

Birthday treat



Fun fire run: Sara Holcomb of Farmington Hills invited five of her friends to her special ninth birthday party that included being picked up at home in a Farmington Hills fire truck and brought to Fire Station #5 for lunch and a tour of the fire station with Fire Chief, Rich Marinucci. This special event was purchased last fall at a charity auction for St. Alexander's Parish in Farmington Hills. Pictured (left to right): Assistant to the Fire Chief, Bob Rebtov, Tommy Dunn, Kari Ungar, Sara Holcomb, Lauren Drew, Shilpa Philips and Alex Mott

'Pay' day

Author impresses in local appearance

BY JACK GLADDEN
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For a group of 13- and 14-year-olds, it was a chance to meet their hero. And for *Pay It Forward* author Catherine Ryan Hyde it was part of a series of personal appearances and book-signings — and another example of life imitating art.

It took place on Thursday at the Canton Public Library. Even on a muggy weekday afternoon, the lobby and community room were filled with fans and admirers — of all ages — of the book that has become a phenomenon across the country.

Rebecca Havenstein-Coughlin, head of adult services for the library, said she counted 71 people in attendance.

The author's reading campaign being sponsored by several area libraries. Farmington and West Bloomfield libraries are also participating in "Everybody's Reading: Pay It Forward."

Pay It Forward tells the story of 12-year-old Trevor McKinney who, as part of an extra-credit assignment for school, is asked to come up with an idea that could change the world. Trevor's idea is to do a favor or something nice for three different people but, instead of asking them to pay him back, they are asked to "pay it forward."

Each is to do something nice for three more people and ask them to pass it on. If such a movement caught on, Trevor figured, it could change the world. And, in the novel, the idea does catch on — much to Trevor's surprise.



STAFF PHOTO BY DYLAN MITCHELL

Special guest: Catherine Ryan Hyde, whose book "*Pay It Forward*" has become a hit with readers of all ages, spoke at the Canton Public Library Thursday as part of a communitywide reading campaign that also includes the Farmington Community Library.

But, much to Hyde's surprise, the idea jumped out of the pages of the book and has literally caught on around the world. Two organizations, the Pay It Forward Foundation and the Pay It Forward Movement have been formed to promote the concept in real life.

"It's a classic example of life imitating art," said Hyde. "I didn't see any of this coming."

And some of her biggest fans are young boys about Trevor's age.

"It's great to have a 14-year-old come up to you and say 'You're COOL,'" Hyde said with a chuckle.

Pat Cline, 14, of Canton, an eighth-grader at Central Middle School, thinks she's more than cool.

"She's my favorite author," he said, while standing near her book-signing desk. "Basically she's my idol."

Both Pat and classmate Luis Hirschlieb, also 14, of Plymouth got to the library when the activities began at 3 p.m. and hung around until Hyde left the building a little after 5 to go to another engagement.

"It's such a simple idea," Luis said of *Pay It Forward*. "People say 'wow, why didn't I think of that?' They didn't but she did."

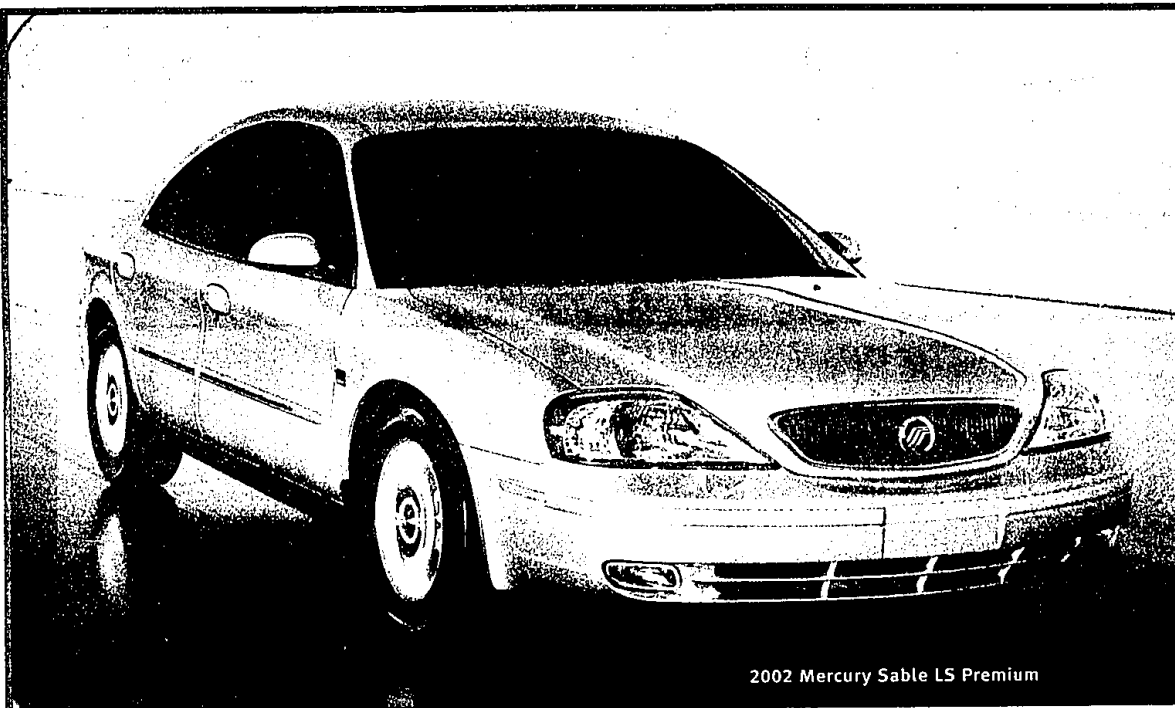
Michael Wingler, 13, of Canton, an eighth-grader at Discovery Middle School, also spent most of his afternoon there.

Like the others he brought in a book to have it signed.

"This is actually my second copy," he said. "The school gave us one but I read it so much I kind of wore it out. So I got a second copy and kept it in good condition so I could get it signed."

Michael Farreri of Canton wasn't interested in a signed copy and, in fact, fell asleep during Hyde's talk. But then, he's only 4 years old.

His mother, Emma Farreri, who brought Michael to the library, said he hasn't read the book but he has seen "parts" of the movie. "He knows who she is," Farreri said. "This is his first author."



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