



**Gotta dance:** The Hora Aviv Israeli dance group, including (from left) Barbara Herman of Ann Arbor, Jan Moskowicz of Birmingham, Eli Shalom of Farmington Hills, and Jenele Teger of Southfield, will perform in the area.

## Fest features food, dancing

The International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit Inc. and the city of Southfield Community Relations Department are presenting the Eighth Annual International Folk Dance Festival 3:30-7 p.m. Sunday, April 23, at the Southfield Civic Center.

Ten ethnic performing groups will perform and nine gourmet international restaurants will serve appetizers, entrees and desserts from the Middle East, Europe and Asia.

Tickets for the festival are \$13.50 in advance, \$15 at the door.

Send checks payable to City of Southfield, and mail by Friday, April 14, to Community Relations, City of Southfield, P.O. Box 2055, Southfield 48037. Additional information is available by calling the International Institute at (313) 871-8600.

The schedule is as follows:

- 3:30 p.m. — Hora Aviv Israeli Dancers
- 3:50 p.m. — Wawel Polish Folk Ensemble

- 4:10 p.m. — Daughters of Peace Middle East Dancers

- 4:30 p.m. — Sarisen Slovak Folk Ensemble

- 4:50 p.m. — Echoes of Ukraine

- 5:05 p.m. — Tagumpay Philippine Cultural Ensemble

- 5:25 p.m. — Presentation to Southfield Mayor Fracassi

- 5:05 p.m. — Art of Motion African Dance Theatre

- 6:20 p.m. — Tim O'Hare's School of Irish Step Dancing

- 6:45 p.m. — Vidyanjali East Indian Dancers

The Southfield Civic Center is at 26000 Evergreen, north of 10 Mile in Southfield.

The International Institute is a United Way-supported agency that provides social services and immigration counseling to the foreign born, as well as hosting cultural enrichment programs to foster awareness of all cultures.

## Engler: New academy model for others to follow

By MARGARET O'BRIEN

STAFF WRITER

The "Alleluia" movement from Mozart's Exultate Jubilate was heard Friday afternoon by the 100 people gathered in the Duns Scotus chapel to dedicate Southfield's new Merle Academy.

Even though it is early in the process — bonds critical to the school's development have yet to be approved by the Southfield Economic Development Corporation — most agreed it was an appropriate selection for the occasion.

Merle Academy founder Jerry Marlatt called finding the former friary available for him to convert into a public charter school a "true blessing." Duns Scotus president the Rev. Maynard Tetreault said he was "delighted" to find a buyer that plans to continue using the building for study and reflection.

Gov. John Engler said the agreement was a "shining example" of what charter schools can be. Southfield city staff have said they are glad to have found some-



Walking the halls: Jerry Marlatt, left, founder of Merle Academy, Gov. John Engler and Al Pope, academy vice president, toured the Duns Scotus campus Friday.

thing that will preserve the area and building.

In short, there was a lot of praise at the one-hour ceremony. Marlatt outlined the plans for the 1,100-student, 6-12 grade school that will teach a college

preparatory curriculum with an emphasis on and with the assistance of the arts.

"Behind everything is our conviction that art is the essence of life," Marlatt said at the dedication, which was held in the school's concert hall. "The past and the future reach out and touch us through the arts."

Engler called the Merle Academy the essence of public charter schools and a model for others to follow.

"This and other charter schools like it will truly be centers of learning and also a challenge to all of public education in Michi-

gan to get better," Engler said. "I'm very excited about what you are doing here."

Tetreault, who has been fielding queries and trying to find a buyer for the friary that served the Franciscans for 50 years, said he is also hopeful at the prospects for the school.

"The Franciscans wish you God speed," Tetreault said. "We are delighted that once more young people will walk these halls and roam these woods. May they enjoy it as much as we have."

In discussing the school's future, Tetreault reminded the audience of the building's past. He

talked about the school's namesake — 14th century French philosopher John Duns, who was referred to by the Latin nickname for his Scottish heritage — "Scotus." Tetreault also talked about the students who studied there when it was a seminary.

"They invested a lot of sweat, love and care here," he said.

Though supportive of the school idea, it was Tetreault who reminded the audience that Friday's dedication was one based on faith.

"Now it is up to the residents to make this happen," Tetreault said.

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