

Schools seek business partners for French student exchange program

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Three Farmington Public middle schools will do back-to-back French exchange programs this year. But for O.E. Dunckel, which piloted successful programs in the spring, the exchange is part *deux*.

Organizers have another "do" in mind as in: Do you have any money to spare?

Parents pay their children's transportation to France, but the program doesn't cover costs associated with hosting French students here. Organizers are looking for donations to help with such things as field trips and entrance fees to museums for the visitors.

"We hope in some ways we can become (business) partners with them," said O.E. Dunckel Principal Pam O'Malley. "Perhaps the students can meet them or we can do a field trip to their business."

One business — Albion Industries — has already made a financial contribution to the program. Donations can be made by check to: Farmington Public Schools, School and Community Relations, 32500 Shawwassee, Farmington 48336.

Last year, O.E. Dunckel hosted 17 students and two chaperones from Cergy, France, in April. Their visit was followed by a return trip to Cergy with 12 O.E. Dunckel students during the summer.

Less students visited Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum, took in a Detroit Tigers baseball game, and went shopping on the University of

Michigan campus as part of their visit here.

Such ancillary costs to host French students ran \$1,500, an organizer said.

The program expanded to include Power and East middle schools this year. Warner Middle School is expected to participate in 1998.

O.E. Dunckel will host students from Louvre, France, while Power will have kids over from Mennecey in the spring. East gets students from Paris. Farmington students will return to France during the summer.

Organizers are reluctant to release dates for security reasons, said Ellen Jud, an O.E. Dunckel parent coordinator.

Enthusiasm for the back-to-back program is running high at East and Power middle schools.

Power Middle School expects to send 23 children to Mennecey, 25 miles south of Paris. Some 30 French students are expected to stay with families from Power.

Parent organizer Sue Pacer and her daughter, Jillian, have started exchanging letters with the family of Mathew Cadilhac, 12, of Mennecey, who they will host in the spring.

"We've gone to meetings with other schools who have been doing this for years and they keep coming back because it is such a wonderful program," said Sue Pacer, a parent organizer at Power. "A lot of parents are apprehensive because the children are so young. They have found, though, the younger you are the more receptive you are to speaking a foreign language."

"We're excited."



PHOTO BY RONALD POKNEY

Accident scene: Farmington Hills police Officer John Markey and an unidentified firefighter check over the aftermath of where a pedestrian in the road was hit and killed by a car Wednesday night.

Car hits, kills woman, 58, standing in road

BY WILLIAM COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills police are trying to find out why a Farmington Hills woman, 58, was standing in the road Monday night when she was struck and killed by a car.

"The accident is pretty straight forward," said Hills Traffic Supervisor Sgt. Dennis Green. "We just haven't been able to find out why she was in the road, on foot at that time of night."

The woman, Margaret Fleming, was struck by a red 1993 Chevy Corsica driven by Ronald Young, 54, also of Farmington Hills, at 10:16 p.m. on southbound Halsted across from the Independence Green Apartments near Hallwood Court.

Young had told police that he saw the woman at the last minute, waving her hands in front of the car as if trying to flag him down. He could not stop in time.

She was pronounced dead at 1 a.m. at Botsford General

Hospital.

Officers found that she lived at the apartments and also found an application for a nearby pizza parlor in the blue leather man's jacket she was wearing. They believe the jacket belongs to her husband.

Police found no identification on the woman, but found that she worked at a nearby Kmart and traced her back to her residence where they contacted her husband early Tuesday.

The driver was wearing a seat belt and was uninjured. Police found no alcohol in his blood and he was not at fault in the accident. He had been driving to work at the time.

"I don't know what we can do about this type of thing," said Green, adding that the death was the eighth traffic fatality this year, higher than in recent years. "I'm afraid this is becoming a more urban area and bikes, pedestrians and cars don't mix."

Police are seeking an autopsy and still trying to find out why she was walking in the road.

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the problems go beyond fire safety, including a number of crimes such as burglary, thefts and auto thefts.

"It is our intent to see if we can get a sub station or office over there," Dwyer said. "That way we could have a district officer or someone in the area."

According to police and fire statistics, the complex has had a disproportionate number of problems in 1996.

There have been a total of 762 runs, including 104 fire runs and 658 police runs at the 980-unit complex as of Dec. 13 this year. The fire runs include medical emergencies.

By comparison, the 1,392-unit Muirwood Apartment complex, on the north side of Grand River

west of Drake, has had 431 total runs with 78 fire runs and 353 police runs in the same period.

Green Hill Apartments, some 796 units on the south side of Nine Mile west of Fire Station 1, had 326 runs including 292 police runs and 34 fire runs.

There have been six burglaries at Green Hill, nine at Muirwood and 16 at Independence Green. Six vehicles were stolen from Muirwood during the year compared with seven from Green Hill and 12 from Independence Green. There were 53 larcenies from Green Hill, 49 from Independence Green and 34 from Muirwood.

The department made 78 runs per unit at Independence Green compared with .41 at Green Hill

and .31 at Muirwood.

"I don't think location is the problem," Dwyer said of the high number of responses.

Pat Clapper, manager of the complex, said she had talked briefly with Hume and plans to meet with him in the next few days to discuss any possible problems.

In a letter in August to David Clapper, Hume made recommendations to help prevent future fire problems. The recommendations included:

■ Securing access doors to hallways and basements.

■ Notifying residents by newsletter that a "serious fire problem exists" and asking them to report any suspicious information to the complex management.

■ Providing security personnel for the complex "who will specifically target the basement areas and any suspicious activity."

Hume said an investigation

this summer found that people were leaving trash in the basement area, which later became fuel for fires.

Hume said the Dec. 7 fire, which caused \$18,000 in damage to contents and \$6,000 to one building, could have cost lives. That fire is under investigation.

Pat Clapper, who said she is related to David Clapper, said other than a conversation with Hume about the fire, she had not known about any ongoing fire problems.

Dwyer said when Green Hill Apartments experienced a series of crimes during the summer, management came forward and asked police to help.

"We have Officer Bonnie Unruh of crime prevention trying to work with managers of these and other apartments to prevent problems," Dwyer said. "We'll be working on that with them."

WL school board meeting canceled

The regular meeting of the Walled Lake Consolidated School District's board of education scheduled for Jan. 2, 1997, has been canceled.

The next regular meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 16, in the board room at the Educational Services Center, 850 Ladd Road.

Farmington Observer

(USPS 187-840)

Published every Monday and Thursday by Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Farmington, MI 48030-0910. Periodical postage paid at Farmington, MI. Postmaster: Send address changes to "Observer & Eccentric," Farmington, MI 48030-0910. Telephone 313-953-2288.

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million on new computers. She was looking for areas to cut.

"It's a big undertaking for us to think about," Enberg said.

Time is not on the board's side, though, school officials said. Many of the district's 26 buildings are 30 years old and becoming outdated for modern teaching techniques.

Athletic director Ron Holland and technology director Kathy Jones stated the case for the pool and computers.

The district only has one competitive swimming pool at North Farmington High. Two other high school teams use it as well as the Stingrays Swim Club, Holland said.

Standards call for pools to be at least 6.8-feet deep with a diving area of no less than 12 feet. Farmington High's is three-feet in the shallow end.

A base of computers is needed in both elementary and secondary buildings, Jones said. The proposal would add three computers to each elementary classroom. Secondary classrooms would get one unit but have access to computers on carts.

In terms of the number of computers, the district is lagging, Jones said.

"With computers, it's always difficult with the obsolescence factor," Jones said. "What we really need is a large investment of computers to get our installed

base."

Computer replacement would be done on a five-year schedule and paid for out of general operating expenses, Jones added.

Trustees were briefed by a bond analyst and a financial advisor on how to proceed if they decide to go to the voters.

Bonds can be sold in a series or all at once to raise \$110 million, a representative said. Proceeds raised from bond sales would pay for building renovations and technological improvements outlined in the proposal.

The figure involved is not unusual considering the amount of buildings and scope of work involved, one analyst said.

"The overall load is fairly modest," said Paul Stauder of Stauder, Barch and Associates, which has been hired as the financial advisor during the process.

Some trustees needed to hear it from their colleagues, though. The panel recommendation makes sense, said Trustee Priscilla Brouillette. Her voice of less than a year's experience on the board was joined by Inch's 18 years.

His response — which called on the wisdom of Harry Truman, a shipbuilder, and an English king — appeared to sway the rest of the board.

"I think it's time we embrace this proposal," Trustee Cathy Webb said.

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