

Celebrate a journey

Teachers learn how to keep students interested

BY TIM SMITH
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More than 200 Farmington elementary school teachers swayed in their cushioned seats at the Civic Theatre, holding balloon animals in the air and singing a catchy tune titled "Hands-On, Minds-On."

They were enthusiastically interacting with David Bydowski, Charles Kline and Fred Ribits, who performed "Science Explosion: Brain-Based Instruction Through Music, Magic & Comedy" during the kickoff session for the district's elementary study summer academy, "Celebrating the Journey." The academy took place Monday, June 12, through Wednesday, June 14.

Their message was that teachers can increase the odds of reaching their students in the classroom if they do various projects and activities, including music and magic.

Teachers listened to Kline's instructions on how to make balloon animals - demonstrat-

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—Wood Creek Elementary School teacher

ing how air is matter that takes up space - and then the lower auditorium became filled with the sound of squeaking elastic.

"By the way," joked Kline to teachers, who voluntarily attended. "A quick way to lose control of your class is to hand out balloons."

Soon, he instructed the group to remember to leave room at the tip of the balloon.

"Air takes up space," Kline explained, pinching and twisting another balloon into the shape of a dog. "Air needs a

place to go."

At the end of the two-hour session, the guests led teachers in a rendition of "Hands-On, Minds-On," and invited them to brainstorm some new songs together during break-out sessions that followed at Farmington Training Center.

Several teachers, as they left the Civic, were impressed with the program.

"I know I need to be doing more hands-on, engaging students, getting them up and singing," said Wood Creek Elementary School teacher Rosheen Hunter. "Music retains knowledge better."

Scott Stauffer, a teacher at Beechview Elementary School, noted that it is important to "get the kids moving, it stimulates their brain. I think we'll have a lot more teachers using the concepts we saw here."

Judy White, the district's assistant superintendent for instruction, said the program was a unique and fun way for

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STAFF PHOTO BY MATTHEW TAPSCOTT

In the spirit: Alamada School teachers (from left) Debbie Barnes, Rose Boyle, and Carol Roble clap and sing along to a musical number by Science Explosion.



STAFF PHOTO BY DEB BRESNA

Yeshi Beverly Papai, library director, presents Laura Anne Mihalco and her mom, Patricia, with gifts that accompanied the 11-year-old's distinction for pushing the circulation over one million.

Library hits a million!

BY JONI HUBERD
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Laura Anne Mihalco and her mother, Patricia, rode their bicycles to the Farmington Community Library Wednesday afternoon, never expecting they would leave with a lot more than just a few books.

The 11-year-old Dunkel Middle School student's five young adult novels - books by R.L. Stine and Christopher Pike - pushed the library's circulation over one million. She and her mother received a goodie bag packed with library memorabilia and a gift certificate to Borders Books and Music.

The celebration commemorated an important benchmark, according to Executive Director Bev Papai.

"There just aren't that many libraries with a million circulation," Papai said, naming Ann Arbor, Dearborn, Grand Rapids, Detroit, Kent and Wayne Counties among the handful that

have.

While library professionals have speculated about declining circulation in the wake of the Internet and electronic resources, Farmington's experience has been completely the opposite, Papai said. As the use of Internet-based resources has increased, by more than 50 percent from 1988/89 through 1999/2000, so has the number of items checked out.

Laura visits either the Farmington or Farmington Hills branches about once a week, is a member of the summer reading club and participated in "Battle of the Books," a reading competition held during this year's Farmington Area Arts Festival. Her favorite part of the library is the Young Adult Section.

"I like their books," she said. Papai believes an investment in materials has contributed to the increase in circulation.

"We have doubled the monies spent for new books," she said. "The selection at both branches has dramatically improved, not

CIRCULATION

only for best sellers but also for adding depth and breadth to the collection."

Circulation for both libraries was 943,335 in 1998/99, among 83,492 cardholders. Papai projects there will be 84,000 cardholders at the end of this fiscal year, June 30. Internet and electronic logins are expected to rise as well, from 361,203 in 1998/99 to around half a million this year.

In June, 1985, the libraries circulated about half a million items, which increased by 100,000 over the next five years. With a significant expansion and remodeling in progress at the Hills branch, Papai said circulation could take a significant leap.

"It's conceivable within the next five years, we could see a 50 percent increase in circulation," she said. "That makes a big difference in how we do our planning."

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