

School district hosts recruitment fair in March

BY TIM SMITH
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It apparently doesn't hurt school districts to get an early jump on identifying future teachers and other valuable employees, particularly with the increasingly competitive job market in education.

To that end, Farmington Public Schools is hosting a recruitment fair in March, nearly six months before the next school year begins.

"It's getting more and more competitive to find the people we

need," said Larry Lobert, the district's executive director for human resources. "Farmington (schools) wants to have its profile out there — and out there early."

The district recruitment fair is scheduled 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Saturday, March 11, at Farmington High School. Lobert said approximately 1,500 job seekers are expected to stop by during the fair, which will be divided into four time slots. Prospective candidates for jobs in all areas will have an opportunity to garner key information about posi-

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Larry Lobert
—Human Resources executive director

tions. "We'll fit in as many people as we can, on a first-come, first-served basis," said Lobert, adding that the application process mostly will be handled via computer. "And this doesn't pre-

clude people from getting (job) interviews later."

Lobert listed the following areas: teachers in preschool, grades K-12, adult and community education; secretarial/clerical; maintenance/custodial; bus

drivers; nutrition services; para-professionals to assist classroom teachers; and substitute teachers for all levels.

People are asked to pre-register on the Farmington schools web site, www.farmington.k12.mi.us, or by calling 248-489-3600 if they do not have computer access, Lobert said.

According to Lobert, Farmington schools lost about 70-80 teachers over each of the past four years, in addition to support staff personnel. In the past, he explained, the district waited

until employees put in for retirement before beginning a recruitment drive.

But now, in part because other districts are beginning to hold such mid-year recruitment fairs, Farmington schools cannot afford to wait, because of the risk of losing top-quality candidates.

"This will give us a first look at the very best" teachers to graduate this year from universities, Lobert said.

CMU volunteer goes to Big Apple

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For many high school and college kids, "spring break" equates to a week in the sun, perhaps on a south Florida beach.

But that's not the case as far as Central Michigan University

junior Tracey Gies is concerned. The 21-year-old and nine other students from CMU are traveling to New York City to help the homeless and hungry from March 4-12 as part of the Youth Service Opportunities Project.

"It's such a great program," said Tracey, the daughter of Timothy and Karlyn Gies of Farmington Hills. "It shows there are college-age students interested in social causes. And it's great to meet some great people and get inspired."

The YSOP is the focus of CMU's annual "Alternative Spring Break," which is entering its sixth year.

Tracey, a 1997 graduate of Farmington High School, said her team will work on different projects every day of their trip, such as delivering food to low-income families and preparing dinner at a homeless shelter.

And, there will be a chance to interact with the downtrodden.

"We'll get some insight into what their lives are like, why they're there," explained Tracey, among 101 high school and college students working in 10 urban settings during spring break. This is her second stint; she first participated in the YSOP in 1997.

There still will be time for some sightseeing, however, Tracey said.

Making her fourth trip is Christy Turner, president of CMU's "Alternative Spring Break." She said a key aspect sought in YSOP applicants is their motivation for signing up.

"We have an application that gives students a chance to rank what's important to them," Turner said. "... We don't want people to say, 'I want to go to New York City,' but, 'I want to help the homeless.'"

Sponsoring the YSOP is the United Way of Isabella County & Volunteer Center, a nonprofit organization. Participants pay the \$300 fee for the program, although it can be lessened to about \$150 through fund-raising efforts.

N'ville library seeks donations

The Friends of the Northville District Library are seeking all good condition paperback and hardcover books, CD's, videos and tape cassettes for their Huge Millennium Year Used Book Sale.

The Friends have a Library Book Drop from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, Feb. 26. Donors are asked to bring donations to the library's loading dock, off S. Wing Street.

The book sale will be 4-8 p.m. Friday, March 3, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, March 4 at the Northville District Library. All proceeds benefit the library.

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