

Students, staff honor sophomore

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER
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More than 200 Farmington High School students and staff members Monday honored sophomore Matthew Willer's memory by attending his funeral at St. Gerald Catholic Church in Farmington.

"And now, the high school strives to put the tragedy behind and move forward. That epitaphs looking at the problems and issues that lead to teen suicide."

Principal John Barrett said a staff workshop soon will be planned to enhance awareness of students "who might be depressed and how to deal with it."

Matthew Willer, 16, died Friday at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, from injuries sustained in an apparent suicide attempt last Wednesday, March 10.

"Described as always smiling and upbeat, Matthew recently became distraught over a personal matter."

"He was a neat kid," said FHS assistant principal and former counselor Bob Crawford. "He had a great wit about him ... He could definitely debate you and get pretty

creative with his rationale."

Assistant principal Catherine Cost said Matthew was an average student, well-liked by the staff and his peers. Matthew also "was not afraid to take a stand if he didn't think something was right."

About the large Farmington High contingent who attended Matthew's funeral, Crawford said, "I think that's what we're supposed to do. Kids are important."

Many students and staff also attended Matthew's family Saturday and Sunday at Heeney-Sundquist Funeral Home in Farmington.

During the funeral, friend Rob Wiloy read two poems written by Farmington High students. Cost said the poems revealed Matthew as a smiling, upbeat, honest indi-



Matthew Willer

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vidual.

This week, Crawford, Cost and others are struggling with Matthew's death, trying to find out if anything could have been done differently to prevent it. But Crawford noted that the victim did have friends and resources available at the school to help him work through his despondency.

Unfortunately, Matthew did not avail himself of those opportunities for help. "He didn't reach out, and that's the tragedy. He had friends who were there," Crawford said.

Cost said it was stunning that Matthew wasn't able to communicate his recent feelings of depression, especially since he usually had no trouble getting things off his chest.

"I worked quite extensively with the kids on Friday," Cost said, referring to counseling sessions following news of Matthew's death. "And they talked about how honest he was about his feelings, and that he was a happy kid who made everybody laugh. That's why it came as such a surprise."

In lieu of flowers, the family is requesting that memorials in Matthew's name be sent to Farmington Families in Action, 35000 Thomas St., Farmington 48336.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BECKER

Remembering: A shed at Farmington High School shows classmates' feelings about Matthew Willer who died almost a week ago.

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by lower to middle income-families who lived in the southeast area.

"He held nothing back," Heidt said, "which is somewhat refreshing in municipal matters."

On a grassroots level, Mr. Roberts served on the Old Town homeowner's association. He did

his part for the city and neighborhood, Kurzeja said.

Mr. Roberts wasn't above rapping his always present walking cane to get someone's attention.

His wife Judith described him as exceptionally knowledgeable and well-read. Mr. Roberts was born Nov. 1, 1927 in Detroit. He worked as an electrician and was a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 55.

He is survived by his wife of 27 years Judith; daughter Renee Floer; and step-children Bonny, David and Joseph Poltier; and

sister

Eleanor

Szacachowicz.

He had

six grand-

children. Vis-

itation is 3-9

p.m. Thurs-

day at

Charles R.

Step Funeral

Home at

16424 Beech

Daily Road, Redford. Funeral ser-

vices are 8 p.m. Thursday with

the Rev. James Wright officiat-

ing.



George Roberts

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Robert Dodds, MD, recently joined the practice of David Clarke, MD, Christina DiMaggio, MD, and Kang-Lee Tu, MD. He specializes in Obstetrics and Gynecology, and has a special interest in treating conditions of infertility, urinary incontinence, and pelvic prolapse.

After earning his medical degree at Wayne State University, Dr. Dodds completed his internship and residency at Providence Hospital. Among his other awards and activities, Dr. Dodds was honored as Resident Teacher of the Year each year from 1995 through 1998. He is also a member of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology and the American Medical Association.

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