

Michaelson gets picked for job

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER
timsmith@ecce.com

Collaboration with community organizations is at the top of Estralee Michaelson's to-do list as director of Safe and Drug Free Schools, a newly-created administrative position in the Farmington district.

According to Michaelson, her new job replaces a similar faculty position she held for several years, one that will not be continued.

"This will allow me to reach out more and build a more seamless initiative out in the community," said Michaelson, who formerly accepted the position during Tuesday's Farmington Board of Education meeting.

Her appointment was unanimously approved by board members Nov. 17, but she was not in the audience that evening.

Michaelson immediately begins the year-round job, which carries an estimated salary of \$70,000. A \$50,000 federal grant will pay part of her salary and help fund the office.

The key regarding collabora-

tion is this is definitely not going to be a top-down operation," Michaelson said. "... There will be a tremendous amount of collaboration between the schools and community. I see myself as a liaison."

Continuing the Call to Action Summit, a community-wide coalition, is a high priority for Michaelson.

She cited the following as Call to Action themes: promoting a zero tolerance attitude throughout Farmington and Farmington Hills; expanding parent education programs; expanding programs with and for students in the middle and high schools; creating more "connectedness" with resources and agencies; "so we're talking more consistently and pushing the same message."

The second annual community-wide Call to Action summit will tentatively take place Jan. 19, 1999, Michaelson told board members.

Student leaders from the district's secondary schools will convene for a similar Youth Summit, 8:30 a.m. tomorrow at Farmington Training Center.

Implementing the "Support Our Students" program in elementary schools is another top priority, she added. The first step to doing that is hiring seven employees, who must be state-certified counselors, social workers or psychologists.

Meanwhile, Farmington school board President Cathy Webb said selecting Michaelson for the position made perfect sense.

"She is passionate about kids and the problems that kids face," Webb said, adding that Michaelson understands the importance of youngsters learning in a safe and secure school environment.

An added bonus is the fact that Michaelson was "doing much of this job already, without having the official title."

Several people criticized the district this fall, after it became known it wanted to hire a director for the Safe and Drug Free Schools program. They were concerned that such a position would add another high-priced administrator; overlap what the leaders of other community organizations might be doing.

But Webb said there were no

residents to discuss Michaelson's appointment during the public comment portion of the Nov. 17 meeting.

"It's not (adding) a layer of bureaucracy," said Webb, defending the appointment. "It's a way of organizing things that are already in place. And she works so close with so many people in the community."

Coordinating efforts in the district is only part of Michaelson's duties. She also will act as a go-between for the Farmington and Farmington Hills police departments and the 47th District Court.

Community agencies and organizations Michaelson is expected to work closely with include Farmington Families in Action, Farmington Youth Assistance, the Commission on Children, Youth and Families and the Farmington Area Counseling Services.

Michaelson will have her office at the Farmington Training Center, near Farmington Youth Assistance and in the same building as the Farmington Alternative Academy.

Barton Malow hired to manage library

Farmington Community Library has hired Barton Malow Co. to manage a \$12 million building program. Two projects, funded by a recently passed bond election, will include renovations and a 36,000-square-foot addition to the existing Farmington

Hills Branch library, including a computer lab, tutoring rooms, a second large meeting room, and improved heating, ventilating and air conditioning; upgrades to electrical and cable capabilities to accommodate information technology, and a computer lab.

Groundbreaking is scheduled for late spring 1999. Robert Zieglerman of Luckenbach/Zieglerman Architects in Birmingham, is the architect for the program.

In addition to the renovations and expansion, Farmington Community Library plans to use

the recently passed millage funds to expand its collection of books, books on tape, videos, CD-ROMs, business and investment resources and other materials. Access to technology will also be improved, and hours of operation will be extended.

Clarification

Oops: A photo caption in the Sunday, Nov. 29 Observer should have identified four Farmington High School students walking down the colorful, innovative "Hall of Murals." They created are (from left) Lyndsay Duseh, Lisa Grentzel, Jennifer Reese and Akil Dawkins.



STAFF PHOTO BY ELIZABETH CARNEGIE

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