

Schools search for new ways to help kids

By Joanne Mallazewski
staff writer

There must be a better way of dealing with student problems. Farmington School District administrators, teachers, social workers and counselors are searching for a method with the help of Farmington Families in Action (FFA) — a community organization which zeroes in on drug and alcohol abuse.

Guided by FFA, school officials last year formed the Network Committee. The committee is designed to pool the knowledge and resources of all staff involved with helping students.

But school district officials are not jumping into any new programs for combating problems such as drug and alcohol use.

"We need to be educated before we make a plan," said Pam O'Malley, assistant principal at Farmington High School. "The first step is education not

'It causes all of us to open our eyes and ears. It helps us work with the problems.'

— Lynn Nutter
assistant superintendent



action."

ONE STEP in the educational process has to be to realize students' drug and alcohol use is generally only the tip of the iceberg.

"We're seeing more kids whose lives are being influenced in one way or another by chemical dependency," O'Malley said. "I would contend that kids are getting more sophisticated in their drug use."

"We have to look for the causes. We've seen a whole evolution in the way we deal with the entire problem. It's not just a drug or alcohol problem. They're trying to cope."

To educate school officials, the committee — spearheaded by Lynn Nutter, assistant superintendent of instruction — has organized a program for administrators, principals and assistant principals to learn about chemical dependency.

Presented by Sis Wenger of the Fairlane Home Services Corp. in Dearborn, the four-session workshop in August offered school officials the hard, cold facts about teen-age chemical dependency, its causes, its impact on families and how a school system can offer help.

"YOU NEED TO work with the community or you won't get the help you need," Wenger said. "Farmington is ahead of most for community resources."

Wenger suggested forming a community council of parents, school, city

and court officials, the police, religious organizations and service groups.

"Each one of these would have a specific job. This kind of a council can sponsor things — a network — to get cooperation," Wenger said.

First of all, school faculty must be educated, she said. And alternatives to suspending students who are caught with alcohol or drugs must be found.

The school system should also provide continuing help for students who perhaps have attended chemical dependency treatment centers, Wenger said.

"They go through a grieving process," Wenger said. "Their relationship with their closest friend has been severed. They need constant reinforcing."

THE KIDS WITH problems, Wenger said, generally are those with alcoholic parents, children of divorce, new kids on the block and the learning disabled. Consequently these kids have more than just a chemical dependency that must be dealt with long after they are treated for drug or alcohol problems, Wenger said.

Help also should be provided for those students who aren't chemically dependent, but who have a family member or friend that has those problems, Wenger said.

In the way of intervention — preventing a chemical dependency problem before it starts — the schools could also provide help for students who may have just experienced a friend or family member's death or whose parents are divorcing.

Sometimes kids with problems have

trouble coping with personal problems and turn to drugs and alcohol to make the difficulties seem easier, Wenger said.

"It doesn't cost any money to do any of these things. What you do is make structures that say to these kids, 'we care,'" she added.

"It causes all of us to open our eyes and ears," Nutter said. "It helps us work with the problems."

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WSU schedules dance lab

Wayne State University Saturday Dance Lab classes will begin Saturday, Sept. 7 in Old Main on the University campus. Classes will also be offered at the Birmingham Unitarian Church in Bloomfield Hills on Tuesdays, beginning Sept. 10.

Campus classes, taught by University dance faculty, will begin at 10 a.m.

for 3-4-year-olds, 11 a.m. for 4-6-year-olds, noon for 7-10-year-olds, 11 a.m. for 11-15-year-olds and noon for 16-18-year-olds. Adult dance exercise classes will also be offered at 10 a.m.

Birmingham classes for pre-schoolers will be taught by Lilo Fatman. Four-to-six-year-olds will meet at 9:30 a.m. Three-to-four-year-olds will

have classes at 10:15 a.m. and 1:15 p.m.

Campus classes will meet for 14 weeks at a tuition cost of \$49. Some scholarship money is available for needy students. Birmingham classes run for 13 weeks at a cost of \$45.00. For information on the WSU classes, call 577-4268. For information on the Birmingham extension classes, call 542-4725.

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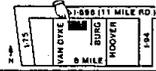
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Livonia Mall's
Calendar of Events
September
July 31-Aug. 4
• Safety City 12-3 p.m.
Safety learning program for children
Sept. 12-15 — BILL RIGGINS ART & CRAFTS SHOW
Sept. 20 — "A SYMPHONY IN MOTION" GRAND RE-OPENING FALL FASHION SHOW and the OAKWAY SYMPHONY 6:30 P.M.
Sept. 26-28 — AAUW USED BOOK SALE

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS
WHAT'S HAPPENING SEPTEMBER 4-7

Rejoice! Our Birmingham remodeling project has been completed. Everything has a new look. A new excitement. Check your Monday newspaper throughout September for our weekly Calendar of Events...then come celebrate with us!

WEDNESDAY 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Bottega Veneta accessory boutique Grand Opening with representative Andrew Dubin.
THURSDAY 7 p.m., Children's International Show. Children's.
FRIDAY 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Informal Adele Simpson Show. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Consultations with millinery buyer Diane Lange. 12 Noon-4 p.m., Estée Lauder make-up consultant Deede Hassinger. 2 p.m., Formal Adele Simpson Collection Show. Designer Salon.
SATURDAY 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Football Party Snack demonstration. Kitchen Shop. 12 Noon-4 p.m., Informal lingerie modeling throughout the store. 7 p.m.-4 p.m., Scarf-tying demonstration.

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