

Store  
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"Because we are family-run and smaller, we take really good care of our people and our people take real good care of our customers," Conlin said.

At Thursday's planning commission meeting, members approved a 4,738-square-foot building at the current site on O'Sheehans. Under the plan, the

existing structure would be torn down and a new facility built.

Last week, O'Sheehan's owner Larry Sheehan confirmed Applebee's plans, but said he hadn't been made an offer by the restaurant chain.

"They would be purchasing the rights to our land and (liquor) license; they wouldn't be buying our business. We'd just close," Sheehan said.

"They probably want all their ducks in a row before they negotiate with us."

Athena dinner honors Ural May 21

The Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce will present its 1998 Athena Award to Nurten Ural, president of Ural Interiors in Farmington Hills.

The Athena Awards Dinner is at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 21, at the Botsford Inn.

Ural has been involved in

many women's business organizations and is a past chamber chairwoman.

Standup comedian Alice Faye will be the guest speaker. She is the co-founder of "Motor City Women of Color."

Tickets are \$35 and include a full dinner with dessert. For tickets, call 474-3440, ext. 21.

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EXCEPT FOR

Officials eye alternative middle school

Alternative education is usually an option for students having trouble in high school.

"The problem is at age 16, it's almost too late," said Dianne Duthie, Farmington schools alternative education director.

"We don't begin early enough."

Duthie is one of several southwestern Oakland County school district representatives who attended a recent informational meeting about the first alternative middle school in their area.

Southwest Technical Middle School is set to open in August for the 1998-99 school year.

The program is open to students ages 11 to 14, in grades seven and eight, from the Clarencville, Farmington, Huron Valley, Novi, South Lyon, Walled Lake and West Bloomfield school districts. Qualifying students are those who fail to respond to intervention, display multiple behavior problems, have a history of school failure, have a pattern of high absenteeism or are pregnant or a parent. The program is not for special education students.

Each district would have the ability to place 10 students in

the program which will be housed in the 14,000-square-foot Tuxton office building next to the Walled Lake Educational Services complex on Ladd Road in Walled Lake. Oakland Schools is leasing the facility.

School officials, parents and students would have to agree on the placement and after one year, each child would be evaluated to determine if they are prepared to return to their home schools.

"The earlier that we catch them, the better chance we have to fix them," Duthie said.

The off-site program is designed to reduce disruptions in the home schools while providing smaller, individualized classes with a ten to one teacher ratio.

The main goal, Duthie said, is to improve self-esteem.

"If you can improve the self-esteem of a student ... you can see an abrupt change in not only academics, but in every area of their lives," Duthie said.

The curriculum will focus on the use of technologies and hands-on instruction. It will also include health and fitness, strong parent involvement, high

school and staff mentors, and flexible use of time.

Walled Lake schools already has alternative programs at both middle schools. Up to eight students can participate in Project C.A.R.E. at Walled Lake Middle School and Options, a half day program focusing on math, reading, behavior and responsibility is available at Clifford H. Smart Middle School.

"The kids have already been through numerous other interventions," said Janella McGuire, principal at Smart. "We're willing to adapt to what's good for the students."

"Right now academics is the least important thing to those kids," said Allen Archer, Options instructor. "We try to get them to buy into the school. The big thing I try to tell them is 'doesn't it feel better to be successful.'"

But two more middle schools are opening in the Walled Lake district this fall and the six remaining districts do not have alternative middle school programs.

"They're the kids that need the one-on-one," said Kris Miner, a counselor at Farmington's East Middle School. "They need their education to come in a different way."

Farmington, Huron Valley and West Bloomfield schools have alternative high school programs, but many administrators see a need at the middle school level.

"I think the need has been there," however, Miner said, "to put a program in for one district is very expensive."

"I think there's always some kids, that no matter what you do, the regular school setting is not right for them," said Kim Szalay, social worker at Muir Middle School in the Huron Valley district.

Brian Kaplan, assistant principal at Abbott Middle School in the West Bloomfield district, likes the plan to provide off-site education with on-site opportunities in sports.

"The kids are feeling overwhelmed and I think the parents, in some situations, are feeling frustrated," Kaplan said of the current situation. "They get to keep their hands in their home school and get their education somewhere else."

The goal of the program is to try to reintegrate students into their home schools when possible by the time they reach high school.

District officials, who would pay for participation through state per pupil funding, are being encouraged to select students for participation by mid-June.

**Dentistry in the 90s**  
by Herbert M. Gardner, D.D.S.

**SENILE DECAY**

While it may be true that the risk of decay may decrease during young adulthood as consumption of sweets declines and oral hygiene improves, the risk of getting cavities starts of its during middle age. Why? The gums begin to recede to expose vulnerable tooth roots, which do not have the benefit of an enamel coating to protect them. Unlike the exposed crown, tooth roots also have minimal prior exposure to toothpaste. What is more, many older people have reduced secretions of saliva, which affords natural protection against tooth decay. To protect aging teeth against "senile decay," older patients are urged to ask their dentists about possible fluoride applications, as well as

strategies to improve saliva flow.

This column on senile decay is brought to you by LIVONIA VILLAGE DENTAL ASSOCIATES. Preserving teeth is an important consideration for everyone. We're located at 19171 Merriman Road, where we stress preventive health care for the entire family. We utilize 21st century, state of the art dental procedures. The best way to reduce your risk of tooth decay is to develop good oral hygiene habits. We recommend you brush twice a day and be sure to floss at least daily. We're currently accepting new patients and welcome your call at 478-2110 to schedule an appointment. Smiles are our business.

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P.S. Gum disease can lead to root decay by harboring plaque, made up of decomposed food particles and living bacteria, beneath the gumline.

**SPOTLIGHT ON Orthodontics**  
by Josephine Finazzo, D.M.D.

**CHANCES ARE...**

According to numerous studies, 50% of the population need some form of orthodontic care for the treatment of malocclusion, the improper positioning of teeth that does not allow them to fit together correctly when the jaws are closed. This large percentage is understandable when one considers that many malocclusions are hereditary. Causes include extra or congenitally missing teeth, misaligned jaws and teeth with too little/too much room between them. Problems may also arise if the relationship between jaw and teeth is not proportional. Malocclusion may also be acquired through tooth loss due to decay or injury, sucking habits, or retention of baby teeth.

Whether inherited or acquired, many of these problems affect not only alignment of the teeth, but facial appearance as well. To schedule an appointment, call THE ORTHODONTIC GROUP, 19223 Merriman (442-8885).

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Learning problems are getting statewide attention!

Corvette Engler is stating all children should read by the third grade. Many children are struggling with the basic skills needed for reading. MEAP testing was developed to find ways to improve schools and support learning problems. Teachers are concerned with the large number of children who are struggling with reading. In many schools, children line up at lunch time to receive their dose of Ritalin. This has many parents and doctors worried. Meanwhile, the children are still waiting for answers. They're still waiting for help with their homework. Or they just avoid it all together.

Dr. John Jacob, director of the Vision Therapy Center, has found an answer for many of these children. Most children with learning problems, especially those with A.D.D., have an undiagnosed vision problem.

I can't stress enough how critical it is for a complete eye examination to be included in testing for A.D.D. and other learning difficulties. 40% of children in an average classroom have a vision problem that can hinder their ability to read and learn, says Dr. John Jacob, director of the Vision Therapy Center in Livonia. It is often overlooked, and can be serious.

Symptoms of vision deficiencies and A.D.D. are similar. Parents, teachers, in fact all of us, need to know the symptoms of vision problems. The symptoms of a child having learning difficulties are related to vision:

1. Avoids reading and near work, cannot sit still or finish a task. This is often caused by double vision and eyestrain to focus, swim, or visually discriminate.
2. Losses place while reading, skips words, moves whole head back and forth, uses his finger to follow sentences "impulsively". Poor

control of eye movements will bring these symptoms to the surface.

3. Tiring head while working up close, covering one eye, developing headaches after reading or near work, are all signs of problems with eye teaming. Children typically do not report poor vision. They assume everybody else sees what they do," notes Dr. Jacob.

4. Poor handwriting can also be the result of poor eye hand coordination. Many of our patients have poor handwriting skills.

These spelling, the child may even pass the test but cannot recall the words one week later. Reversing letters (sometimes identified as dyslexia). This is often the result of poor visual memory and visualization.

Local parents Stuart and Mary Mathis share their daughter's success story. "There can't possibly be anything more frustrating and a feeling of hopelessness, when you know your child is bright and she can't read. Vision therapy for my daughter has uplited my heart in so many ways and has decreased the stress in our home. Finally finding the missing piece in the puzzle allows Tonya to move ahead into more challenging aspects of her life."

The Vision Therapy Center doesn't claim to solve vision problems that cause these symptoms. It comes at A.D.D. Their role is to correct vision problems that cause these symptoms.

The American Optometric Association (A.O.A.) states that ten million U.S. children under the age of twelve have vision problems that make it hard to learn at home and school. These vision problems often prevent a child's development of normal learning abilities by interfering with learning.

Frustration leads to a behavior of dropping out of school and even juvenile delinquency. The Association's warning is clear.

Dr. Elly Hildebrand, author of "Suddenly Successful Student," adds this good news, "In almost every case of a child with a vision problem there is a solution. The trick is recognizing the problem and getting the child to the right practitioners."

"After started off as an early reader who caught on quickly and loved to read. As reading became more difficult, Alex came to dislike reading and avoided it as much as possible. Now Alex is able to read with much more ease, he no longer complains of reading and has actually begun to pick up books on his own because he's into it," shares Roxanne Roth.

Tonya Mathis with her vision therapist, Kamela Asher.

Testing for vision-related learning problems is being offered by Dr. Jacob in Livonia, (734) 525-1170. "I am very concerned when I see extensive testing for A.D.D. and learning problems without considering a possible vision problem. Even school screenings can be misleading, because they are nowhere near sufficient to rule out all vision problems," states Dr. Jacob. "An undiagnosed vision problem is very often the missing piece."

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