

Thankful for ...

Here are our readers' answers

My loving wife, children, family and friends; the dawn of each new day; the shining stars above and my God who makes it all possible.

Bill Campbell
Farmington Hills

I am thankful that my mother doesn't have cancer. Last November we thought she did, but didn't. I realized how much my mother means to me.

Katie Persitz
Farmington Hills

I am thankful for my mom. She has three kids and takes care of us all by herself. She is amazing and I'm thankful for her...

Emily Showalter
Farmington Hills

I'm thankful for my parents. They teach me right from wrong, and keep me out of trouble. I love my parents and I'm thankful for them.

Jacqui Smylie
Farmington Hills

I am thankful for my life. I have seen people get killed by gangs in Detroit. You never know when you will die...

Johnny Jenkins
Farmington Hills

I'm thankful that all of my friends and family live near me. So whenever I have a problem they are right there to help me.

Tracy Byrne
Farmington Hills

I am thankful for my family and friends. I'm very thankful I can read, write and walk. I'm also thankful for my home.

Tina Gupta
Farmington Hills

I am grateful for everything, my family and my dog. If I didn't have my family, I would die, because they are my loving heart.

Felicia Gardner
Farmington Hills

I'm thankful for love and friends. I'm grateful for a place to live. I'm glad I have enough to eat. I have enough to give.

Caroline Coleman
Farmington Hills

I am thankful for my family, food, religion, home, independence, clothing, holidays, education, my dog, the Thanksgiving feast and most of all friendship and love.

Vicki Barczynski
Farmington Hills

I'm thankful for my family (all of it), friends, food and my religion. Thanksgiving is one of my favorite holidays. I get to see my family.

Jaymie Morton
Farmington Hills

I'm thankful for my house, because some people can't afford a house. And for my parents, because I would not be here without them.

Alex Gentile
Farmington Hills

I am thankful for my family because some people don't have one. I also get the opportunity to go to school and figure skate.

Brindar Sandhu
Farmington Hills

I am thankful for my parents because they are really loving and kind. They are always there for me. They support me in everything I do.

Kristen Ternes
Farmington Hills

I am thankful for my clothes, my family, and a warm house. I'm also thankful for my dog and my rabbit.

Shelly Robertson
Farmington Hills

I am thankful for being able to go to sporting events like the U.S. Open, the Stanley Cup Finals and the N.B.A. All Star Game.

Billy Brink
Farmington Hills

I am thankful for my best friends and family because they have been with me all my life! I am also thankful for freedom...

Sarah Pounds
Farmington Hills

(Our thanks to students from Beechview Elementary and East Middle School who contributed many of these letters.)

Share your bounty this season

'T is the season for giving thanks and although most who live in the suburbs are enjoying some prosperous times, there are many who still need help throughout the metropolitan area.

As we gather with family and friends to enjoy this Thanksgiving, consider sharing your bounty either in the form of volunteer time, canned goods or cash.

Your local church, synagogue, school, civic organization and place of business are good places to start. But if you're still looking for other suggestions, the following agencies have put out the word that help is needed this season. Many groups rely on the increased spirit of giving at this time to help them continue their work the entire year.

■ The Salvation Army Christmas Kettle Campaign. The Salvation Army provides more than three million direct services to disadvantaged individuals in metro Detroit. In the past 12 months, Salvation Army programs have contributed nearly \$40 million to the local economy.

Public support during the holiday season is crucial to the Salvation Army and enables it to share food, clothing and shelter with those less fortunate throughout the entire year.

"The Salvation Army needs to raise enough money to meet the needs of 125,000 people in the tri-county area," said Dale Johnson of the Salvation Army.

"Our goal is to meet the needs of the community. We never put the money before the need. The generosity of this community is sparked because people understand the need," says Johnson, adding the Army's 1997 holiday fund-raising goal is \$4.5 million.

Johnson reminds us that "need knows no season." Donations this holiday season provide food, clothing and shelter for many needy individuals for the entire year.

The Salvation Army is looking for bell-ringers to help raise money. To volunteer, call the Salvation Army's Farmington Hills Center at (248) 477-1153.

If you can't donate the time, be generous as you pass by the familiar red kettles which this year will be at Kmart, Hudson's, Target, Farmer Jack, Kroger and other locations in downtown Plymouth and Farmington.

■ Food Bank of Oakland County's three warehouses welcome donations of holiday fare for the 117 emergency food distribution agencies it serves. The Food Bank staff is calling on Oakland County residents to help provide

turkeys, yams, cranberries and the trimmings.

Since 1985, the Pontiac-based Food Bank of Oakland County has been providing food and personal care items on a regular basis through a network of emergency food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters including Farmington Hills Baptist Church, Mercy Services for Aging, Salvation Army and St. Alexander Roman Catholic Church in Farmington Hills.

Monetary contributions for holiday meals can be made payable to: The Food Bank of Oakland County, 120 E. Columbia, Pontiac, Mich. 48343. Food donations can be made by calling (248) 332-1473.

■ Gleaners Community Food Bank. Since 1977, Gleaners Community Food Bank has distributed more than 150 million pounds of food to the hungry, 41 percent of whom are children.

Tax-deductible donations can be made to Gleaners Community Food Bank, 2131 Beaufait, Detroit, Mich. 48207-3410 or call (313) 923-3535.

■ The Children's Leukemia Foundation of Michigan (CLF) needs help organizing toy drives for children. Call CLF toll-free at 1-800-825-2536. CLF is asking civic groups, businesses and individuals around the state to collect toys for patient children in their area. The agency is hoping to gather more than 3,000 donated new toys. Monetary donations are also welcome.

■ First Step, a western Wayne County agency which aids the victims of domestic violence, is looking for generous individuals and organization to "adopt a family" this holiday season. First Step provides the donor with information, including ages, sizes and wishes. The donor brings unwrapped gifts and food baskets to the First Step office in Canton Township, where families pick them up.

All donations are welcome and appreciated and families are screened to assure that they are in need of holiday gift giving. For more information, call the First Step office on Lilley Road in Canton Township, (313) 981-9595.

■ Focus:HOPE offers a variety of ways to share the joy of the holiday season with others, including its Share with a Senior and Family to Family programs. And their are other programs, including serving as drivers on Senior Delivery Day Saturday, Dec. 13, and helping to raise money by wrapping gifts at Northland Mall.

To participate, call the Focus:HOPE Volunteer Department at (313) 494-5500.

COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION:

What's your opinion about lighting high school football fields in the Farmington district?

We asked this question at Big Apple Bagels in Farmington.



"I think that's a good idea. Why not?"
Katy Marcoux
works in Farmington



"I guess it's a bad idea. There are a lot of homes in the neighborhood and it might get loud at night."
Brandon Hernandez
Farmington High student



"It's a pretty good idea."
Nancy LeDuke
Farmington Hills



"It shouldn't be a problem. It's something that could instill a little more enthusiasm for the crowds. It'd be good."
Dave Pavich
Farmington

LETTERS

Solutions 'not yet novice'

I should come as no surprise that there are parents who are confused and upset about the High School Proficiency Test. These parents put their faith in the public schools and ended up with children the state of Michigan certified as "not yet novice." I suppose it's only natural for some parents to blame the state's test, not themselves or the schools. They wondered where were the district's teachers? Why didn't they let parents know what was happening? Were they too frustrated or just too burnt out in their overcrowded classrooms to get personally involved with these students and parents?

These teachers knew what needed to be done. Smaller class sizes, and more planning time, a safer learning environment that allows for more interaction with parents. Michigan ranks 47th in the nation in terms of overcrowded classrooms and 38th in the number of college graduates. In Michigan, only 18 percent of our population is prepared well enough to earn a four-year college degree.

Obviously, it's the Michigan Legislature that should be stamped "not yet novice." They failed to listen to their teachers. They failed to study the needs of schools before they gave the test. After the test was given, they failed to provide resources and solutions to deal with the weaknesses that the test revealed. Finally parents wisely withdrew their children in mass from the HSPT, correctly pointing out the test was of no admission value and that all it did was label kids. The state then failed to admit the test was a complete failure.

As for the state giving the most gifted students a hundred dollars for the highest scores on the HSPT, that demonstrates what the state thinks of gifted students. Thomas Jefferson, the father of American public education, believed that the youth with the most gifted potential regardless of social class should be given a free university education at public expense. In modern America, the gifted student has been out of favor for over thirty years. Less than a tenth of 1 percent of the hundreds of million dollars that is spent on special programs goes to gifted students. Is it any wonder the parents of the gifted feel forced out? What we have today in Michigan public education are politicians who are only capable of proposing average standards and below-average solutions in overcrowded schools.

Eric Borregard
parent/advocate for gifted, talented
Farmington Hills

Ripple effect of crime report

You reported in October that Don Bosco, a Farmington Hills businessman, had been found guilty in the sexual assault of a teenage boy.

Unfortunately for my family, we are the "other" Bosco family, formerly of Franklin. My husband, also named Don Bosco, is a busi-

nessman in Bloomfield Hills. He is 61 years old and has been in the building business for over 25 years now.

As you can see, the similarities are painfully close. As we are not related to the other Bosco family, we are acquainted. Sharing the same name, including the middle initial, we got to know each other by occasionally exchanging mail.

We sympathize with all concerned, having two young children, we realize sexual assault against a child is every parent's worst nightmare. We also feel terrible for the members of the other Bosco family who now have to get past the pain and humiliation their family member has caused and go on with their lives.

I am surprised at the response we have gotten. Many of our friends have either called or faxed us with your article. Most with genuine concern that we "set the record straight," as it were.

This letter is no was a criticism of your article nor its contents. It is only meant to show the ripple effect one man's despicable actions can have on so many. However, the real motivation for my writing this letter was the shocked look on my 10-year-old son's face when your article came in over our fax machine. I felt an obligation to him and the rest of our family, many of which live in Farmington, to shed some light on how easily things can be misunderstood and the negative effects this misunderstanding can have on innocent people. My husband's only "crime" is having the bad luck of sharing the same name with an obviously disturbed man.

Gina Bosco
Plymouth

Where's the commission?

When the winter snows of '97 and '98 have melted, the landscaping on the medians dividing 12 Mile Road may well have become a desert. After only one snowfall it can be observed that a number of trees and some of the shrubbery have already been felled by skidding automobiles. There are two reasons that this has occurred. First, some drivers have lost control because of exceeding the speed limit. Second, Oakland County is remiss in getting trucks out to salt the road and protect people who must make their way to work and various other destinations.

Why is it that a highly taxed area such as Oakland County does not get immediate and early morning snow removal service on a thoroughfare as highly traveled as 12 Mile Road? The north-south Farmington Hills roads have been salted long before anything is done on this major artery going east and west. It is sad to see the beautiful landscaping destroyed. It is sad when people have the frustration and expense of fender benders. It is tragic when people are injured or killed because of the lack of services in our community. Oakland County Road Commission, where are you?

Gloria Gerber
Farmington Hills

Farmington Observer

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— Philip Power