

Her Japanese classes learn language-plus

BY CASEY HANS
STAFF WRITER

Marilyn Schlieff's Japanese students learn more than language — they learn about the country and culture from students living in that country.

The Farmington Hills resident and teacher in the Garden City Public Schools uses interactive technology to introduce culture to the classroom. Students from four Japanese schools, including one university, interact with 52 Garden City High School students in Japanese I and II courses using computer equipment and telephones, which allow students to see each other while they talk on the telephone.

Even some elementary students are getting into the act, sending "class" messages to the Japanese high school students.

"I really feel... it motivates them to want to learn more about the students around the world," said Schlieff, who has taught for 23 years. "They're also learning more about themselves."

Schlieff's innovative work using technology to teach culture earned her the title of a 1992 Christa McAuliffe Educator, one of five selected from across the country. The awards are given by the Na-

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*Marilyn Schlieff
innovative teacher*

tional Foundation for the Improvement of Education, a non profit foundation created by the National Education Association in honor of teacher-astronaut Christa McAuliffe, who died in the Challenger explosion in 1986.

As part of program, Schlieff will receive a \$5,000 honorarium and plan a 10-day summer conference at Stanford University with a telecommunications "global" understanding theme.

The idea for the program stemmed from Schlieff's participation in a 1987-88 teacher exchange program to Shiga Japan, Michigan's sister state.

She believes that learning about culture and language is an important part of everyone's future, and

that students should become immersed in it at an early age. "Foreign languages are so critical for Americans and for students to begin to learn as early as possible," she said.

"No matter how much language you have, you have to have a global understanding — a sensitivity of the other people's perspective."

Schlieff said she was surprised to find out she had won the McAuliffe Educator award. The five educators were selected after a nationwide search taking nominations from across the country. "It really creates a voice for teachers — it's a chance for them to be heard," said Lori Wiedler, assistant to the executive director of the NFIE.

Schlieff's once-a-week program at the high school allows students to discuss general issues about the environment and lifestyles, and specific events such as Desert Storm. They use English when communicating, she said, because Japanese students are proficient in our language, and it is easier with the technology being used.

In the future, Schlieff wants to hook up all buildings in her district to participate in the program.

Schlieff shares her award with educators from California, Illinois, South Dakota and Virginia.

Teacher from page 1A

the classroom at Harrison and the rest of her time studying motivation theory, visiting other schools and businesses and talking to people like coaches and business leaders who are successful at motivating, to call their secrets. Then, she hopes, to bring her findings back to Harrison and share them with other schools as well.

Brown, the 1990-91 High School Teacher of the Year for the Farm-

ington district, is modest about her \$34,800 award from the U.S. Department of Education — the only teacher in Michigan to get such a stipend.

"It doesn't mean I'm the best teacher in the world," she said. "It was really fortunate to get this."

But others offer more lavish praise. In honoring the 1991 award recipients for the Farmington district, Superintendent Michael Flan-

agan said that Brown "has a knack for turning kids on to learning" and that "students call her a model teacher."

The \$2 million Christa McAuliffe fellowship program originally began with a focus on science projects, but has recently expanded to include all disciplines. It is named for teacher-astronaut Christa McAuliffe, who died in the 1986 Challenger disaster. Brown said she got an announcement about the program during the time she was working on the district's Secondary Study Committee, and decided to apply for the program. "That had me inspired," she added.

The Secondary Study encouraged Brown and other teachers in the district to look at their role and approach differently. Ten years ago, for example, a good test was a multiple choice with essay. "Today, that's not good enough," she said. "Now, I see my job as less Language Arts Specific. My primary goals are teaching them to be good thinkers — I guess I want an ethic of excellence."

Her aim with the study is to see it blossom into a full-blown program for the Farmington district with measurable results. She said today's teacher faces more challenges to motivate students, especially with changes in the family structure.

"We have so many troubled families and so much of motivation comes from the family. We still have to try and throw them a lifeline," she added.

2 reach for the stars

Two Farmington-area teachers have been offered a chance to teach for the stars in 1992.

Farmington resident Mary Brown and Farmington Hills resident Marilyn Schlieff were recognized this year for their teaching expertise, and each received a different award given in honor of Christa McAuliffe, a teacher who died in the Challenger shuttle explosion in 1986.

McAuliffe was the first private citizen to be invited to share in space travel, and her death prompted both the U.S. Department of Education and the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, a non-profit National Education Association group, to create programs in her honor.

Brown, a Harrison High School English teacher, was named 1992 Christa McAuliffe Fellow by the U.S. Department of Education. She is one of 66 teachers from around

■ Christa McAuliffe was the first private citizen to be invited to share in space travel.

the country, and the only Michigan educator, to receive the award. A stipend will allow Brown to teach half days next year, and spend the remainder of her time studying motivation theory and how it can be applied in teaching students.

Schlieff, a foreign language teacher and consultant for the Garden City school district, was named a 1992 Christa McAuliffe Educator through the NFIE's Christa McAuliffe Institute for Educational Pioneering. One of five educators selected from across the country for the award, she will receive an honorarium plus plan and teach at a conference for program fellows this summer.

POLICE/FIRE CALLS

Listed below are some of the Farmington area police incidents, fire calls and court cases reported during the past week:

■ PARK DAMAGE

Two drivers, who remained in Horton Park after the main gate was locked, are believed to have pulled part of a wooden fence out of the ground to get out of the area May 25-26, according to a Farmington Hills police report.

A parks and recreation employee was unable to locate the drivers of two cars that remained when he closed the park. Sometime before morning, an 8-by-4 foot piece of the fence was removed. It's estimated that it will cost about \$35 to repair the fence.

■ HARASSMENT REPORT

The co-owner of Goutman To Go restaurant in the Mulwood Square shopping center told police she received a harassing phone call May 20, referring to the charges against her business associate in connection with the assault of a 15-year-old employee in July 1991.

"Is this the place where the 15-year-old girl was assaulted?" the caller reportedly asked. The woman

didn't reply. The caller then threatened her 6-month-old son, according to police.

■ POSSIBLE LEAK

The manager of an Eight Mile Road business called the Farmington Department of Public Service and Farmington Hills firefighters when he smelled propane in the building May 22. The manager evacuated the building and closed the propane tank, according to a Farmington Hills fire report.

When public safety officers arrived, they entered the building and shut off gas to the furnace. When firefighters arrived, they monitored the area and found no appreciable amounts of propane. The manager was advised that the owner should have the propane tank and furnace inspected before putting both back in service.

■ EXPLOSION REPORTED

Farmington Hills Fire Department district chief Robert Rehtoy responded to a report of an explosion at the intersection of Tredwell and Ontaga May 23 and found an exploded pop bottle, according to a fire report.

A witness told Rehtoy the explo-

sion was very loud. Rehtoy could find no odor of accelerant. No damage was reported.

■ THEFTS REPORTED

A watch and money valued at \$595 were reported stolen from a house on Beacon during a May 26 break-in.

An AM/FM cassette player valued at \$400 was reported stolen from a 1985 Plymouth on Tulane May 25-26.

Speakers, amplifiers, a CB and stereo valued at \$1,285 were reported stolen from a 1982 Oldsmobile at Bob Sak's Oldsmobile, 35300 Grand River, May 23-26.

Approximately \$507 in coins was reported stolen from a house on Quakertown May 21-25.

A car stereo valued at \$350 was reported stolen from a 1984 Buick on Springvale May 25-27.

■ DAMAGE REPORTED

The rear window of a car parked on Violet was broken out May 25-26, causing \$200 in damage.

Damage was estimated at \$500 when a car parked in the Downtown Farmington Center parking lot was scratched May 26.



Language and technology: Marilyn Schlieff, a Garden City High School foreign language teacher, is a recipient of the 1992 Christa McAuliffe Institute for Educational Pioneering award. Huddled with her around a classroom computer terminal are students Heather McConnell (right), Matt Leclercq (left) and Ryan Hamilton (seated at right).

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