

Shop-A-Holics



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BREKLER

**Stacking up:** To celebrate the opening of its new store at 12 Mile and Farmington Roads, Farmer Jack held a celebrity shopping spree, which teamed local community members with a charity. Participants got 15 minutes to shop for up to \$500 worth of merchandise; some opted to take a \$500 cash donation. Pictured above, Chamber of Commerce President Carleigh Flaharty and Barbara Szewczyk of Community Living Center race to fill their shopping cart. Also benefitting were the Salvation Army, Neighborhood House, Farmington Hills/Farmington Community Foundation, Boys and Girls Republic, Goodfellows and St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BREKLER

**Speed Demon:** Farmington Hills Mayor Nancy Bates takes a corner on two wheels in the race to fill her shopping cart for the Farmington Hills Farmington Community Foundation.



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**Paradigm shift:** Judy White asks the teachers to imagine that they were retiring and to write about themselves from the point of view of students and co-workers.

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contractor. She revved up the group with music, chimes, and presentations that involved group participation and humor. Teachers talked about what gives them butterflies. Being branded as a new teacher can be unsettling, they said. "The running gets rough," White said. "It's a different thing when all the rug rats show up in front of you." Maxfield's presentation a day before was more serious. He referred to the teaching profession as a "calling" and a "covenant." "You have been called to a sacred profession," Maxfield said. Providing a quality learning experience doesn't mean accepting sloppy or mediocre work, he added. "Each employee has a chance to make a difference," Maxfield said. "Every single one of those kids counts. Whether it's by design or default teaching is non-negotiable. We can all make a difference, the question is what kind of difference." The entire student body is an "extraordinary bunch of kids. I brought their names," Maxfield said. He produced a five-inch thick student roster and opened the stack. As he moved from the back of the room to the front, he

created a computer paper trail on the floor, telling the stories of some students who succeeded because a teacher took an interest. "It's OK to take chances," Maxfield said. "If you don't take chances, nothing happens," he said. Maxfield passed out "I blew it" cards, which read: "I tried something new and innovative and it didn't work as well as I wanted. This card entitles me to be free of criticism for my efforts. I'll continue to pursue ways to help our district be successful." The cards are meant to be tucked away and pulled out when an endeavor doesn't quite make the mark. Learning to walk the talk is an often-used Maxfield expression. "A covenant involves making the connection," he said. The first day included all new hires. About 99 percent were teachers. "You are now respected members of the Farmington family," Webb said. "I assure you that all the ingredients of family are in place." The employees will teach in a district of 12,000 students. The district has a heartfelt commitment to diversity, Maxfield said. "A diverse population is a healthy population. Our kids come from homes where 84 lan-

guages are spoken." Gohar Imam, a paraprofessional in the bilingual department, has worked for the district since Aug. 24, 2000. A Pakistani native, she has a master's degree in microbiology and taught the subject in Pakistan. She came to America five years ago. She has also written for a women's magazine, whose audience was working-class women. "There's more emphasis on creativity here," Imam said. "Journalists can state opinions." Imam likes special education and values the range of education provided to these students. Among the non-teaching staff at the orientation Monday were Robert Steinhauer, a former mechanic and Albert Jones, a former Detroit Newspaper Agency circulation manager. Both work as substitute bus drivers. "There's only about four or five guys," Jones said. "Some women have been here more than 30 years." Both agreed the district is a good place to work and said their jobs carry much responsibility. They like the children they transport though the noise level is often high. "The teachers here give the kids those high sugar treats," Jones said. "I don't raise my voice. I talk to kids personally."

*New staffers are almost all teachers*

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Almost all new Farmington school employees at an orientation held Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at O. E. Dunckel Middle School in Farmington Hills were teachers.

Other new staffers met only at the Monday session; teachers who were hired during the school year attended the full three days.

About 46 new teachers have been hired with at least four more expected, according to

Larry Lobert, executive director of personnel. Seventeen teachers who were laid off last spring have been called back to work.

"Sixteen teachers are brand new to the field," Lobert said. "Thirty have some experience. We have a slightly more experienced staff."

The district receives about 3,000-3,500 applications just in the summer, Lobert said. "We look for the very best person."

Some educational degrees are more in demand, like math, science, secondary and special education counseling.

The current salary for a teacher with a bachelor's degree at the entry level is \$35,093.

Typically, transferring teachers can receive up to a four years on the pay schedule, based on their experience. There were no new hires in educational support personnel or in custodial and maintenance.

Participation during the three-day orientation isn't mandatory, but strongly encouraged, Lobert said. The teachers had a choice of receiving compensation or using the time to help fulfill their in-service requirement.

**"It's a New Day at Crittenton!"**



Lyle Perna  
Crittenton Maintenance Technician

*"Crittenton's new administration has been very receptive to the employees' concerns, questions and ideas. They have done many things to benefit the staff, which has helped a great deal to improve attitudes and working conditions."*

*"Crittenton has been my community hospital for many years. I got my first job there when I was 16, had my children there and spent 12 days in intensive care while they saved my life. We are so fortunate to have such an excellent medical facility in our backyard!"*



Melinda Conway Callahan  
Executive Director  
Rochester Community Schools Foundation

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