

## Dedication



**Plaza sweet:** The Farmington High Falcon Society's Bob Washer and Denise Albrecht cut the ribbon during Friday night's dedication of a new plaza adjacent to Falcon Field. The project was the result of fund-raising efforts and lots of donated time and materials. The plaza can be used by students during their lunch break; improvements were also made to the athletic facilities. Right, Farmington Falcon senior cheerleaders Chastity Taylor, Yvette Banks and Allison Pittman celebrated before they reved up the crowd for their team's match-up with Novi High School.

STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRISLER



## Confession ties suspect with Hills robberies

BY STACY JENKINS  
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It was just a matter of time before an alleged serial bank robber was identified by someone and caught by police.

An image from a video surveillance tape at a bank in Taylor, which the 26-year-old Detroit man allegedly robbed last week, led to his arrest in Detroit Monday night.

While the man was arrested in Detroit, he allegedly confessed while being interviewed by Southfield Police Department investigators, according to Sgt. David Kutek of the Redford Township Police Department. He was expected to be charged this week on four counts stemming from robberies at four Southfield banks. According to Southfield police, he admitted to robbing banks in Redford, Farmington Hills and Taylor.

In each incident, the man allegedly approached a teller, without wearing a disguise, and handed a note demanding all of the 20s, 50s and 100s from the cash drawer.

He never spoke during the robberies and calmly walked away from each location after receiving the cash.

"He will be prosecuted, initially, in Oakland County, then it's entirely up to the discretion of the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office," Kutek said.

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vices and calls the district "a family of learners." Beechview Elementary, East Middle School and Harrison High School are the schools of destination for these students.

"Even though (Beechview's) Newcomer Center meets the needs of the newly arrived student, we have a lot of bilingual students who are just in the mainstream classes. I do a lot of workshops and consultations with teachers, training and coordinate all the testing."

About 45 students in kindergarten through second grade don't speak any English.

"There's probably 200 bilingual students who have lived here for three or four years."

Bilingual means speaking a language in the home other than English, Dean explained.

"There are 65 languages being spoken." Throughout its history, the district has identified 84 languages spoken in students' homes.

The Newcomer Center for new foreign students takes a multi-age, multi-cultural classroom approach. This ensures that newcomers are not segregated.

Students at the middle and high school levels start at the Newcomer Center, then take elective classes in the mainstream and other more difficult classes as they become more capable of handling them.

The idea is to teach English as quickly as possible and immerse the students in the language, Dean said.

Services provided vary depending on the level of the students' language efficiency. They include an intensive English program, small group tutorials, literacy groups, native language support and personal service.

The staff is made up of bilingual and English as a Second Language teachers and assistants who closely reflect the language background of the students.

The goal of the program is to raise the level of the students' English proficiency quickly so that they can function within mainstream classes and avail themselves of the curricular and extra-curricular offerings of the district, according to information provided by Dean.

The bilingual department also offers an extensive teacher training program intended to enable teachers to include bilingual students in classroom activities, taking into consideration their language backgrounds and varying abilities.

Dean's experiences, including visiting Japan seven times in 10 years, have helped frame her work in Farmington Public Schools.

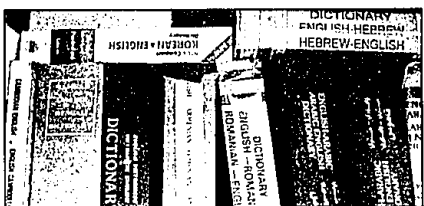
"It showed me how much kids are alike. Everybody has this perception that Japanese children sit straight in their desk. Kids are kids all over."

Kids are kids all over."



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRISLER

**School days:** The atmosphere at East Middle School (above) was welcoming for new students Monday. At Harrison High School, (right) shelves are filled with dictionaries of many different languages.



## Students from page A1

who sits next to him in their classroom, knows less English than Naoki.

"I like Farmington," Mariko said. "But I'm a little worried. I don't understand the words and the language everyone is using."

Their biggest surprise? "How spacious their home is," Dean said. "Their home was much smaller in Japan."

The children came from the city of Toyota with their father, Kenji, and mother, Mayumi.

"My father works here," Naoki said. Their mother is a homemaker. They also have a 9-year-old brother, Hiroki, who attends Beechview.

"Toyota is Detroit's sister city," Dean explains.

Luke Junek, their teacher at East, lends them in a two-hour block of intensive English. The children will be in regular gym and art classes, followed by math, social studies and science.

## Beechview Elementary

Tudor Cribalmeanu, a Beechview Elementary fourth grader, is like many contemporary children. When asked his age, he includes the important detail that typifies his becoming more grown-up.

"Nine and a half," Tudor replied. Tudor's favorite pastime is bowling.

A native of Cluj, a Romanian city, Tudor said his hometown is much more rural than the Farmington area.

The first day is going well at

Beechview. Tudor and his classmates drew their self-portraits, and they also began a journal.

In his class, 13 spaces are reserved for newcomers, Dean said. Tudor is among eight foreign students.

Foreign students may have had English lessons, but they are mainly about social greetings, knowledge of color and time. They are not academic language, Dean said.

Teachers Fay Kinaya and Sue Dawley bring the students to the back of the room. There isn't enough room for a circle, so they form an oval, and Kinaya begins a game similar to the popular "Who Wants to be a Millionaire" TV game show. Laughter soon fills the classroom.

The object is who can learn everyone's names the quickest. Even Kinaya stumbles the first time around.

Still, the students seem to enjoy their time in class, despite the nervousness that accompanies any first day of school.

"I like the teachers," Tudor said. "The kids are friendly."

An enthusiastic nod needed no further explanation when Tudor was asked if he was happy his family was together again. He and his father, Musat, and sister Irina, a kindergartner, join Simona, his mother, who came to America before them. She is an engineer.

**Harrison High School**  
Ke Da and Chuan Yi Chen,

two cousins from the Fu province in China, described as "a big, busy city," spent a good portion of their morning at Harrison High School waiting for their schedules.

"They're registered, but not for classes," Dean explained.

Frank Ivezaj, their teacher, is working toward that objective.

Both 14-year-old ninth graders, the teens have much in common, though Chen has been in this country one year and Da just three months. They live in Farmington Hills with their uncle, who owns the Panda Buffet restaurant on Orchard Lake Road.

"China has more of an extended family," Dean said.

Da left a brother and a sister in China. Chen has one brother and three sisters in America.

They, too, are asked about their biggest surprise in coming to America.

"So many trees," said Da. "The school is about the same size."

The teens, now part of the student body, will soon begin to feel more relaxed in their surroundings as they become more familiar with English and with their school, said Samir Haddad, director of bilingual education.

"You'll see the progress," he said. "It's hard to get them to say 'Hi' to you. By May, it will be hard to get them to stop talking. It might seem like an easy thing, but you can't imagine how they feel."

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