

# Telethon from page A9

monetary support. "We want to expand our mission, and events like this build awareness," said Suzanne Lichtman, the foundation's executive director. "Besides, it gives the school the opportunity to showcase its new studio."

Most viewers never would have guessed that the high school crew running the show was using its studio for the first time. Naturally, there were mistakes, but the students accepted them as natural. Even when North High School junior Alyson Adams typed in a grand total of \$22.60 instead of \$2,260, she was unfazed. A fellow student called her, "It's \$2,200! Not \$22.60!" Adams laughed. She was more amused than apologetic.

Later she explained, "This was my first-time experience really using this in the studio," she said. "I learned the program between fifth and seventh hours."

Much of the high-tech equipment was installed just last week, with some pieces indetracked just hours before show time. Harrison High School senior Shawn Uridge was in the control room for his shot at

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**Suzanne Lichtman**  
—Foundation executive director

real-life experience as a camera operator.

"I figure this will be a resume builder to back me up even more than someone who just has a college education," he said.

Like most of his student colleagues, Uridge planned to crash at the school, especially after his 2 a.m. shift. Student shifts typically lasted three hours, with some students working as many as five shifts. Many students who had intended to last the entire 24 hours were spotted snoozing toward the wee hours, but telethon heroes Sue and Dean Cobb weathered all 24 hours.

Organizers had only about two months to prepare. That's why the foundation depended heavily



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DEWINTER

**Giving: Farmington Harrison freshman Jon Garvey works the phone banks early Friday evening.**

on reliable parent volunteers, such as Julie Devine, who has a student at Farmington High School. Dressed in her yellow telethon T-shirt, Devine coordinated students manning the phones, camera operators and anyone else who walked into the studio. Asked what is most exciting about the event, she said, "Just making it happen."

# Videos from page A1

said parent Laura Volzy, who has children attending first and fourth grades at Hillside. "The reality is, we live in a cruel world and I thought the videos were done tastefully and age-appropriately."

"It's hard, as a parent, to realize that that's out there. But it is, and we have to do what we can."

Also at Tuesday's preview, attended by about 50 people, was Hillside parent Penny Twigg, who conceded not quite knowing just yet about what to think of the videos.

Although Twigg said there were good points made in both videos, the one intended for fifth graders ("When Should You Tell") had a focus that made her uneasy.

In the video, an older teenage boy gets on top of and holds down his younger female cousin, despite her protests. She felt she could not inform her mom about the incident. Later in the video, the girl, "Karen," finally confides in her teacher, "Mrs. Valdez," assuring her that what happened wasn't the girl's fault, despite what "Tommy" said.

"The way the older cousin was depicted bothered me," Twigg said. "I don't want my child to be afraid of their relatives. I think relatives are real important to a child's health. The (abuse by) relatives issue probably needs to be brought up, but I thought it was too prevalent in this particular film."

The videos have previously been previewed at other schools, with Hillside being the only school whose they are currently an issue, said Judy White, the district's assistant superintendent for instruction.

White said Collier can decide if the videos are in the best interest of that school's population. "That's up to the principal," said White about whether the videos might be withdrawn at Hillside. "If she decides that, at her site, it's not a piece they want to use, that's fine."

### Not automatic

Both videos are intended as supplementary materials for the "Respecting Myself and Others" health curriculum, which will debut this spring. But the fact that the board-approved curricu-

# SEXUAL HARASSMENT

lum will begin does not automatically mean the videos will be shown in classrooms, said Estraleo Michaelson, the district's director of Safe and Drug Free Schools.

"We're moving forward with the program," Michaelson said, "but we're respecting the rights of parents who want to view the materials and make a more-informed decision about opting their children out, which they are permitted to do." ... Our curriculum is never tied to any piece of media."

Michaelson said the program, which was developed over a two-to-three-year period, was approved by the district's health advisory committee.

Meanwhile, Michaelson added that although there is a federal mandate for sexual harassment curriculum to be taught in public schools, there isn't one in place mandating parental notification — as the Farmington district is doing — about such a program.

Concerns at Hillside were prompted by a few parents who last week attended the school's first preview. After viewing the videos, some said they thought a letter about the videos was misleading, that what was portrayed as "sexual harassment prevention education" actually leaned more strongly toward issues such as pedophilia and sexual abuse.

Other parents subsequently were telephoned about the videos, and invited to attend scheduled previews to make their own decision.

Parent Claudia Taffe spearheaded the fan-out calls to bring the issue to attention. She said it worried her that the videos were vague, too graphic, and did not "concentrate on child-to-child respect for one another, inappropriate behavior in the hallway," for example.

"My main concern is, they're telling the parents it's sexual harassment," Taffe said, "but these videos have to do with the criminally sexual things that can happen out there."

Taffe also wrote a letter to the Farmington Observer about the issue. "There is so much vague-

ness surely our (6- and 7-year-old) children will not have the ability to verbalize their inevitable confusion. We adults will have no way to measure the effectiveness of this material."

### Fine line

One video, which focuses on "stranger danger" and the subject of inappropriate touch, is intended for first and second graders, while a video for fifth graders features an older male cousin physically holding down a younger female cousin, with the implication that he touched her in a way that made her "feel bad." Each video is slated to be shown in single classroom sessions.

The program's main goal is to educate children so they can "trust his or her gut if something is uncomfortable, if they are feeling harassed in any way," Michaelson explained.

Students are taught to distinguish between "appropriate and inappropriate touch," with the definition of private parts being anything below the waist and above the neck. They also learn to not be afraid to seek the help of other trusted adults, especially if communication breaks down between students and their parents about a specific incident.

White is confident the program is handled in a sensitive, compassionate manner, with materials introduced gradually — phased in over several years.

"We strongly believe in keeping our kids safe," White said. "It's information we ought to be providing our children. ... There's a fine line between harassment and abuse."

White said she understands why some parents have concerns over the videos, "and I respect their points of view. But I think the thing we never want to be put in position is, as a school district, to have something happen to one of our children and we sit back and say, 'Why weren't we more assertive?'"

School board President Priscilla Brouillette said the issue is one that needs to be handled with care.

"If it's not appropriate for kids, then you, we're not interested in using it," Brouillette said. "It's a delicate area and it has to be handled delicately."

# BUSINESS WATCH

It is time again for the business community and the Farmington Department of Public Safety to meet at 8 a.m. Friday, March 31 in the basement of the Farmington library.

All businesses, new and old, should attend this

meeting so that Business Watch works to its full potential.

Managers or assistant managers should also attend and bring any alarm and callback information.

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- Inspirational, humor, fun -

Workshops • Lunch • Exhibits  
Fashion Show by Casual Corner Group  
(Marilyn 2-16, Patricia 0-18, Women in 14-50)

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REGISTRATION FORM

Registration is required by Monday, April 3, 2000. Registration fee is \$30 (\$35 at the door). (No refunds.) Registration includes workshops, continental breakfast and lunch. Questions? Call 1-800-484-1817. Clip and return this portion to the address below. You may attend ONE workshop from each session. Please indicate your first and second choice under each session in order of preference.

Check here for vegetarian lunch.

<p><b>SESSION I - 8:45-10:45 a.m.</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Relax with Tai Chi</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Looking Good When You're Not Feeling So Good</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Easy on the Eyes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Healthy Happy Feet</p>	<p><b>SESSION II - 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Relax with Tai Chi</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Looking Good When You're Not Feeling So Good</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Why They Make You Crazy</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Aromatherapy and Therapeutic Massage</p>
<p><b>SESSION III - 1:15-2:15 p.m.</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Piling In Fitness</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Easy on the Eyes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Aromatherapy and Therapeutic Massage</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The Truth About Women's and Cardiovascular Disease</p>	<p><b>WRAP UP - 2:30-3:30 p.m.</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Where To From Here (Everyone attends)</p>

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