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They also are trained to go to teachers and administrators whenever they sense that someone's safety might be in jeopardy.

The program, which began in spring 1996, is under the leadership of teacher Stephanie Potocki and counselor Jim Weston. Students who might be candidates for peer mediation are usually identified by faculty members.

"I personally feel it is highly effective in the students that have been peer mediated," said Potocki, during a Friday roundtable discussion with Weston, Brandon and Amanda. "... This (encourages) kids to feel comfortable talking about their feelings."

Weston pointed out the process opens up lines of communication,

fixing problems while at the same time helping kids become friends — or at least civil to each other.

"The idea ... is to resolve a conflict," Weston explained. "The idea isn't for them to become buddy-buddy. But that you will find a way to get along in our building."

There are two tracks to that goal:

■ In conflict resolution, staff members intervene between angry students.

■ Peer mediation involves students leading other students to a resolution, by following a format; mediators such as Brandon and Amanda ask questions (Can you tell us what happened? How did that make you feel?) in attempts to diffuse arguments and dispel rumors before someone decides to take matters into their own hands.

"We have a conflict report form, we go over the ground rules," said Brandon, 13. "We ask them what the conflict is. Why are you so angry? It goes back and forth and we re-state what they said."

"And we ask them what they need to have this conflict resolved."

Farmington school and police officials emphasized that the vast majority of youngsters aren't like the Arkansas boys, 13 and 11, who reportedly dressed in camouflaged outfits and waited outside their school before firing a stream of bullets into

unsuspecting students and teachers as they left the building.

According to Brandon and Amanda, there is a lot of negativity among young people, particularly those who can't communicate effectively at home or school. But they don't want to paint all with the same brush.

"I think most kids are good," Brandon said. "But some kids choose to be bad."

Amanda, 11, noted that "When an incident like this occurs, it seems like all the kids are angry ... People start thinking kids are getting wild in the '90s. But not all kids are bad."

Farmington Public Safety Director Gary Goss feels the same way. "We should also remember we have an awful lot

of good kids. We can't condemn an entire generation."

Goss, meanwhile, commends the district for its peer mediation and conflict resolution programs.

With those in place, "We're in pretty good shape to identify the kids who are at risk."

The Arkansas shootings created a buzz among students across the district. However, Dunckel Middle School teacher Steve Koponen said he didn't sense students were shocked.

"Kids are aware of it because they're talking about it," Koponen said. "But it's more of a 'Did you hear about it' kind of thing."

"Maybe because it happened so far away, there's not the same shock as if it happened around here."

He added that the incident "reflects the way society is going. Parents and teachers, everybody in the community, needs to do a lot more communication with kids ... more one-on-one communication."

Don Cowan, the district's executive director of K-12 instruction and student services, said the mass media is much to blame.

"My own personal opinion, violence on TV and movies has an impact on kids and adults," Cowan said. "It has a great impact."

Power's Weston, a teacher in the district for about 30 years, said "The final outcome when something like this happens, ... it makes you stop and think about your own community."



Peers of prevention: Eighth-grade student Brandon Connolly and sixth-grader Amanda Mergener discuss their role as peer mediators at Power Middle School.



■ **'The idea ... is to resolve a conflict. The idea isn't for them to become buddy-buddy. But that you will find a way to get along in our building.'**

Jim Weston
— counselor
Power Middle School

Check those golf spikes

Golfers at San Marino Golf Course in Farmington Hills had better check their shoes before they head out for a spring round.

A new city policy requires that only soft spikes may be used starting this season. The change aims to reduce the damage that metal spikes cause on the greens. Soft spikes can be purchased and replaced before you get there, or check the San Marino Pro Shop (476-5910).

Beer from page A1

kind of set up."

Goss said that when Putt bought the case of beer, "they said it was \$35. But she said she only had \$25 and they said, 'OK, we'll take it.'"

The store wasn't padlocked, even though the case is being investigated on several fronts.

"From the city's standpoint, they were selling beer without a license. From an INS standpoint, they had people working there in an illegal status, and it's a violation for a business to hire illegal immigrants."

Other possible issues include importing and not charging sales tax. Meanwhile, Putt said the bottles did not have "Michigan markings" for deposits.

But Goss said the city probably wouldn't be issuing local charges against the business owners or employees. "We're going to turn the matter over to the (Michigan) Liquor Control Commission."

CLARIFICATION

A photo caption on page A1 of the March 22 issue incompletely described a local company. Magie Brain in Farmington is a computer sales and service company.

Clarenceville brings in Ohioan as new middle school principal

Pamela Swert's first day on the job as principal of Clarenceville Middle School will be April 20.

The new principal comes from a similar post in Galion, Ohio.

The Clarenceville Board of Education Thursday unanimously voted to hire the Ohio native after interviews with the two finalists, Swert and Gail Weeks, an assistant middle school principal in Northville.

"We had two excellent candidates," said Superintendent Tom Tattan. "We are pleased to find someone of the caliber of Pamela. This is not a good time to find a principal, in the middle

of the school year."

Swert succeeds Karl Wagner, who retired earlier this year. Jim Lancaster, assistant superintendent for instruction, has served as interim principal of Clarenceville Middle School since Lancaster's retirement.

Applications for the job came from 15 candidates. Swert comes on board after spring break for both Clarenceville and her home district in Galion.

"That's a good time to make the transition," Tattan said.

Swert is a 1987 graduate of Ohio State University. In 1990, she earned her master's of edu-

cation from Ohio's Ashland University.

From 1989-1993, she was a learning disabilities resource room teacher for the Shelby City School District in Shelby, Ohio.

She worked as a sixth-grade teacher in 1993-94 and a seventh-grade math teacher in 1994-95.

She joined Galion City Schools in 1995-97 as an assistant principal in Galion Middle School. She became principal of that school in 1997.

The Clarenceville school district serves students in Livonia, Redford Township and Farmington Hills.

McCabe Funeral Home is offering seminar on coping with loss, grief

McCabe Funeral Home is sponsoring "Surviving Loss - Free Bereavement Seminar" at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 14, at the Farmington Hills Public Library on 12 Mile Road.

"Losing loved ones is one of the most painful experiences human beings can face," said Kevin McCabe, chief executive officer of McCabe Funeral Homes. "People need extra support to cope with bereavement. This seminar will try to help people through this stressful time."

Cathy Clough, director of bereavement services at Arbor Hospice for the past 12 years, will conduct the seminars.

Cities at home

The following Farmington area companies will display their goods at the second annual Home Improvement Show, which opens April 2 and runs through April 5 in Novi: American Express, American Discount

Heating, Tarnow Doors Inc. and the Tile Shop.

Helping the hungry

The Michigan World Food Day Committee has announced that Florine Mark, CEO of the W.W. Group in Farmington Hills, will again serve as Honorary Chair and spokesperson for the 7 Percent Solution, a campaign to bring the community together toward one common goal — the elimination of hunger. The 7 Percent Solution takes place Oct. 15.

"Swing & Shoot" set

Golfers and sport shooters mark your calendars for the 1998 Charity "Swing & Shoot" Golf/ Sporting Clay Jamboree starting with registration at 7:30 a.m. Friday, June 5, at the Detroit Gun Club and the adjacent Links of Pinewood Golf Course in Wald Lake.

Sponsored by Land Rover Farmington Hills, all proceeds from the event will benefit the Detroit Institute for Children, providing specialized diagnostic, medical and rehabilitative care for children with disabilities since 1920.

Hop for Leukemia

Childtime Children's Center in Farmington Hills will hold its fourth annual Hopathon to raise money for the Children's Leukemia Foundation of Michigan.

The first week of April, all Childtime centers will collect pledges and participate in the Hopathon. Last year's proceeds from the event raised over \$10,000 for CLF.

Builder's license seminar

Farmington Community Education in cooperation with Oakland Builders Institute will offer a 16-hour, pre-license seminar from 6-10 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays, April 28 through May 7 at the Community School in Farmington.

The class is designed for people who want to subcontract the construction of their own home and building trades people who want to work legally, as well as for real estate investors and developers.

The cost of the seminar is \$170. Pre-registration and payment is required by April 24. Call 489-3333.

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