

Making a future career out of it

Career day features 'Officer Friendly'

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER
tsmith@oe.homedomain.net

"I want to be a mom," said the 3-year-old girl, during last week's career day at Alameda Early Childhood Center.

Not to be outdone, a little boy chimed in with "I want to be a dad."

According to Alameda paraprofessional Elizabeth Meck, those kinds of responses are typical for such small children.

But, after being asked to pick their future careers, they came up with everything from ice skaters to hockey players to even archeologist.

Meck and Alameda preschool teacher Deborah Lienvoli hosted the career day to give youngsters an opportunity to see what kinds of jobs they might someday explore.

One of the highlights of the day was an appearance by "Officer Friendly," who also goes by the name of Farmington Hills Police Officer Bonnie Unruh.

"She was there to teach, talk to children about safety and that police officers do help you," Meck said.

"Officer Friendly" asked the children if they knew what she was wearing.

"Some of them know it was a uniform," Meck noted. "And she also told them that she has 'tools' on her belt, such as a gun and (police) radio."

The children also were asked if they knew what telephone number to dial in an emergency.



Pointers: Haley Gold, 3½, holds her dad Eric's hand as he explains to the preschoolers in Debbie Lienvoli's Alameda class, about his job as a real estate developer.



Oh my: Liam Schaening, 3, listens to the career options presented recently at Alameda.

ALAMEDA EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

■ 'She (Officer Friendly) was there to teach, talk to children about safety and that police officers do help you.'

Elizabeth Meck, paraprofessional
—Alameda Early Childhood Center

According to Meck, quite a few of the kids knew the answer — 9-1-1.

Meanwhile, asked if age 3 is old enough for such a presentation, Meck said "Absolutely. You'd be surprised."

Meck added that she thinks the children "really get something out of it. Some people wonder, 'Well, they're only 3.' But a lot of these kids are well educated and know what's going on."

A number of parents devoted part of their day to talk to the children about their jobs.

Following are those who participated: Doug Mullett, geologist; Jeff Zadorozny, chemical engineer; Bruce Sanders, land developer; Teri Spytman, pottery artist; Eric Schwartz, automotive engineer; Caral Malone, school psychologist; Paula Nelson, automotive engineer; and Eric Gold, land developer.



Friendly: Farmington Hills police Officer Bonnie Unruh, known as "Officer Friendly," performs a magic trick with the help of Alison Decker, 4.

Morawski new William Grace principal

BY TRACEY BIRKENHAUER
STAFF WRITER

Hillside Elementary teacher Mark Morawski received a much-anticipated promotion, as the Farmington Board of Education appointed him principal of William Grace Elementary School on Tuesday.

His tenure as principal will begin July 1, 2000. The board had reviewed 12 candidates, and then selected two finalists.

"I can't wait to do this on a different level, which is as principal of William Grace, where I can provide that positive environment that I spoke of in my resume," Morawski told the

board. "I hope to bring that sense of leadership to William Grace."

"I look forward to working with the staff, the parents and, of course, the students. I want to create what is a quality learning experience for these kids."

Morawski's wife and eight-month-old daughter were present for his appointment.

The board offered its praise and thanks to Morawski.

Board member Gary Sharp commented specifically on Morawski's non-traditional resume, which highlighted not only his professional goals, but also his familial aspirations.

"I think, looking at an extremely impressive resume, the thing that jumped out most to me as defining Mark as a person is on his statement that says: 'I will love my family, with many indulgences, knowing that they are my true treasures in life,'" Sharp said. "That, I think speaks volumes, and I think you can hear the passion in Mark's voice and in his very being. It will be a dynamic experience at William Grace."

Morawski will succeed Kayleen Hill, who recently announced she was retiring from the William Grace principalship.

[finally]



Baker opens in Birmingham

Hills WalkAmerica site eliminated

BY TRACEY BIRKENHAUER
STAFF WRITER

Some Farmington families will have to amend their spring traditions this year.

Good thing it's for a good cause.

WalkAmerica, a March of Dimes annual event scheduled for the last weekend in April, will no longer parade through Farmington Hills.

Organizers merged the local walk with Plymouth's, which starts at Haggerty Field just south of Plymouth Road in Hines Park. Plymouth's walk will commence Saturday, April 29.

If Plymouth isn't convenient, you can walk on Sunday, April 30, in Detroit at Comerica Park.

MARCH OF DIMES

in Harrison Township at Metro Beach or in Troy at the Civic Center on Big Beaver Road.

The Southeast Michigan chapter of the March of Dimes has set a goal of \$2 million in 2000. Sixty-five cents from every dollar raised by walkers will stay in Metro Detroit.

The funds help March of Dimes researchers prevent birth defect and save babies' lives. Healthy Baby Services provides free rides to prenatal visits for mothers without transportation. The group is fighting for health insurance for the more than 11 million children who have none. WalkAmerica is the March of Dimes' No. 1 fund-raising event.

Because of low numbers, the March of Dimes consolidated its seven Detroit-area WalkAmerica sites into four.

"We were just spreading ourselves way too thin," said Pamela Levin, March of Dimes special events coordinator. "In some cities, we didn't have the hoopla for a large walk. It just wasn't the same feeling. Also, it wasn't cost effective."

Last year, Farmington attracted about 600 walkers, down from previous years.

"So far, the changes have been welcomed with open arms," Levin said.

The March of Dimes estimates this year's walk will draw about 1 million participants.

To register, call (800) BIG-WALK.

Rackowski co-sponsors bill intended to help seniors

Michigan senior citizens will get a tax break through a bill co-sponsored by state Rep. Andrew Rackowski.

The bill will double the personal exemption for seniors through the Homestead Property Tax Credit.

"These measures mean that seniors will have more money and freedom to improve their standard of living," said Rackowski. R-Farmington Hills. "Putting money back into the hands of those who earned it provides individuals with the ultimate choice in deciding how

their money is spent."

House Bill 4032 enables seniors to receive dollar-for-dollar refunds on anything above 3 percent of their income going to property taxes up to \$1,200, allowing for a more substantial state income tax refund. People 65 and older qualify for the enhanced property tax credit, which is indexed to inflation.

"Our booming economy provides us with the opportunity to bolster the quality of life in Michigan, especially for those on fixed incomes," Rackowski said.

"While the Homestead exemption helps seniors who own homes, doubling the personal exemption from \$900 to \$1,800 will help every senior citizen."

Rackowski also introduced legislation calling on Congress to eliminate the earnings test for Social Security benefits. That measure has broad bipartisan support in Washington and is expected to be signed into law.

"We need to end the practice of supporting outdated policies that penalize older Americans," Rackowski said.



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