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Battling drug problems

Confidential help is available to students

By Casey Hans
staff writer

A typical Farmington-area teenager with a drug problem might be involved with LSD, cocaine or, more commonly, marijuana and alcohol. Counselor Tim Templeton of the Farmington Area Advisory Council said he has seen an increase in the use of LSD during the past year, and cocaine — both powder and crack forms — in the past six months.

A synthetic hallucinogenic drug also known as acid, LSD first became popular in the 1960s and 1970s. "LSD is one of the biggest things we've seen. It's making a big comeback," Templeton said.

The youths treated by FAAC range in age from 12-19. The type of help they need varies, depending on how progressive their addiction has become.

FAAC therapist Carolyn Browning said she also has seen an upsurge in the use of LSD.

REGARDLESS OF the type of drug a student is using, counseling services can be confidential and free to those who cannot afford to pay. Although the FAAC encourages parent or family participation, it is not necessary and confidentiality is ensured.

Any student who needs help is encouraged to call the FAAC, said Shelley Rence, client services director. "We offer confidential counseling and sliding (fee) scales, which start at nothing," she said. "A lot of kids don't know that."

Professionals at FAAC have noticed a number of substance abuse trends in recent years.

SOME include:

- a younger age of initiation into drugs and alcohol.
- alcohol and marijuana use has remained a consistent problem.
- teens are experimenting with LSD and other synthetic drugs.
- because of recent ads and promotions, it's becoming "all right" for students to want to be drug-free.

Many students become involved with drugs because of low self-esteem.

Others come from families where there is already a pattern of drug or alcohol abuse. In many of today's problem families, parents were raised around alcohol and marijuana. They continue drinking and smoking as adults.

According to Templeton, a teen might say, for example, "Why should I stop smoking, when my parents give it to me free?" Or, "My dad rolls his own."

ADOLESCENT drug treatment often can become a "revolving door," counselors say. But chances for recovery are better when the family participates in counseling and developing a healthy peer group, said Rence.

Teens who come in for counseling react in several ways, depending on who referred them to the program.

Some want to be there, others don't. Some are hostile, others are quiet and reserved. "When they

come in, they're not sure what to expect," Templeton said. "They have no idea what they're getting into."

In the past five years, there has been an emphasis on offering in-patient adolescent treatment for substance abuse within Michigan.

Teens previously had to be sent out of state for intensive treatment. Some teens get out-patient counseling through FAAC, others need in-patient treatment and are referred elsewhere.

THOSE AT FAAC say the community needs to be aware of problems not only within the community, but also in nearby communities. Teens will buy their drugs wherever they can get them.

"We're going to have to open our eyes and take stock," said Browning, a 25-year resident of the Farmington area. "There are crack houses here too."

Adolescents and adults seeking help for any type of substance abuse can call the FAAC at 477-6767.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Counselor Tim Templeton discusses various stages of addiction with a group at the Farmington Area Advisory Council's education room. The room is also used by Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon for regular group sessions.

Drug counseling center helps families, youths

By Casey Hans
staff writer

IT STARTED in 1970 as a drop-in center and telephone crisis line called Rap Line, helping Farmington-area teenagers through drug abuse and other troubles of the day.

Operating from church basements and school classrooms, it developed into a full-fledged agency now located in the former Noble School on Middlebelt in Farmington Hills.

Today, an expanded staff at the Farmington Area Advisory Council helps both teens and families through all types of substance abuse.

"The major amount of people we serve are now adult," said FAAC's executive director, Betty Arnold. "In the beginning, we served more adolescents. It's our hope to swing back more to adolescent work."

"We've tried to network with other groups so there are no duplication of services."

A NON-PROFIT corporation, FAAC is

supported by the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills, Farmington Public Schools and the United Foundation and the state and Oakland County substance abuse services offices.

Arnold said she hopes to work with the Farmington Public Schools in their new health curriculum, which includes education on substance abuse awareness.

Arnold and her staff are encouraged by the recent national movement towards drug awareness, but encouraged President George Bush and his advisers to remember

the importance of education services. "I hope they don't lose sight of the importance of education and treatment," Arnold said.

"I hope it's not a lot of talk," added Shelley Rence, client services director. "I think it's absolutely necessary. If we don't do something, we're in big trouble."

THE STAFF at FAAC stays on top of drug-related issues that impact every community, including Farmington and Farmington Hills. They offer outpatient services, including education groups, individual coun-

seling and assessment and referrals to other programs, if necessary.

During the past year, the 16 staff members at FAAC counseled about 1,000 people in programs, spending some 12,000 hours helping them with their needs. Some 3,700 people were reached through the FAAC program. Many residents come to group therapy in the evening, of which FAAC holds 3-4 group sessions per day.

Any area resident who needs information on substance abuse, or help with a problem, should call FAAC at 477-6767.

inkwell

Inkwell provides news about Farmington-area primary and secondary students and education issues. The column appears monthly as part of the Observer's "School Page." Send news items to The School Page, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River, Farmington 48024. Include a telephone number where a contact person can be reached during the day. Items will not be taken over the phone.

● DRUG AWARENESS

At least two Farmington-area elementary report special activities in launching National Substance Abuse Awareness Month.

At Longacre Elementary, Trudy Danley's third graders wrote letters to President Bush in reaction to his September speech to students about drugs.

They received a prompt reply, said principal William Smith. Students will receive a copy of the president's response, along with a "drug-free" T-shirt Friday.

At Gill Elementary, an officer from the Farmington Hills police will participate in festivities Friday, speaking to all students throughout the afternoon. Students will be given the opportunity to sign a pledge committing themselves to be drug-free.

Also at Gill, students are collecting money for the "drug-free" T-shirt effort. They will wear red ribbons throughout October.

Students in all Farmington-area schools will be given T-shirts this Friday, as part of "Drug-free T-shirt Day" in the Farmington Public Schools. Farmington Families in Action sought donations for the T-shirts, which say "Say Yes to Life, No to Drugs."

● SEMIFINALIST NAMED

Jonathan Freed of Farmington Hills qualified as a semifinalist in the National Merit Scholarship Competition. Freed is a senior at Cranbrook Kingswood Upper School in Bloomfield Hills.

About 90 percent of semifinalists will become finalists and thus eligible for Merit Scholarships worth \$23 million.

● FALL AT FLANDERS

Flanders Elementary kicked off the new year with several September activities.

A School Spirit Day was held Sept. 1, when students were encouraged to wear school colors of blue and white. Ronald McDonald visited the Farmington school Sept. 12 for an all-school assembly on peer pressure.

On Sept. 20, the BADES drug and alcohol awareness program was held for Flanders' third graders. And on Sept. 22, a bus safety assembly program, sponsored by AAA of Michigan, was held at the school.

● TEACHER HONORS

The Student Loan Marketing Association has named Jean Godwin of Farmington Hills one of 100 teachers nationwide to receive a 1988-89 Sallie Mae First-Year Teacher Award.

The honor includes a \$1,000 cash award.

Godwin, who teaches third grade at Keith Elementary School in Union Lake, was nominated by Wallase Lake superintendent James Geisler.

Nominees were judged on classroom performance, collegiate academic performance and volunteer leadership capabilities by a panel of education experts appointed on behalf of Sallie Mae by the American Association of School Administrators.

"We are pleased to honor the... award winners for the superior teaching skills they have demonstrated," said Edward McCabe, Sallie Mae chairman. "Because Sallie Mae's entire business relates to education financing, we have a very special interest in the teaching profession."

● INNOVATIVE YEAR

Farmington Community School is beginning another year of innovative programming, administrators there report. Both adult and preschool classes are growing in scope and in size.

New at the community school this year are programs that include a multicultural theme, development of thinking and learning skills, and field activities. Parents are involved in some of the classes.

Parents of preschoolers are welcome to visit the school during regular hours, 9:15 a.m. to 3 p.m.

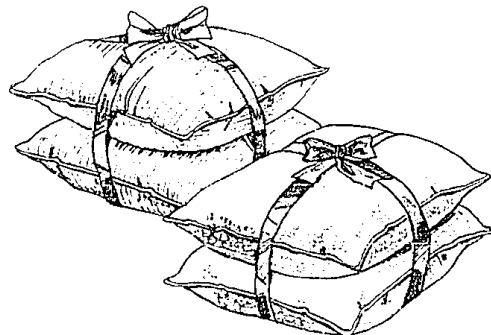
● SUMMER ACADEMY

Eric Crawford of Farmington visited Northern Michigan University in Marquette this summer for the Seaborg Summer Academy.

He worked with professor John Kilinen, studying mathematics and science.

The program was sponsored by NMU's Glenn Seaborg Center for Teaching and Learning Science and Mathematics with support through a grant from the National Science Foundation's Young Scholar's program.

It drew high school students from throughout Michigan as well as Illinois and Oklahoma. Crawford received a scholarship to attend the academy because he was among the top 100 finalists in the state on last year's Michigan Mathematics Prize Competition.



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Jacobson's

Flanagan: Tax plans vital for schools

If one of two statewide ballot proposals does not pass in November, Farmington Public Schools would likely lose \$6 million — immediately.

It could happen overnight. And it will be every year," said acting superintendent Michael Flanagan, voicing his fears about what could happen with school finance reform at the state level if the measures fail.

For some sort of property tax relief, but ask for a sales tax increase.

Flanagan believes if more tax money is not approved by voters statewide, state officials will raid Social Security and school retirement funds, forcing local out-of-formula districts, such as Farmington, to pay their own way. If that occurs, he said, it would cost the district some \$6 million per year beginning immediately.

Farmington Public Schools has set

aside 10 percent, or more, of its budget during the past several years, concerned about finance reforms that might impact the district.

As of June 30, financial reports show the district carrying \$8.5 million in undesignated reserves, with another \$3.2 million designated for maintenance and capital projects.

School accountant Fred Heller of Plante & Moran CPAs of Southfield said the state has already started dipping into those retirement funds.

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