

Friendship: Rebecca Thomas, pictured with camper Jacque Bohns, was a counselor this summer at a camp for physically challenged kids. Also at the camp, which is held at the Lake Huron Retreat Center and sponsored by the United Methodist Church, was Harrison grad Megan Ventura.

## **Camping out**

## Teens help at camp for disabled kids

BY KEVIN BROWN STAFF WRITER kbrown@oe,homecomm.net

Taking care of physically challenged kids in a camp setting is vital to 2001 Farmington High grad Rebecca Thomas' summer routine.

"I plan my whole summer around the camp. I can't imagine not going," said the 18-year-old Farmington Hills resident.

year-old Farmington Anto-Leadent.
"I get strength from the campers. It renews my spirit, they've tought me not to take little things for granted," she

This marked the fourth sum-This marked the fourth sumer Thomas has attended the one-week camp, which ended Aug. 3. It is presented at the Lake Huron Retreat Center north of Port Iluron by the Detroit Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Rebecca's mom Jan first discovered the camp in a brochure. This year, Rebecca joined 37 high school and college age camp "buddies," who helped take care of 23 campers.

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selors.

"It varies from camper to camper how dependent they are." Thomas said. While many are in wheelchairs, some walk with braces. "Some are more mentally challenged than physically challenged," Thomas said. Campers range in age from around 10 to 22.

Rebecca friend Megan Ventura, a 2001 Harrison High grad, also served as a camp buddy." It was her first time.
"I heard about it through Rebecca, through church. She thought that it would be right up my alley."
Ventura, who'll attend Western Michigan University this fall, said the best thing about the experience was making so many new friendships and getting to know the campers—that was excellent."

"I think it made me more aware of disabilities, it helped prepare me for my education at Western. I'm studying special education. I think it helped me become more patient," she said.

Also on hand were 25 counselors.

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Turn On the Fun

After dinner comes games including a scavenger hunt and a carnival, with different activities for the campers.

"There's a roller coaster of motions you experience. You can go from being really frustrated and really tired, to being really happy and really excited." Thomas said.

"The last night is always emotional, we always and the last campfire singing "Friends," she said.

Ventura recalled the day

she said.

Ventura recalled the day when Jacque, the camper Rebecca was caring for, signed the word friend: "She pointed to herself and pointed to mend I said "Ves." The look on her face was the best I've ever seen."

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Thomas has kept in touch with some campers on line. She would eventually like to serve as a counselor.
She plans to study early ele-mentary education this fall at Baldwin-Wallace College near Cleveland.

## No water pressure trouble

Unlike some western Wayne and south Oakhand communities, no serious problems with water pressure were reported last week in Farmington or Farmington Hills, officials said.

"We have not had any major problems. There have been slight fluctuations (in water pressure) but we can adjust for those," said Tom Biasell, Farmington Hills director of public services.

services.

Thousands of residents in south Oakland and western Wayne Counties lost water pressure Thursday when a pumping station transformer in Dearborn

That sparked a request from the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department to its customers to curtail water use outdoors until further notice.

## **OBITUARIES**

MARIA A. PICANO
Services for Maria Antonia
Picnno, 80, of Livonia will be
beld at 11 a.m. Tuesday, Aug.
14, at St. Gerald Catholic
Church in Farmington with the
Rev. John Menner officiating.
Mrs. Picano was born Dec. 15,
1920, in Italy and died Aug. 7,
2001, at Arbor Hospice in Ann
Arbor.

2001, at Arbor Hospice in Ann Arbor.
She is survived by son, Ted (Carol); daughter, Tina (Leonard Edick) Picano Blay; brothers, Angelo Pacitto and Sabatino Pacitto; grandchildren, Ryan and Bennis; and many nices and nephews here and in Italy. She is preceded in death by her husband. Antonio. and brothers, Benedetto and Francesco.
Memorial contributions may be made to Arbor Hospice.
Arrangements were made by Heeney-Sundquist Funeral Home in Parmington.
THERESA A. FRECHETE
Services for Theresa Ann

JOHN W. FALAHEE JR. Services for John W. Falahee

Jr., 74, of Farmington Hills were held Aug. 11 at St. Fabian Church in Farmington Hills with the Revs. Loren O'Dea and Jack Steffey officiating. Burial took place at Holy Sepulchre Cemetory in Southfield.

Mr. Falahee was born May 3, 1927, in Jackson and died Aug. 8, 2001, at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak. He was a World War II Navy veteran. He is survived by wife, Ruth; sons, Sean, Kevin (Kim) and Terry (Michelle); brother, Jim (Virginia); and grandchildren, Andrew and Christina.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Capuchin Soup Kitchen.

Arrangements were made by Heeney-Sundquiat Funeral Home in Farmington.

HELEN S. Lawton 87, of Fast.

Memorial contributions may be made to Arbor Hospice. Arrangements were made by Meeney-Sundquist Funeral Home in Farmington.

HERES A. PRECHETE
Services for Theresa Ann Frechette of Traverse City were held Aug. 7 at Reynolds-Joukhoff Funeral Home in Traverse City with the Rev. William Lipscomb officiating.

Theresa was born and died on Aug. 3, 2001. She is survived by ber parents, Darren and Diane; and grandparents, Melvin and Judy Frechette of Sault Ste. Marie and Emil and Rose Benoit of Farmington Hills.

Memorial extributions may be made to the Crippled Children's Foundation, 4200 Saladin brive S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49546.

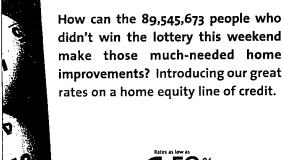
JOHN W. FALAHEE JR.

Services for John W. Falahee

Heen. S. Lawton, 87, of East Jordan died Aug. 8 at her home. Jordan died Aug. 8

may be made to the American Heart Association.





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