

COMMUNITY LIFE

THURSDAY, JANUARY 23, 1997

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ELIZABETH HAMMER

DELTA helps reach the gifted students

All students need consistent daily opportunities to learn at their challenge level. When children say "Now I understand!" about something that originally seemed "hard to learn," their academic self-esteem and sense of mastery skyrocket.

Providing this sense of accomplishment for the gifted child is often a challenge to classroom teachers. Very bright children often know the basics which other children still need to learn. Teachers who feel a keen sense of responsibility to "the other 28 children" may need help in providing for the gifted students in their classes. The DELTA Department assists and supports the classroom teacher in finding ways to meet the learning needs of the gifted.

There are three general approaches which the DELTA coordinators use. The first is through actual student contact. While the classroom teacher is responsible for the learning of all students, the DELTA coordinators frequently assist by meeting with small groups of children or even with an individual child. This "extra pair of teacher hands" gives children guidance for things like independent studies, classes at more advanced skill levels, and alternative instruction to replace topics the child already knows. This is an especially common option in the elementary schools, where students have more flexibility in their schedules.

At the middle and high school level, students would more commonly choose particular classes to meet this need: for example, taking algebra in the eighth grade, or choosing an Advanced Place-

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■ Carlos Ramirez has a traveling dog grooming business that pampers pooches in Farmington.



BY MARY RODRIGUE
STAFF WRITER

Mary Picard is typical of the customers who depend on the services of Carlos Ramirez, a traveling dog groomer.

His yellow van, with pictures of dogs painted on the sides, pulls into her Farmington Hills driveway once every six weeks to groom Grover, a six-year-old Maltese-Poodle mix.

"I would highly recommend him. I would trust him to come in and get my dog if I weren't home," said Picard, who manages the Meadowbrook Country Club golf shop.

"Carlos does a lot of charity work, marathon bike trips, things like that."

Picard has been using the services of Ramirez's "Going to the Dogs" for six years, since her family moved to the community when husband Robert's NHL career brought him to the Detroit Red Wings in 1991. Shortly thereafter, the couple bought the tiny curly haired dog who weighed less than two pounds and was "smaller than a meatloaf," according to Picard.

"Two of my neighbors across the street use (the service). It's much easier than driving the dog everywhere and picking him up later. This is much more convenient."

While Picard beams when she sees Ramirez pull into her driveway, Grover isn't quite so happy to see the groomer.

"Last time, he hid under the couch," she said.

Since she was at work that time, her daughter, Lauren, 15, and son, Preston, 12, had the task of extricat-



STAFF PHOTO BY SHARON LAMIERA

Bath time: Carlos Ramirez reaches for a towel to dry Grover, a Maltese-Poodle mix who gets groomed every six weeks or so by the traveling service.

ing Grover from his hiding spot.

"He's scared at first. He shakes. But he gets over it fast. He's a happy dog," she said.

Inside Ramirez's heated van, Grover's body shook nervously as the groomer washed him and blew him dry with a hand held dryer. He had already had his nails clipped and Ramirez performed a cursory check of the little dog's teeth, which he pronounced healthy and clean.

Within a few minutes, as Ramirez spoke to him, Grover appeared to settle down.

Ramirez started his traveling dog grooming business in 1984, after years of working in shops. He custom designed the van interior to include a full size bathtub (he taps into the homeowner's water supply, and uses a heater to warm it) and a large table for grooming.

"What gave me the idea, I heard about a lady in West Virginia who ran a portable grooming service. That sounded good to me," he said.

A Farmington Hills resident, Ramirez works alone, except when he gets extra busy. Then his sister,

Maryann, lends him a hand.

"I do all types of breeds," he said. The only pooch who posed a problem was a very large St. Bernard dog.

"(Grooming) was not possible," Ramirez said. "He was too big."

His work takes him to neighborhoods all over the Farmington area, as well as to Southfield, Bloomfield Hills, Birmingham and Livonia.

"I don't advertise," he said. "Mostly, people hear about me by word of

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