

Visiting the world of the handicapped



Dan Schneider, one of the physical therapists at Eagle, explains the Changing Places program to a group of students.

By Casey Hans
staff writer

THE MESSAGE was loud and clear. Youngsters at Eagle Elementary School learned that their handicapped counterparts want "empathy, not sympathy," as they changed places, becoming "handicapped" last week.

It was called Changing Places, and non-handicapped students spent their normal gym class time learning about the special problems of their handicapped school friends.

"We want them to know how difficult it is for their handicapped friends to do what they do regularly," said Dan Schneider, physical therapist at the Farmington Public Schools elementary. "We don't want pity, we want understanding."

Six different stations were set up in the Eagle gymnasium, where therapists show students different therapies, including physical, occupational, speech and others.

CHANGING PLACES is held over a two-day period at Eagle every few years because of the district's special education programs centered at the school. In addition, now students are oriented each fall so they can understand their classmates' special needs.

"This teaches (the handicapped) that they have some control over their environment," said Kathy Nicholas, an 11-year teaching veteran who works in the Physically-Or-Otherwise-Handicapped unit at Eagle, known as POHI.

Parents have thanked her for the experience of having their children in classes with mainstreamed students — special education pupils who are taking regular classes.

Wheelchairs, electric charts, computers and various therapy tools were discovered by each Eagle student during the 25-minute sessions.

Some students were blindfolded to simulate blindness, others had their arms and hands restrained so they would know the feeling of being physically handicapped.

Second-grade teacher Carole Frank uses the Changing Places program as a teaching unit for her students.

"I prepared mine for the different stations before they came in," she said. Frank also asked her students to write their reactions to the program when they returned to the classroom.

"I had a great time. Thank you for teaching me how the handicapped are," said second-grader Kelly Roberts in her letter. "Now I know how hard it is. I really enjoyed it. Thank you."

High technology has changed the tools used in POHI classes, according to Nicholas. When she began her career in Farmington schools, "we didn't even have electric wheelchairs. Now we have computers and electronics."

Eagle Elementary is at Middlebelt and 14 Mile in West Bloomfield Township. As part of Farmington Public Schools, it serves elementary students from West Bloomfield Township and the city of Farmington Hills.



A blindfold and heavy gloves help simulate a vision and sensory handicap for Eagle student Christine Rich.



Occupational therapist Laura Barker uses a tilting table to show Eagle students what happens when someone loses use of one side of their body. Tania Kasgorgis (left), Seth Weingarten and Steven Ingber had one hand tied behind their backs and then had to take turns balancing on the table.

Staff photos
by
Randy Borst

general election

Nov. 4, 1986 — Unofficial local tallies

U.S. House District 18

Republican: William Broomfield (Incumbent) 109,999 overall, 2,682 Farmington, 13,429 Farmington Hills

Democrat: Gary Kohut 39,132 overall, 950 Farmington, 4,796 Farmington Hills

Governor

Republican: William Lucas 1,819 Farmington, 8,170 Farmington Hills

Democrat: James Blanchard (Incumbent) 2,087 Farmington, 10,399 Farmington Hills

Secretary of State

Republican: Weldon Yeager 1,604 Farmington, 7,296 Farmington Hills

Democrat: Richard Austin (Incumbent) 2,184 Farmington, 11,127 Farmington Hills

Attorney General

Republican: Robert Cleland 1,769 Farmington, 7,745 Farmington Hills

Democrat: Frank Kelley (Incumbent) 2,050 Farmington, 10,609 Farmington Hills

State Proposals

A (a proposal to allow for the establishment of the Library of Michigan within the State Legislature): Farmington yes, 1,263, no, 1,532; Farmington Hills yes 7,313, no 8,782

B (a proposal allowing for the approval or rejection of administrative rules by the State Legislature): Farmington yes, 978, no, 1,723; Farmington Hills yes 5,881, no 9,801

C (a proposal to expand the authority of the State Officers Compensation Commission): Farmington yes, 1,578 no, 1,194; Farmington Hills yes 8,806, no 7,308

Farmington yes, 1,578 no, 1,194; Farmington Hills yes 8,806, no 7,308

State Senate District 15

Republican: Frank Brock 27,601 overall, 2,030 Farmington, 9,669 Farmington Hills, 3,350 Novi, 831 Wixom, 612 Northville, 6,478 Southfield, 936 Lathrup Village, 1,248 Oak Park, 785 Huntington Woods, 1,537 Ferndale, 78 Royal Oak Township

Democrat: Jack Faxon (Incumbent) 46,222 overall, 1,660 Farmington, 8,560 Farmington Hills, 3,219 Novi, 720 Wixom, 358 Northville, 17,022 Southfield, 705 Lathrup Village, 6,774 Oak Park, 2,006 Huntington Woods, 4,030 Ferndale, 1,155 Royal Oak Township.

State House District 69

Republican: W.V. Brotherton (Incumbent) 19,114 overall, 2,719 Farmington, 12,484 Farmington Hills, 3,911 Southfield Township

Democrat: Michael Breshgold 7,414 overall, 927 Farmington, 5,327 Farmington Hills, 1,160 Southfield Township

District Court District 47

Margaret Schaeffer (Incumbent) 13,305 overall. Unopposed.

Circuit Court Oakland County

Jessica Cooper 121,872 overall, 1,503 Farmington, 8,508 Farmington Hills

Lawrence Terman 73,339 overall, 1,058 Farmington, 4,693 Farmington Hills

County Commission District 15

Republican: David Moffitt (Incumbent) 7,570 overall, 3,969 Farmington Hills, 477 West Bloomfield, 582 Franklin, 2,542 Bloomfield Township

Democrat: Albert Zolton, 3,649 overall, 2,286 Farmington Hills, 259 West Bloomfield, 276 Franklin, 828 Bloomfield Township

County Commission District 21

Republican: Douglas Sokolowski, 3,004 overall, 1,071 Farmington Hills, 1,933 Southfield

Democrat: Alexander Perinoff (Incumbent), 6,045 overall, 918 Farmington Hills, 5,127 Southfield

County Commission District 26

Republican: John McDonald (Incumbent), 7,656 overall, 2,184 Farmington, 5,472 Farmington Hills

Democrat: Johannes Spreen, 4,700 overall, 1,380 Farmington, 3,320 Farmington Hills

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