

On the job

Student workers show their abilities

PARTNERS

Now in its third year, the Farmington Public Schools Community Partnership Advisory Council is dedicated to bringing the schools and local businesses closer together and inspiring them to share talents and resources. Direct queries to Betty Wolford, School/Community Relations, at 489-3349.

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To be given the opportunity to demonstrate your abilities, rather than hear about your disabilities, does wonders for your self-esteem. Just ask students from Visions Unlimited, a school that provides educational programs and services to handicapped students between the ages of 18-26, about their work experiences in local businesses and organizations. Their enthusiasm and their pride are unmistakable.

Staff members at Visions see their mission as developing

each student's potential in reaching the status of contributing citizen, productive worker, supportive family member and leisure time participant.

One of the school's goals is to increase student participation and involvement to the local employment community. Staff members have developed several partnerships with local businesses and organizations to help students achieve this goal.

One such partnership was developed by teachers Joyce Brown and Dennis McElhorne with Wesley Mewer of ACO Hardware. Though Mewer retired this year, the partnership continues with the help of Patricia

Graff, human resources director.

ACO Hardware provides facilities for community work training for Visions students. Activities include the daily use of the ACO mailroom for clerical training, placement of students in area stores, and occasional use of the warehouse for training in packaging and materials handling. Graff said, "It's a very rewarding experience for us. Our employees enjoy having these students here."

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who go to the ACO sites interact with regular employees, helping students develop better social skills for the job.

In return, employees increase their awareness about people with disabilities. Brown said, "This is a wonderful company. They were willing to open their doors to us. I can't say enough good things about them."

The partnership has led to the employment of one student at ACO headquarters. It has also increased the self-esteem of the students involved in the job training experiences.

Brown and McElhorne nominated Mewer for Farmington Public Schools' 1995 Partnership Wall of Fame. He was recognized and honored by the Board of Education last spring for his commitment and dedication to Visions students.

Farmington Public Schools operates Visions Unlimited which is funded by Oakland County Intermediate Schools through a county-wide special education millage.



Gaining vision: Visions students Jason Meyers (left) and William "Zev" Bricker are gaining work experience in the ACO Hardware mailroom.

Beautification remains a priority for Farmington, Hills

By BILL COSTICK
STAFF WRITER

The notion that keeping communities beautiful is an important part of their viability and value is finding believers in Michigan.

The Beautification Council of Southeastern Michigan's quarterly meeting Dec. 7 at the Farmington Hills Activities Center was more like a testimonial to the positive effect of beautification programs.

"Keep Michigan Beautiful has been working for over 35 years

for beautification," said council president Art Koester. "It's been an evolution for most communities. It usually means minor changes that continue over time and eventually make a major impact."

Gladys Smith of Berkley has been involved with beautification efforts in Dearborn, Detroit and other cities since the late 1950s. She's seen the progress.

"(Gov.) Milliken even put funds in the budget for it (Keep Michigan Beautiful)," she said. "At our first meeting, we had 22 commu-

nities involved. Now there are many communities active in this all over the state, even the U.P."

The concept has not been lost on the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills.

"We have been trying to establish a vibrant downtown," Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff said. "Since forming a downtown development authority in 1986, we've seen over \$2 million plus private investment money go into our downtown. The SEV has doubled."

Lauhoff cited a project involving 3,000 hours of work by Lawrence Technological University students that has given Farmington new ideas on how to improve the city's beauty.

"That's helped it keep its small town charm," he said. Lauhoff said in an older community, like Farmington, it was especially important to fight blight, improve roads and sidewalks and keep the city beautiful.

"Without the maintenance, you lose the community," he said.

Farmington Hills City Manager Bill Costick said that city has had a different experience and different challenges.

"We've had rapid growth to where 10-12 years ago, those were the issues," he said. "But our vision is to become the most livable city in Michigan by the year 2000."

For that reason, the city, including its parks, buildings and fountain, have been examples of how to maintain beautiful landscaping and overall appearance.

"If we want the city to be

beautiful, we've got to set an example," Costick said. "Fifteen years ago, we were a little bit of a sleepy hollow. Now we have to make sure we have strict zoning."

Costick cited the 12 Mile boulevard, the Grand River corridor and the city's parks.

"In 12 years, we've added over 450 acres of park land with over 200 acres being natural park land," he said.

About 100 representatives of communities in southeastern Michigan attended the lunch.

Careless smoking led to fire

Farmington Hills firefighters say careless cigarette smoking caused a fire that claimed the life of a Farmington Trailer Park resident Dec. 7.

The victim, James Arthur Treloar, 67, died in the fire. The cause of death has not been determined.

"We're quite certain that smoking was the cause," said Hills Fire Chief Richard Marinucci. "Everything points back to

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Richard Marinucci
Hills fire chief

an ashtray."

The fire, first reported at about 7:30 p.m., quickly spread through a trailer at the park on Middlebelt. Two residents tried

in vain to rescue Treloar. Police and firefighters were able to get the man out and put out the fire, but he was already dead.

FARMINGTON FOCUS

Dress down — donate up!

Every Friday is Casual Day for the non-uniformed employees at the Farmington City Hall. Since May, they've contributed \$1 each to a kitty for the privilege of dressing down.

So what to do with the almost \$250 collected? Why, donate it to Neighborhood House, the organization that helps Farmington-area families in need, of course.

That particular charity was selected by a vote of the employees, said Carol Murphy, secretary of Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff.

Well, just how dressed down can employees be on Casual Day at City Hall? "There's a guideline policy," said Bill Richards, assistant city manager. "We adopted it from Ford Motor Company. They can wear jeans, casual slacks, sweat shirts, that kind of thing."

Talking trash

Hear ye! Hear ye! Refuse and recyclables will be picked up a day later than the usual pick-up day during the two weeks beginning Tuesday, Dec. 26, and ending Monday, Jan. 8, in the Farmington area.

For example, if your collection day is Monday, Dec. 25, your trash will be taken away on Tuesday, Dec. 26, and so on. Normal pickup resumes Monday, Jan. 8.

Christmas trees will be composted if placed at the curb on the regular collection day during the week of Jan. 2-6. Trees should not be placed in bags.

What becomes of recyclables?

Looking for something fun and educational to do with your kids (and yourself) during the Christmas break? Consider a tour of the facility where the recyclables go.

Items placed in the recycling bin at curbside are taken to the Materials Recovery Facility in Southfield. Then they are sorted, baled and shipped to local and international markets.

Free, one-hour tours are designed for young

and old, big groups and small. An educational presentation, video, and walk-through the facility are included.

Dec. 21-22 and 28-29 have been set aside as "open tour" days. Space is limited. Call Heidi Wayco at 208-2270 for more information.

CPAs wield cookie cutters

Some local certified public accountants put away their calculators and put on their chef hats for a charitable cause.

Morof Sheplew Weinstein, PLC, a Farmington Hills accounting firm, closed its Orchard Lake Road office Dec. 11 and brought out the cookie cutters to help the Karmanos Cancer Institute in its inaugural Holiday Cookie Walk.

Morof Sheplew Weinstein sought the help of one of its clients, chef Joseph Bogosian of Joseph's French Pastry Shoppe, who volunteered his time and expertise to assist the novice bakers.

The CPA volunteers brought in their favorite cookie recipes and the best were used. "The holiday spirit has really hit MSW," said Gary Brand, member, "and we're glad we can share it with others."

Memory Lane

From the Dec. 15, 1955 edition of the Farmington Enterprise:

■ About 35 students attended the Farmington High School Language Club's Roman Banquet in the high school cafeteria. Guests were Ruth Bailey, Latin instructor, and Mary Bastianelli, Spanish and French teacher.

■ Officials disclosed that about \$1.5 million has been pledged by developers and builders toward the construction of the proposed Farmington Sewer Interceptor.

■ Short item: "The best beauty aid for many a woman is a near-sighted man."

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 39411 Grand River, Farmington 48335; faxed to 477-9722; or dropped off at the newspaper office. For the computer literate, the Internet E-mail address is: pocky@online.com.



\$110
christian dior
robe

Knit cotton velour
with zip front and gold
braided trim. Red or
navy. S-M-L.

Jacobson's

HOLIDAY HOURS

330 W. MAPLE RD. • BIRMINGHAM
MONDAY - SATURDAY, 9:30 AM TO 9 PM
SUNDAY, NOON TO 5 PM
PHONE: 644-0000 • FAX: 644-5067