in Farmington.

"I enjoy the interaction between the teens and myself personally," he said.

The teens are very receptive to the center. They enjoy the opportunity to get together with their friends for a game of pool, air hockey or hockey sack.

Darrel Mullins, 14, a frequent center visitor, said a lot of his friends are here and he can make new friends.

"It's fun, and it keeps kids off the streets," he said in between pool shots.

"It's a way to get away from the house, and you don't have to pay for anything."

Jim Malkowski, 14, said he comes up to the center when it gets boring at home.

"It's fun up here and it doesn't cost anything," he said. "I liked horseback riding and plan to go on most of the field trips."

Fifteen year old Rhonda Turner said the center is "something to do in the summer and keeps us out of trouble."

TRACY HARRIMAN, 15, took time out from a video game to say that she enjoys the center and the staff is fun.

"It's fun to pick on Lonnie," she said. "The field trips are great and I'm looking forward to going to Bob-Lo."

Joe Rutkowski, 17, a two-year member of the Summer Activities Center committee, says it is a great way for kids to get involved in the planning of the center.

"We find out what other kids might like to do," he said, "and we make suggestions to the committee."

Rutkowski said the center is pretty good but could benefit from a greater turnout.

"We'd like to see kids that we've never seen before at the center," he said.

Rutkowski, along with staff members and teens, stressed that they really need more equipment, such as pool or foosball tables. Anyone wishing to donate equipment can contact Farmington Youth Assistance at 476-3540.

Kristi Wisdom, 15, enjoys the casual atmosphere of the center.

"We can come up here and play hockey and talk to our friends without getting hassled," she said.

The staff is planning more activities for the teens, including more crafts, masquerade, makeovers and sports events. A group of break dancers is coming to the center late in July to give a demonstration. Teens also worked on a float for the Farmington Founders Festival parade.

Lori Blight says the staff wants to offer teens a wide variety of experiences.

Rutkowski summed it up by saying he thinks the center is important and hopes it will remain open for many years to come.

The center will remain open until August 15.



Center staffers (from left) Lori Blight, Lonnie Ford and Carol Mulkiten hold up under pressure.

Class tells how to deal with heart conditions

Learning to Live With Your Heart Condition is a series of classes offered free on Tuesday and Thursday evenings in St. Mary Hospital of Livonia.

The classes are ongoing. New heart patients and their families are welcome to come on any Tuesday or Thursday for the lecture which begins at 7 p.m. starting at any point until they hear all five lectures in the series, as each session is complete within itself.

All of the classes are given in the hospital's fourth-floor classroom, at 36475 Five Mile.

The class called "Your Heart Condition and Your Future" explains what causes heart disease and how risks can be reduced.

"Signals for Action" concerns physical activity after a heart attack.

"Your Prescription for Health" is a

discussion of effective use of medicines given by a pharmacist and a nurse.

"You Are What You Eat" is a dietitian's evaluation of special diets and healthy eating for heart patients.

"Coping With Stress" tells how emotional reactions cause physical stress and what to do about it.

Registration is not necessary. Inquiries will be taken by calling the hospital's Nursing Services Department, 464-4800, Ext. 2514.

Day camp for tots takes registrations

Artstart Summer Day Camp, at Mercy Center, continues to take registrations for children from 3-8 years. The camp is open from 9 a.m. to noon, but extended hours are available. Registration information is given by Sue Ingram, 474-7175.

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