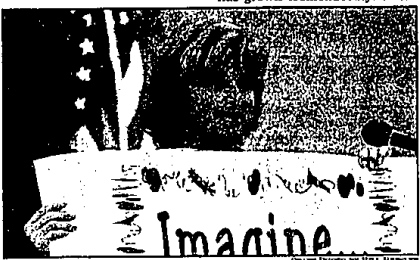


# Farmington Youth Assistance celebrates success

BY MARY RODRIGUE  
STAFF WRITER

"Since Sept. 11, we've given greater importance to all work together," said Joan Young, chief judge of Oakland Circuit Court-family division.

"Farmington Youth Assistance has grown tremendously. There are many more volunteers. The court provides some oversight, but it's a local community endeavor. Other youth assistance programs are marveling at the sustained volunteer commitment here."



Imagine: FYA caseworker Susan Hoffman used props to spice up her talk.

Young made her comments before the 42nd annual breakfast meeting of the FYA program at Costick Activities Center on Oct. 24. The mission of FYA is "to strengthen youth and families and reduce the incidence of delinquency, abuse and neglect through volunteer involvement."

She was the first of more than 20 speakers, from politicians to case workers to private citizens who volunteer for the family-strengthening program, who addressed the assembly.

County Commissioner David Moffit said: "It's my belief that when you volunteer on behalf of others, you express love for society and country."

Farmington Public Schools Superintendent Bob Maxfield said Farmington Youth Assistance is "one of the amazing support systems, one of those puzzle pieces, that helps families endure after Sept. 11."

The assembly heard about a new summer youth theater program that will debut in 2002. Volunteer Julie Devine described how the program "will make a stage for small citizens, especially elementary age children, for dancing, singing and fantasy."

FYA chairwoman Sharon Vincent told how the agency "has experienced a year of growth, with 64 active volunteers, 3,000 volunteer hours given, expanded committees and visions."

A survey by Michigan State University was cited showing a 92 percent success rate for Farmington Youth Assistance. While some clients are court-ordered to seek help, many more

programs, such as parenting classes, are simply offered to the community at large. In addition to family education, programs include tutoring, mentoring, and summer camp scholarships.

"Youth assistance conveys a strong message," said Estralee Michelson, the Farmington Public Schools liaison. "I have witnessed firsthand the intervention, the compassionate ear, the support it offers to give strength, courage and confidence."

Referrals from the schools have grown. Susan Hoffman, caseworker, said FYA handled 137 cases last year. This year in October alone, there were 27 referrals. School truancy, incorrigibility, alcohol or drug violations, shoplifting and vandalism are some of the problems staffers deal with.

Mary Brown spoke about the Mentors Plus program, which matches at-risk kids with adult role models for a one-year period.

"You can be part of the solution," said Hoffman, FYA caseworker. "We're a great organization."

"We have eight active matches and three waiting to be matched," said Brown.

For the past 10 years, FYA has sponsored a spring youth recognition breakfast. Last May, 200 attended the program at the Costick Center where 43 youths were honored for spending a total of 6,071 hours of volunteer service in the community.

For more information on Farmington Youth Assistance, call 489-3434.

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Sealed proposals endorsed "City of Birmingham Municipal Building Janitorial Services" will be received at the Office of the City Clerk, 161 Martin Street, PO Box 3601, Birmingham, Michigan, 48009, until 2:00 p.m. Monday, November 19, 2001, after which time bids will be publicly opened and read. Bidders will be required to attend a pre-bid meeting on Monday, November 12, 2001 at 8:30 a.m.

The City of Birmingham is accepting sealed bid proposals for the work to be performed as specified in the City's specification for janitorial services. Specifications and bid forms may be obtained at the Birmingham Municipal Building, 161 Martin St., Birmingham, Michigan.

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CARLOS JORGE, Building Maint. Supervisor

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