

FHS PomPon squad off to good start

Although their performance season is just beginning, the 1998-99 Farmington High School PomPon squad has already enjoyed some pre-season activities.

The 25-member squad was the only Farmington Public School team to compete in the Advanced Pom category at Mid-American PomPon camp in July. In addition to placing first in the speed learning and kick line categories, several members were chosen to be Mid American All-Star, which involves additional performances throughout the school year.

The 13 members chosen for the '98-99 All-Star squad are Heather Bruce, Becky Culver, Melissa D'Arcy, Stephanie Dow, Leslie Heliak, Kim Hickey, Kimberly Marano, Kelly Martin, Martha Morris, Meghan O'Leary, Heidi Paquette, Morgan Sanford and Jenny Toscani. The All-Stars recently performed in the annual Detroit Thanksgiving Day parade.

Lindsey Abbott, Kate Bouschel, Lauren D'Agostino, Nikki Giroux, Adrienne Grace, Kristin Horton, Melissa Judge, Nicole Lavake, Sarah Miller, Sava Niskanen, Jenny Reeve,

and Natalie Schauer make up the rest of the FHS squad.

The girls also perfected their team unity at the Ropes Course in Farmington Hills. Breaking down into two groups, they brainstormed and executed ways to accomplish the challenging

events of the course.

Jan. 9, 1999 will find the squad along with the FHS cheer team, hosting a combined pom-pom and cheerleading clinic for girls in grades six-eight. The daylong clinic will involve age-appropriate instruction as well

as an opportunity to perform at a FHS basketball game.

Information regarding registration is available by calling coach Fitzgerald at 426-2900 or coach Lloyd 426-2912.



Farmington High School PomPon Squad

Medicare seminar will help seniors in January

The Farmington Hills Senior Center in cooperation with the Commission on Aging presents a seminar by Joyce Hunt, from the Area Agency on Aging 1-B, who will be on hand to help seniors understand the new Medicare plans so that consumers can make an informed decision regarding the choices everyone

is being asked to consider.

The seminar is scheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 27 at 7 p.m. at the Farmington Hills Senior Center, located within the William Costick Activities Center at 28600 Eleven Mile at Mid-dlebelt.

Pre-registration is not required for this event.

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ners on a regular basis - never seem to be overly abundant. Teeth need brushing, ears need cleaning. Nails and hair grow so fast they are being clipped almost ceaselessly.

Nourishing the spirit

Caring for their physical needs - though a noteworthy task - is small potatoes compared to nourishing the mind and spirit. There are five distinct personalities to deal with, varying tastes, attitudes, learning styles, intel-

lectual abilities. They display incredibly different temperaments, emotional needs, levels of awareness, individual responses to life, and disparate perceptions of how they are treated by others.

I am challenged by dissimilar needs that constantly evolve and develop and both amazed and astounded at how easily self-esteem can be damaged, yet it is so painstakingly difficult to rebuild.

I love the challenge, but it is a

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legislature.

"Our agency addresses issues in a number of ways," Weipert said. "We offer case ombudsman service to families and individuals in nursing homes. We help resolve a lot of different issues - proper nutrition, health care, lack of care."

The agency also checks charges for care services that are questionable, Weipert said.

A major issue now is when a resident runs out of private funds and the home finds a way to discharge or transfer him to another facility."

On his visits to nursing homes, Weipert observes the bad and the good.

The good and the bad

"I sense some facilities are excellent. The staff strives to make residents feel at home, with personal furnishings. Staff know residents by name."

"But too many places are not that way. They are desolate environments with a sense of depression and isolation. A lot of residents are abandoned by their families, and that's a sad commentary."

Adds Connors: "We don't mean to demean all the homes. Some are very dedicated and are hurt by broadside criticism of the whole system. One thing we do as an agency is we collectively assess information and observations. We look at licensing reports, complaints. It's helpful to us to study the system and make recommendations for change."

Weipert says Citizens for Better Care does not rate homes or make recommendations to families.

"One home that just closed received a good rating," he said.

"Quality can go up and down."

Rizzo says some home staffs, aware of impending state inspections, "will clean up, act concerned about residents."

Adds Connors: "Citizens for Better Care makes inspection reports available. But they should not be the end all on quality."

Weipert suggests families looking at homes should visit facilities unannounced.

"See what the staff and the activities look like," he said.

The reality for many families, however, is that care is needed in a hurry, such as on discharge from a hospital.

"The decision is often not well thought out."

That is in part why Rizzo and others want to strengthen legislation and make consumers more aware.

Need for reform

"People know nursing homes are not what they should be," said Connors. "Our focus is on what needs to be done. People don't love being cared for. They need meaning in their lives."

Adds Weipert: "There is a strong perception that nursing homes are dangerous and not the place anyone wants to be in the end stages of life. The system needs improvement. We're working to address these issues."

To order "Michigan Long Term Care Companion," send \$24.95 plus 6-percent sales tax and \$3 shipping to: Citizens for Better Care Publications, 4750 Woodward Ave., Suite 410, Detroit MI 48202. All proceeds go to Citizens for Better Care. To contact Lydia Rizzo and the new Oakland County chapter of Michigan Campaign for Quality Care, call (248) 178-7293.

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challenge nonetheless.

Up to the task

At times I do not feel up for the task. On other occasions the sheer work volume creates a deep sense of loneliness and isolation if I don't keep my priorities in order.

While I would like to have the "perfect" Martha Stewart house and attitude, the something that has to give in order to achieve that is my children, and this is a sacrifice I am not willing to make. They are only young for a short time, and the old saying rings true that there will always be dust bunnies and dirty floors.

My oldest two are shipping into adolescence right before my eyes. I consider the days not all that long ago when I complained about their ineptitude as toddlers. I laugh and cry at the very thought. Before me stand two young men who will soon leave the nest.

I hope with all my heart the good times have outweighed the bad times in their estimation. I pray they feel good enough about themselves that they will not do harmful things, not be seduced by all that is so wrong in the world. That they possess - above all - such a strong sense of belonging, an unquenchable sense of family, they will always

know where to return to get answers, to recover from life's batterings, to the place they are accepted without reservation, to simply be loved.

Struck by growth

Tears escape in the darkness when I realize how incredibly quickly my babies have developed cracking voices, testosterone-tinted temperaments, the unexplainable physical strength of manhood.

I am suddenly struck by the profound realization - though they would surely say "Duh, Mom!" - I can never have them little and innocent again.

Knowing these things, I treat the third, fourth and fifth children differently, for better or worse. I let them be young and immature longer. Yet they resist my exuberant allowances and want to grow up even faster - like their older brothers!

I kiss each sleeping child, cherishing these stolen moments when they are not able to squirm away, when I bless them in the quiet with a mother's love, hope and dreams. Truly, this is what does matter in life.

Kathie O'Donohue lives with her husband and five children in Farmington Hills.

I thank God for Christmas.
Would that it lasted all year,
For on Christmas Eve,
and Christmas Day,
all the world is a better place,
and men and women
are more lovable,
Love itself seeps into every heart,
and miracles happen . . .

PETER MARSHALL

This Christmas, May The Miracle Of God's Love Happen To You!

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