

He's taking his fire safety message to school

Continued from Page 1

proof it works," said Garr, who has been taking his fire prevention message to students for about four years.

"Kids instinctively run for help. But Ray helped himself," Garr added.

ON HIS return to school, Ray took medicine and bandages to help explain to classmates what happened to him. Ray will join Firefighter Mike in the fire prevention fall assembly at Gili Elementary on Oct. 3 — just in time for National Fire Prevention Week Oct. 5-11.

"Ray is going to help me explain what he did," Garr said. "Although kids listen, they aren't really aware it can happen to them."

Ray was burned while playing with older boys who apparently ignited a can of dry gas with a cigarette lighter, catching the youngster's shirt on fire.

Instinctively crawling from the tent the boys were playing in, Ray — with hands covering his face to prevent it from burning — rolled in the grass and extinguished the fire. He then shouted to the boys to get it hose and cool his burn with water.

"I heard the 10-year-old screaming, 'Ray is on fire,'" said Rosalie Rudzki, Ray's mother.

Rudzki ran to the yard, grabbed her son, took his clothes off and put him in a bathtub of cold water. "He wasn't burning. His clothes weren't sticking to the burns," she said.

Rudzki and her husband, Steve, immediately drove to Woodland Medical Clinic in Detroit, where Ray's burns were determined to be serious. The youngster was transported to Children's Hospital of Michigan in Detroit, where he stayed for more than two months.

"WE DIDN'T realize how severe it was. Not until we got to Woodland Clinic did we realize how bad it was," Ray's mother said.

But Ray held his own without complaint during the ordeal. Emergency room nurses were awed by Ray's calmness and willingness to explain what happened, his mother said.

"I was proud, happy, really mixed emotions," she said. "He was so brave. He didn't complain."

The only glimmer of her son's worry came when he arrived at the hospital and asked whether doctors would put him back together, Rudzki said.

She admits that her son's calmness prevented her from the panic she could have easily slipped into in the

minutes after she grabbed her burned son and ran to the bathtub with him.

Like her son, Rudzki knew what to do. Not long before her son was burned, Rudzki had watched ABC's "20/20" news magazine. The episode showed parents talking about what to do if their children are burned.

"That's where I learned how to use the cold water and call compresses," she said. "The parents on TV were talking about it."

BUT RUDZKI also remembers her reaction the night she watched the show. "I thought how terrible this is. And that it would never happen to me because I'm so careful."

Yet the knowledge the show provided stuck with her so when it came time to react, she did it instinctively.

While in Children's Hospital, Ray had three skin grafts; more surgery is expected as he continues to grow. Fortunately, the youngster didn't suffer lung damage from the burns. But he continues to wear a neck brace and arm brace at night while his skin heals. He is also working with a physical therapist.

Ray is adjusting well to what happened, showing no self-consciousness or lack of confidence. In fact, Ray's openness about the incident and resulting burns seem to be helping others adjust, Rudzki said.

"If he didn't know what to do to help himself, it could have been a lot worse," Rudzki said. "I'm just glad he didn't panic. I'm glad I didn't panic."

Rudzki echoes Firefighter Mike's sentiments about the need for fire prevention education.

"If they keep having these programs in school, they will retain the information while they are young. God only knows what would have happened if Raymond didn't know what to do," she added.

FIREFIGHTER MIKE'S assembly programs are geared for youngsters in kindergarten through fifth grade.

"We are going into 12 elementary schools in Farmington and Farmington Hills. Only one elementary school indicated it wasn't necessary to come in, that it was only necessary every year," Garr said.

At the assemblies, Garr emphasizes fire safety, the importance of fire drills and Stop! Drop! and Roll!

"We encourage the kids to motivate their parents to be sure their homes are protected with smoke detectors and that they practice drills at home," Garr said. "The kids are required by law to have 10 fire drills a year at school."

The assembly program is followed with a more personal talk in the classroom with kindergartners and first graders. "This is our first chance to impact on the class. What we're working on is a fire-safe generation," Garr said.

The firefighter is a firm believer that fire prevention education

works. Statistics speak for themselves.

UNDER THE National Fire Protection Association's campaign, "Thank You America," statistics show that in 1984, house fire deaths decreased for the first time since 1978. In 1984, 4,000 people died as

the result of house fires, compared to 6,000 in 1978, Garr said.

In Michigan, 100,000 incidents of burns occurred in 1985. Of that total, 2,000 of the burns were serious enough for the victims to be hospitalized. In 1985, 400 deaths were recorded, Garr said.

"We are firm believers that fire

prevention should occur 52 weeks a year," he added.

Garr supports a proposed legislative measure in the Michigan House that would make fire education a part of curriculum in public schools.

Under the proposed legislation, a fire safety education commission would be created.

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CITY OF FARMINGTON COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS (Summary)

A regular meeting of the Farmington City Council was called to order by Mayor Hartsock at 8:05 p.m. on September 15, 1986, in Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan.

PRESENT: Campbell, Hartsock, Tupper, ABSENT: Richardson, Yoder.

OTHERS PRESENT: City Manager Deadman, Director Billing, Deputy Director Gosa, City Attorney Kelly, City Clerk Bushey.

Minutes of the previous meetings were approved as written.

Minutes of other boards were received and/or filed.

The following proclamations were issued:

TELEPHONE PIONEER WEEK - November 2-9, 1986
NATIONAL BIBLE WEEK - November 23-30, 1986

Council established a Public Hearing on Monday, November 3, 1986, for a Tax Increment Financing Development Plan for the Farmington Downtown Development Authority.

Council introduced Ordinance No. C-537-86 re: Local Seal Code Laws.

Council approved the establishment of the position of Code Service Officer for the Building Department.

The following reports were received:

General Fund and 41st District Court for the twelve months ended June 30, 1986.
Water & Sewer Fund: Quarter ended June 30, 1986.

Monthly bills were approved for payment.
Meeting adjourned at 9:47 p.m.

WILLIAM S. HARTSOCK, Mayor
JOSEPHINE M. BUSHEY, City Clerk

Published September 22, 1986

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