



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BARKER
Top future: Grand Prize winner Jaclyn Silver receives a check from mentor Keith Wilson of Bob Sellers Pontiac.



Speaker: Farmington High School student speaker Scott Sempowski shakes hands with Winning Futures facilitator Kathy Tosioan.

Dreams of future

'If it is to be it is up to me'

BY TIM SMITH
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A group of Farmington High School students very well might now be reaching for the stars instead of keeping their hands in their pockets.

That's because they have just completed the third-year Winning Futures motivational program. Their accomplishments were lauded during an assembly on Thursday, Jan. 4, in the FHS auditorium.

Participating this year were about 140 students, working on setting and reaching goals with the help of 30 volunteer community mentors — representing a full spectrum of careers. "What's so exciting is seeing the kids get up and talk after going through this program," said James Myers, executive director of K-12 student services. "They are learning to set goals, through picking up Dale Carnegie-type skills."

"And you see some amazing growth, forward thinking that kids have developed in a short period of time."

Myers, who made some remarks during the assembly, noted the leap of faith some students completed during the program, this year with the theme "If it is to be it is up to me."

Impressive growth

"Some of the students might have been skeptical in the beginning, less than enthusiastic," Myers said. "But they were very enthusiastic about it when they finished."

He also is impressed by the growth of Winning Futures, held during five weeks of Student Managed Academic Resource Time. Mayna Schumacher, of the district's applied technology and career development department, coordinated the program. It was facilitated by Dale Carnegie Institute instructor Kathy Tosioan.

"This is the third year and it's gotten bigger and bigger," said Myers. FHS principal the first year Winning Futures began in the school.

According to Schumacher, "Many feel it has really helped them to get to more specific handle on planning their future. ... It's just a great bunch of students."

Highlights of the celebration assembly included speeches by junior Scott Sempowski, freshman Tony Gillis, marketing teacher Linda Siggia and keynote speaker Jason Magie.

Siggia was one of three FHS teachers from where students participated. The others were Dianna O'Donnell and Tom Allen, who teach life management and automotive classes, respectively.

Besides the speeches, a number of awards were given out during the well-attended program.

A plaque was presented to Keith Wilson of Bob Sellers Pontiac, GMC for continuous involvement, mentoring and sponsorship through Bob Sellers. The dealership — Master Sponsor of Winning Futures — has provided all the scholarship prize money each year in addition to picking up other program costs.

There were six student finalists, who set goals and spoke about their dreams in front of other students during SMART. Those six earned combined scores of more than 95 percent on written essays and oral presentations.

Award winners

Earning the Grand Prize was senior Jaclyn Silver. The other five were: first runner-up, Katy Streit, junior; second runner-up, Lindsey Forester, sophomore; third runner-up, Ryan Kosinski, junior; fourth runner-up, Jayme Vainer, sophomore; fifth runner-up, Andrea Raymond, junior.

Forty-one other students received "Awards of Excellence," certificates for scoring 90 percent or better and 30 received honorable mention for scoring from 85 to 89 percent.

Schumacher noted the efforts of the mentors. "It was a terrific group of mentors, (who were) very dedicated to the students," she said. "Some arranged job shadowing and some helped to find books in areas of students' tentative career choices."

One mentor escorted youngsters to a college campus, to attend a sporting event, Schumacher added.

"Some kept in regular contact via e-mail," Schumacher said. "... Most just made solid connections with the students."

■ Award winners from Winning Futures assembly

Following are Farmington High School students earning awards at the recent Winning Futures celebration assembly:

Winner Finalists: Grand Prize Winner, Jaclyn Silver; first runner-up, Katy Streit; second runner-up, Lindsey Forester; third runner-up, Ryan Kosinski; fourth runner-up, Jayme Vainer; fifth runner-up, Andrea Raymond.

Awards of Excellence: Leigh Babiaz, Erin Blacha, Crista Bordeaux, Melissa Crawford, Julia Donagrandi, Lindsey Forester, Tony Gillis, Michelle Kanlon, Alexis Johnson, Sofia Juncal, Allison Kahrnoff, Emily Klein, Beth Kolacki, Ryan Kosinski, Jennifer Lacey, Allison Lopes, Tony Lottman, Kryston Marcus, Kristina Milesevi, James Moroney, Britany Nuccitelli, Allison Pittman, Nick Ramirez, Andrea Raymond, Erica Rose, Matt Ryder, Rachel Scian, Scott Sempowski, Jaclyn Silver, Misty Simmons, Andy Skjerve, Becky Smith, Jawdin Spinks, Marinela Stefanova, Katy Streit, Kanne Utsugi, Maggie Vaillancourt, Jayme Vainer, Desiree Wiggins, Kalyn Willie and Dan Xu.

Honorable Mentions: Sagar Agrawal, Scott Albright, Robyn Beals, Steve Beierschmitt, Lauren Brantley, Brian Bosler, Chris Bruce, Teresa Burkart, Trevor Corett, Antoine Clark, Kendall Closser, Genevieve Gojcaj, Jamie Green, Zach Green, Mike Griffio, Emily Kemphill, Colin Kopper, Danielle Lantz, Jason Law, Danielle Lawrence, Chad Moore, Brian Russo, Kristin Schlotterer, Lindsey Schlotterer, Jeffrey Short, Justin Tobe, Lauren Vigna, Patricio Wade, Stefanie Willemson and Becky Willer.

Unusual home business keeps good kids busy

OBSERVER
COLUMNIST



JUDY
BERNE

Good kids don't often make the news. This is about a couple of good kids. Here's how I found them.

Our youngest daughter, now a San Francisco resident, is into the basics. She has a computer, but gave away her television. She shares ownership of a vintage car, but usually travels by bike. She enjoys a trip to Target, but delights in buying second hand.

I try to keep in mind what works for her when I give her gifts, but it isn't always easy.

When, during this holiday season, I came upon a hand-made, duct tape wallet at a West Bloomfield gift shop, I was pretty sure I had a winner.

A few days later, I overheard at a party that the wallet was made by a pair of local teens. It turns out that Oren Brandvain, 13, and Reuben Maxbauer, 14 for the past year or so have been fashioning all kinds of clothes and accessories from duct tape — strictly for fun.

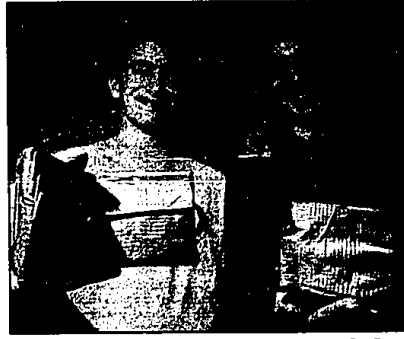
"We made the shorts first," Reuben explains to me, as the Farmington Hills teens sprawl on the couch in our den on New Year's Day. On the floor they line up a sampling of their handiwork: shorts, overalls, a purse, shoes and the wallet — shining up at me in silvery, duct tape splendor.

Hat trick

They've also designed backpacks, hats (both a fisherman's hat and a baseball cap), gloves and belts — and "an entire space outfit" for a friend of theirs who was seeking extra credit for a science project.

"The overalls are my favorite because they're so cool," Oren confides, as he demonstrates how the straps can be adjusted. "I think the purse is kind of neat," Reuben offers. "I had some girls over and one said 'I have a Kate Spade that looks just like it.'"

In fact, the purse may be the next item that the two buddies try to market. An envelope style, but with a strap, it sports a square closure button (a signature device that appears on



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BARKER
Salesman: Oren Brandvain and Reuben Maxbauer are masters of duct tape couture. Here they display their own wallets, similar to those sold in stores.

some of their other products) and an ability to lie flat or expand of which they are very proud.

"The only thing we've tried to sell so far is the wallet," Reuben reports. In fact, the whole idea to sell what they were making for fun just sort of happened.

They created 100 wallets to give as favors to friends who attended Oren's bar mitzvah. A parent who was there, Bill Graham, offered to drive Reuben home, later finding one of the wallets on his car floor.

"I loved it," said Graham, a West Bloomfield resident in the computer leasing business. "Everybody who sees them loves them. I have sort of been encouraging the boys."

On eBay

Well, more than sort of. "He put it on eBay and some guy from Wisconsin bought 15," Oren relates. Graham also promoted it to his wife Susie, an owner of the gift store Creations From.

Their first batch of 25 wallets, well placed on the store's checkout counter, sold out. I actually bought the last one.

Oren, who says he is artistic, and Reuben, who says he's not, enjoy figuring out and refining each of their creations, which they do by trial and error. With

the design down pat and if he's paying attention, it takes Oren five minutes to make a wallet.

"If I'm watching TV and it's a good show, it might take longer. As you can guess, they are laid back about the whole enterprise. It's our parents who are really into this," Reuben reports.

But, just in case, they have come up with a company name — Slow Gold. Oren senses my puzzlement. "You know, kind of like quick silver," he says.

And, just in case, they wouldn't reveal one phase of their design process. "The secret is in how to make it sturdy," Reuben explains. "But it's all out of duct tape."

If it turns out to be a money-making operation, they'll give a percentage to charity.

Good kids don't often make the news. This is about a couple of good kids.

Oh, and by the way, my daughter loves the wallet.

The boys even have a Web site, www.ducttapewallets.net

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Water main break closes St. Paul's

St. Paul Lutheran School in Farmington Hills was closed Thursday due to a water main break.

The break was discovered between 9 p. m. and 10 p. m. Wednesday, and parents and staff were subsequently notified about the day off, said a St.

Paul spokesman.

The private school is on the northwest corner of Middlebelt-Eight Mile roads. A road crew was busy Thursday morning working on repairing the break.

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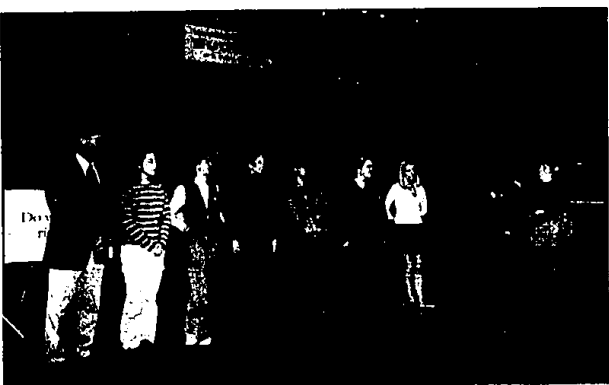
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Anticipation: Winner finalists wait for the big announcement.