

## Recognition

### Let's value the good kids do

Perhaps it's natural that the Littleton, Colo., tragedy has foisted even more scrutiny on children. Such violence tends to stop the world in its tracks and send everyone back to the drawing board looking for answers.

There's no doubt that children are being watched more closely and that adults are gearing up to prevent more Littleton tragedies.

Before the adult world, however, paints every child with the broad Littleton, Colo., brush, it's time to acknowledge the goodness that many children achieve in their growing years.

The Farmington Youth Assistance last week honored 31 children in grades six through 12 who even at their young ages are giving of themselves through volunteer work.

Their volunteer work ranges from school activities such as tutoring, band boosters, bake sales and funds to community efforts at Botsford Hospital and Special Olympics.

Some students went to the Cumberland Mountains in Appalachia and Mexico to do good deeds while a few even attended peace conferences in England, India and the Netherlands.

And some of the students served food to the homeless, while others visited nursing homes and raked leaves for senior citizens.

That's a whole lot more than a lot of adults do or are involved in. So let's give credit where it's due, especially in these times when children are, in general, suspect. These 31 children, plus many more who this year may not have been recognized, but nonetheless give of



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRADLEY

**Honored:** The following students were honored by the Farmington Youth Assistance as "Outstanding Youth" for their volunteer efforts: Brynn Allen, Julie Barber, Gabrielle Lynn Bennett, Karen Berger, Karen Bockli, Leah Brasch, Jeffrey Aaron Canvasser, Abbey Kathleen Cleland, Emily Ann Cohen, Noah R. Cook, Justin Dexter, Jessica Lehiwa Dong, Andrea Gadowski, Jonathan Garvey, Jessica Glovak, Jennifer Gulezian, Kristin Elise Horner, Kristin L. Horton, David Koch, Sarah Ruth Lachowski, Monique Luse, Meara MacWilliams, Keith Marks, Kathryn Therese Mato, Nicole C. McDoniel, William L. Read, Kristy A. Reinhardt, Binsa B. Shah, Jenelle R. Welling, Nicole White and Jennifer Worman.

their time and efforts, are learning to be good citizens — at a very young age.

FYA members who choose which children to honor are faced with tough decisions. They take into account how many hours the kids volunteered, what type of volunteer effort they made and whether they have been honored before.

FYA members should also pat themselves on the back for a job well done and for taking the time to honor these kids and to give them and others a chance to shine.

When we are bombarded with news that can frighten and leave a sense of hopelessness, it's kids such as the 31 honored by the FYA that spread some cheer and once again put the world on its right path.

Let's not forget tragedies, such as Littleton, Colo. But let's also not be so jaded as not to recognize that a majority of children are good and caring members of the community.

## Explore Michigan's appeal

Michigan is the automobile capital of the world. That isn't exactly news to Michiganders. But did you know that:

■ Michigan has the longest freshwater shoreline in the world?

■ The University of Michigan at Ann Arbor is the oldest state university in the United States?

■ Detroit telephone customers were the first in the United States to be assigned phone numbers in 1879?

■ Michigan was the first state to provide in its constitution for the establishment of public libraries?

No, we haven't been taking a refresher course in state history. Those are just some of the tidbits included on a new Web site put up by the Secretary of State's office to promote the celebration of Michigan Week, May 15-22. The theme of this year's celebration is "Michigan: Behold the Splendor."

Gov. John Engler, honorary chair of Michigan Week, said in a proclamation that the week is a "time to encourage greater knowledge and awareness of Michigan and its history; to afford an inspired view of our State's advantages to the world; and to foster a spirit of cooperation among all communities that will make the Great Lake State even more livable and attractive."

## MICHIGAN WEEK

Michigan Week was started in 1954 by the late Don C. Weeks, then director of the Michigan Department of Economic Development, and a group of residents who formed the nonprofit Greater Michigan Foundation. Their purpose was to mobilize grass-roots boosters to promote Michigan as a wonderful place to work and live.

This year Secretary of State Candice Miller is chair of Michigan Week. Calling Michigan the "undisputed fresh water recreational Mecca of the world," Miller said, "Add to that all the other recreational opportunities and the unique combination of our rural roots and Motown sophistication — you have an unbeatable combination."

We couldn't have said it better ourselves. Michigan has something for everyone and this week is a good time to look around your own community and explore some of the special places you might overlook during the day-to-day routine.

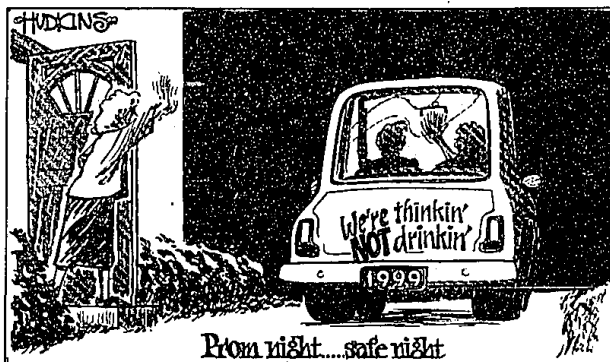
For more information about Michigan's attractions, you can visit that Web site at [www.sos.state.mi.us/miweek](http://www.sos.state.mi.us/miweek).

home, parents should call to be sure proper adult supervision is included.

Other tips include: extending curfew only when children provide a detailed itinerary of their plans; if a limo use or hotel party is planned, calling the company and saying you will hold them responsible if alcohol or drugs are used; and giving students an out by letting them know they can call you if they end up in a dangerous situation.

We love our children and want a bright future for them. Let's get through this prom and graduation season safely so we'll all have fond memories to share.

ARKIE HUDKINS



## LETTERS

### Rape drugs

The Michigan Women's Commission commends the efforts by the media to educate the public about the dangers of Gamma Hydroxy Butyrate (GHB) and other rape drugs. However, these drugs are often mentioned as "date" rape drugs, which is very misleading. Victims of these unsuspecting drug-induced sexual assaults are frequently drugged by strangers or slight acquaintances — not in a dating scenario. Using the term "date" rape drug leads people to mistakenly assume there has been a dating relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. The correct message needs to be sent to the public — these are "rape drugs."

Important points to remember are:

- Never leave a drink unattended.
- Don't accept any beverage (including soft drinks) from someone you do not know.
- Order bottled or canned beverages when possible; open them yourself.

Be cautious of anyone inquiring about drinks that you have not tried before, even health drinks. Predators often disguise GHB as a new health fad, or slip it into drinks that you are unfamiliar with, which makes it even more difficult to detect the taste of GHB.

When Gov. John Engler signed the legislation, in July of 1998, to add GHB to the list of Schedule 1 Drugs, Michigan Women's Commission members were present. The commission has been actively distributing GHB brochures to: law enforcement agencies; middle and high schools; colleges and universities; women's centers, shelters and help groups; counseling and rape centers; hospitals and emergency rooms; prosecuting attorneys; churches; etc.

A Schedule 1 Drug makes it a crime to deliver, possess the drug with intent of delivery, or manufacture the drug. Even simple possession of the drug will be considered a felony and using the drug will be a misdemeanor. When convicted, fines and prison terms are applied.

The public can contact the Michigan Women's Commission office at (517) 334-8622 for GHB brochures.

Patti Garrett  
chair  
Michigan Women's Commission

School board presidents, union leaders and politicians funded by the education establishment oppose every reform measure which holds promise to relieve parents from the government's monopoly on schools. Rather than advocate the best interests of the students, these statisticians promote policies which maintain their grip on power while at the same time claiming they know what's best for our children.

When will the bureaucrats realize they cannot satisfy the needs of every student? Children are not robots with interchangeable minds. Children respond differently to their environment. By limiting options and protecting its monopoly, the government denies parents and students opportunities to find alternative schools that are better suited to their needs. While the UTTO is not a panacea to education's woes, it is a single step in the right direction. A step that helps us provide a better education for our children.

Steve Sutton  
Farmington

### It's unjust

What of the landless poor in the emerging nations like those of Latin America? Millionaires have made their money through our monetary system and are often philanthropic. But so often it is giving a man a fish instead of teaching him to fish and thus have a livelihood. In Latin America there are few rich, many poor and virtually no middle class. Two percent of the people can own 96 percent of the land. They often hire armies to kill and terrorize the poor.

Wealthy people here and abroad through financial institutions and multinational corporations could bring pressure to bear on emerging nations who have great inequities to regulate their policies. If multinationals pay the people fair wages it would be a way out of poverty.

We could help the poor to form community based projects. They could establish their own credit unions. The indigenous people should be permitted to own property in community as is their age old way.

As to agrarian reform a footnote to MICAH; the prophet says "Land monopoly, also denounced by Isaiah was a chronic vice."

It is unjust for people to live in economic slavery. The poor need land and a fair return for their goods and labor in order to be independent and free.

Virginia Mitchell  
Farmington Hills

### Right direction

The Observer's coverage of the recent forum on the Universal Tuition Tax Credit proposal reveals an overall pattern which is troubling to parents seeking to improve the educational opportunities for our children.

## Farmington Observer

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OUR MISSION: "Because we publish community newspapers, we think about community journalism in a fundamentally different way than our bigger competition. They consider themselves to be independent from the stories and communities they cover, swooping in to write the unusual or sensational and then dashing off to cover something else. We regard ourselves as both accurate journalists and as caring citizens of the communities where we work."

— Philip Power

## It's prom time: Be careful out there

Remember that old TV spot that went something like "It's 11 o'clock. Do you know where your children are?"

Those words apply these days, with teens taking time to go to proms, parties and graduations. Although it's a happy time, the general festivity surrounding the season can lead to less-than-festive activities such as teen alcohol abuse, drunken driving and drug use.

Too often, peer pressure can lead otherwise responsible kids to do things they shouldn't. Suggestions from those who work with young people include parents having a copy of the night's itinerary and discouraging hotel parties. If a party is thrown at another student's