

Day care provider rallies for change in law

'In a way, I'm relieved it happened. Now we don't have to live in fear. It's out in the open and there's no more playing games.'

— Darlene Feldman
Hills child care provider



Continued from Page 1

at least one acre of land and that there be at least 5,000 square feet of outdoor play area.

"In a way, I'm relieved it happened," she said about the ordinance issue. "Now we don't have to live in fear. It's out in the open and there's no more playing games."

"I'm picking up the vibes they're (the council) going to do the right thing — they're going to help the kids. I'm a firm believer that everything happens for the best."

Feldman can continue to care for five to seven children each day until the matter is resolved, Rowe added. "We are waiting until the issue is resolved by the planning commission and city council."

He estimated the ordinance change proposal could take as long as 90 days to be heard by both the commission and council, but the issue was placed on tonight's council agenda, less than one week after the zoning board's decision.

AS OF Friday afternoon, even Feldman had not been notified she was on the agenda.

Feldman is a state-licensed "group day care home" operator who cares for between five and seven preschool children in her house each day. She has followed state guidelines for the past four years in operating her baby-sitting service, according to Hilda Weems, a supervisor for the Michigan Department of Social Services in the Oakland County area. The DSS is responsible for licensing child care throughout the state.

People watching children in their homes are supposed to be licensed through the state, according to Weems. Feldman is licensed as a "group day care home" and is allowed to watch up to 12 children. She must have a second caregiver, which she does, 35 square feet of play space per child in the house and a fire extinguisher.

Less restrictive, but still requiring a license, is a "family day care home" which allows care of up to six children. Most of the state-registered people in Oakland County have the family day care home licenses.

TO RECEIVE such a license, an operator goes through a three-hour orientation, provides references for the state, goes through a criminal and protective services check and must prove they have no communicable diseases, Weems said.

Neither the group or family day care home should be confused with the traditional day care "center" rules required by the state, according to Weems, which usually encompass commercial day care centers and include some of the local day care groups located in the area.

Feldman and state and county child care officials say there are as many, or more, that are not registered with the state and are "working underground."

The local zoning issue faced by Feldman and other Farmington Hills residents "is not a new problem," according to Penny Mitchell, president of the Oakland County Child Care

Association, a support group for child care providers such as Feldman. "It has gone on, city-by-city, for the past nine years."

The OCCCA requested a state attorney general opinion. 1 1/2 years ago, she said, but the attorney general refused to render a decision.

THE GROUP wrote a letter to the city of Farmington Hills on behalf of Feldman and gave support during her recent appearance before the city's zoning board.

"If these cities determine we are running businesses in our homes, there'll be a lot of people who can't go to work," she added.

According to Mitchell, ordinance regulations in West Bloomfield Township, Birmingham, Oak Park and Huntington Woods all have been relaxed to allow residential child care without the restrictions faced by Hills residents.

"One by one, they have changed," Mitchell said. "In almost every case, it started initially with a neighbor complaining . . . about things that should have been handled on a personal level."

Child care professionals remain concerned that cities will obtain state licensing lists of child care givers, and will shut them down if the issue is not addressed in the entire area.

Feldman is beginning a group called Parents to Legalize In-home Child Care to address the issue. Information can be obtained by calling 851-9027 in Farmington Hills.



photos by RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Daniel Nugent (left) and Michelle Markzon, both 2, with Kathy Paradis, an aide with the group day care home run by Darlene Feldman.

short takes

If you recently opened a shop, captured an award, earned a promotion or are planning a new venture or project — and there's a Farmington-area business angle — we'd like to hear from you. We can share your news item with other Farmington Observer readers. Send items to: Short takes, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River, Farmington 48924.

MOVING UP

Dennis Barnes has joined the Detroit-based law firm of Butzel Long Gust Klein & Van Zile as an associate.

The Farmington Hills resident, who served as an intern for U.S. Philip Crane in Washington, D.C., received his juris doctor degree from the University of Notre Dame after graduating with high honors from Hillsdale College, where he was a Merit Scholar.



Dennis Barnes

TAIL SAVER

It's called a Tail Saver exercise cushion.

It's simply a piece of high-tech foam with a groove running through the middle. The groove allows the tail bone to be suspended while doing situps, leg lifts and related exercises.

The cushion has been in development for two years as far as size, density, type of foam and applying for a patent.

The first 120 units were distributed and sold for product response, which has been favorable, say the developers. That response also identified more uses for the cushion.

"One of the new uses is for Lamaze classes," said Edward Gandolfo, president of Farmington-based Simtek Corp., whose objective is to innovate, market and produce simple products through technology.

Because of the good response to the cushion in the medical field, there's a new variation — the Tail Saver comfort cushion. It is wider and softer.

Gandolfo said he and his partner, Tod Schallberger, "have great aspirations of distribution of the product through mail order and reps in the medical, therapeutic and physical fitness areas."

The Tail Saver was designed to reduce the pressure on the tailbone while doing situps and other related exercises. It may provide particular relief for people who have lower spine discomfort during exercise.

"When you first sit on the exercise cushion," Gandolfo said, "you may feel that it is too firm and too narrow. The cushion has to be firm in order to support the body and protect the lower spine. It was made narrow so that it can be folded and placed in your gym bag."

Call Simtek at 474-4561.

EARNs APPOINTMENT

Registered nurse Mollie Evans was appointed assistant administrator for patient care services at Northwest General Hospital of Detroit. She previously was assistant administrator of nursing.

A native of Carey, Ohio, she earned her bachelor of science degree in nursing from St. John's Hospital in Cleveland and her master's degree in nursing from Wayne State University.

She has been with Northwest for the two years. Prior service includes one year at Botsford General Hospital in Farmington Hills as a nursing supervisor and five years at Grace Hospital in Detroit as director of nursing.

NEW IN TOWN

Reliance Farm & Supplies Inc. of Farmington Hills has opened a retail outlet in downtown Farmington.

The outlet is called Reliance Business Forms and Computer Supply Store. It specializes in "one-stop shopping" for computer supplies, quick printing, business forms and computer stockpiles.

The store is co-owned by Jonathan Grant of Farmington Hills and Richard Stemple of Livonia. Both have backgrounds in serving commercial accounts through their warehouse operation at 24010 Haggerty.

"The store was developed in part as a response to customers who feel the need for an alternative to catalogue shopping for computer supplies and business forms. The store can meet the needs of the home computer user as well," Grant said.

The store is at 2330 Farmington, one block south of Grand River. The phone number is 471-0877.

NAMED MANAGER

Deborah Boyd of Farmington Hills was named general manager of the Reliance Business Forms & Computer Supply Store in downtown Farmington.

or Supply Store in downtown Farmington.

Boyd, a lifelong Farmington-area resident, was formerly membership director for the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce. She has a background in sales, promotion and public relations.

JOINS GROUP

Dr. Richard Zucker of Farmington was selected for membership in the American Chiropractic Association, a national organization representing the majority of licensed practitioners in the United States.

As a member of the ACA, Zucker joins thousands of fellow doctors of chiropractic who are dedicated to improving the U.S. health-care system and to increasing public awareness of spinal health and chiropractic.

Zucker is a graduate of Life Chiropractic College, Marietta, Ga.

NOW A DIRECTOR

Dennis McLampy, engine marketing and divisional merchandising director for General Motors Corp.'s Detroit Diesel Allison Division was elected a director of the Construction Industry Manufacturers Association.

The Farmington Hills resident will work as part of the 30-member CIMA Board of Directors to set association guidelines and operating policies.

The association is the Milwaukee-based trade group representing the worldwide manufacturers of construction equipment and related components used in the general construction, housing, roadbuilding, mining, energy and forest fields.

WINS AWARD

W.H. Smith, a new vehicle salesman at Bill Seetzkamp Inc., a Chrysler-Plymouth dealer in Highland Park, has earned the Gold Award, the highest level of achievement in Chrysler-Plymouth's Sales Professionals Club.

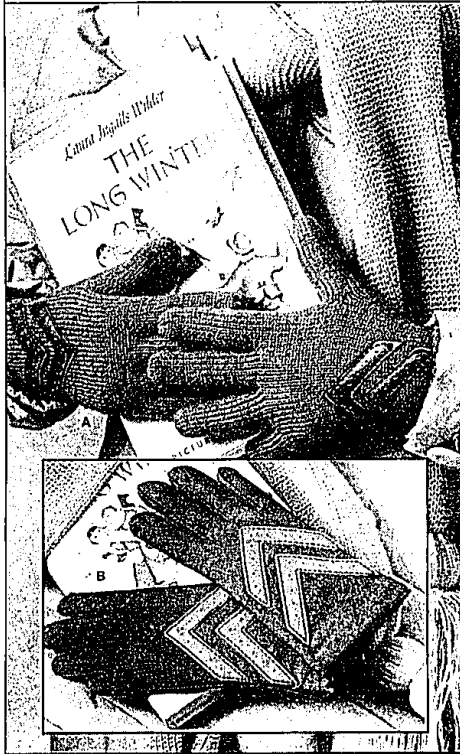
The Farmington Hills resident earned the recognition for individual performance in selling Chrysler-Plymouth vehicles.

BUSINESS PIPELINE

Interested in knowing what programs and activities are available for members of the Farmington-area business community?

Call the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce at 474-2440. It's at 33201 Grand River in the Metro Bank Building. JoAnn Soronen is executive director.

Aris Isotoner for children



FIT, COMFORT

AND STYLE FOR

GROWING HANDS

Here's a handful of reasons to get her Aris® gloves. Like the special 4 way stretch fabric that stretches to fit growing hands. The warmth, comfort and the fact that they're fully washable. Choose from two styles:

A. Knit glove with cuff. Made of acrylic/lycra® spandex. Girls' sizes 4-6X in red, cream, navy, red, navy, blue and black, \$10. B. Lined spandex Isotoner® glove. Made of Aris® nylon/spandex with acrylic/lycra® lining. Girls' sizes 4-6X in red, blue, pink and purple, \$12. Girls' sizes 7-14 in red, blue, pink, purple, sand, taupe or black, \$12.

Boxed for gift giving. Children's Accessories.

HUDSON'S