

Blown away

Student vision of downtown is eye-opening

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Students have turned in their assignments. But instead of sharpening their grading pencils, the project is piquing people's curiosity.

Lawrence Technological University students will present their vision for the Grand River corridor at 6 p.m. Thursday, April 6. A 5:30 p.m. reception kicks off the event at the Farmington Training Center, 33000 Thomas St.

LTU architecture students — under professor Will Allen — took on Grand River in downtown Farmington as a class project in January. They've developed an overall aesthetic plan for the corridor running from Drake Road east to Orchard Lake.

Some city officials and Beautification Commission members have seen a preview and they're quite pleased.

"The presentation just blew us away," said Beautification member Marisa Miller.

Miller, who is a photographer at Focal Point Studios, liked the idea of getting students involved. She heard about a similar project in Grosse Pointe Woods which went over well.

LTU students completed the project at no cost to the city.

Included in the mock-up are stunning renovations, Miller said. Designs call for a park with an amphitheater and a walkway from The Winery over a Rouge River tributary by Brookdale Condo-

miniums.

Students also reconfigured the Masonic Temple Plaza to feature an interlocking brick walkway and a small fountain. Large "Welcome to Farmington" signs are included in the entranceways.

Landscape upgrades — especially tree plantings — are an integral part of making the corridor appear uniform, Miller said.

Other suggestions involved lowering signs to make them easier to view and adding shrubs to parking lots.

"There's a lot of potential," said LTU architecture student Andrew Link. "That's what made (the project) interesting to work on."

"The fact it's such of a con-

glomeration of commercial, residential, urban and historic areas. I think the fact it has all these elements... It's kind of exciting to try and tie all these elements together."

Added senior Kristine Henry: "We really got into the detail and we took this far in terms of research. Someone did a thesis on Farmington 20 years ago. So we researched his research."

The question is: How much of the students' concepts will become reality? Hard to tell, Miller said.

"I guess our goal is to spark a little enthusiasm in the downtown," Miller said. "Yes, you can not complete this overnight, but you can implement this a little bit at a time."

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Smiling readers: Helping out at the recent reading program are (from left) Bobbie Feldman, Dr. Darlene Russell, Jyl Forsyth and Allen Wolf.

Guest celebrities help Warner reading program

Warner Middle School in Farmington Hills participated in the DEAR (Drop Everything And Read) program March 17.

March was Reading Month, and DEAR, an Oakland County-wide program, stressed the importance of reading. Celebrities were invited to read to the students.

Warner readers were: George Cantor, newspaper columnist; former state Sen. Jack Faxon; Bobbie Feldman, Farmington School Board trustee; Jyl Forsyth, radio disc jockey; Sue Gillespie from the cast of "Beehive" at the Gem Theater; the Rev. Gary Johnson;

Darlene Russell, Warner Middle School principal; Barbara Saltz, Warner secretary; Farmington Hills Mayor Joanne Smith; Allen Wolf, attorney and television news commentator; and Marvin Yopola of Marvin's Marvelous Mechanical Museum in Farmington Hills.

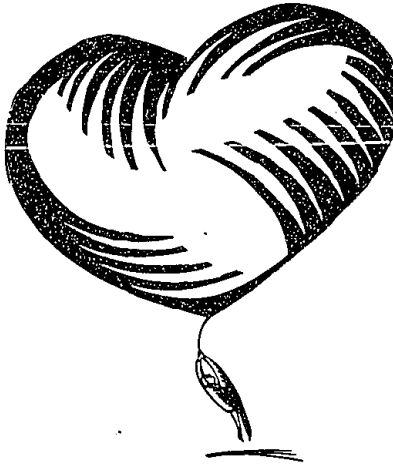
The guest celebrities entertained the students with books from Dr. Seuss, mysteries and scary stories, biographies and Irish folktales. After the reading, the readers were invited to a "Celebri-Tea" put on by Warner's Parent Forum.

Fund-raiser to be all wet

The Rainbow Connection, a Michigan charity that grants the wishes of terminally ill children, will hold a "wet" fund-raiser at Village Green of Farmington Hills, 39365 Village Green Blvd.

Officially opening their pools, several Village Green apartments will celebrate "Splash Day" on Saturday, April 8, at 11 a.m.

Residents, employees and adventurous volunteers will take the plunge by diving into the chilly waters at 11:30 a.m. — no matter the weather conditions. Each jumper will take pledges to raise funds for The Rainbow Connection. The event is open to the public. Information, 810-728-0070.



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