

## Mr. Teacher

### Grace teacher is an old-fashioned guy

BY SUE BUCK  
STAFF WRITER  
sbuck@ec-eccentric.com

Larry Larue, a kindergarten teacher at William Grace Elementary in Farmington Hills believes an advantage goes along with the distinction of being the only male kindergarten teacher in the Farmington School district.

He has fewer discipline problems. "A lot of the kids call me Dad," Larue said, explaining that he's a male figure for some children who don't have fathers.

He's also the only kindergarten teacher in the district who plays the piano and has a piano in the room. He describes himself as an old-fashioned kindergarten teacher.

"At one time in Detroit, it was a prerequisite," Larue said. "If you couldn't play piano, you could not be a kindergarten teacher."

He's taught for 25 years starting in Warren as a kindergarten teacher. He also worked as a school psychologist in Detroit.

Larue has taught in Farmington for 18 years, teaching at Forest, Kenbrook, Wooddale and William Grace Elementary Schools as well as Fairview Early Childhood Center.

"When I was going to school in

the early 1970s, men in elementary schools were not a dime a dozen, let alone early childhood," Larue said. "When I did my master's work I was the only male. Now we have many. There's a few male kindergarten teachers in Detroit and there's one in Walled Lake."

Through the years, others have expressed more intrigue than criticism. "Once when I was in Warren, there were these nuns who just showed up at my door," Larue said. "They said, 'We just came to see what the male kindergarten teacher looked like.'"

Men can be as loving, nurturing, caring and understanding as women, he said.

"I tense and I play a lot," Larue said. "I think (the kids) feel very comfortable with me."

Larue and Denise Rau teach all-day kindergarten at William Grace Elementary. The students are enthusiastic and parents have been extremely supportive, Larue said.

Mary Mason of Oakland Schools has also visited to observe the model.

"We designed our curriculum so it encompasses the whole day," Rau said. "It's an early intervention strategy."



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRESLER

**ABCs: Teacher Larry LaRue helps kindergarten student Rolly Giberson.**

Larue likes not having to get everything done in the morning. "We get to know the kids and we are able to spend time with every kid each day," Larue said.

"You can do more things differently," Rau said.

Class sizes are smaller, Larue said. Larue has 17 students; Rau, 16. Next year they expect the class size to be 24.

Larue can remember when he had 35 children in the morning and 35 children in the afternoon in Warren. "We didn't have any paraprofessionals," Larue said. "Of course the curriculum was a lot different. There was more socialization and

more hands-on play."

A smaller class size means fewer students and parents to get to know and an opportunity to get to know them better. Parents are encouraged to come in and do art and reading projects with the children. It's easier for some parents than others, but there's something for everyone to do.

Though some bilingual parents don't work, some are afraid to come in and help because they are afraid to come in and work in the reading center because they don't think they know enough English. "It's an opportunity to work with them too," Rau said.

## Registrations increase for growing all-day kindergarten at Grace

BY SUE BUCK

STAFF WRITER  
sbuck@ec-eccentric.com

All-day kindergarten at William Grace Elementary in Farmington Hills is a new concept in the Farmington Public School district.

The idea started when teacher Denise Rau did an action research project for the Galileo program about the effects of all-day kindergarten. Galileo is a teacher leadership academy involving a consortium of 10 districts, community colleges and intermediate school districts.

Farmington usually has about nine teachers who take part, according to William Grace Principal Mark Marowski.

"She took the idea, developed a proposal and took it to the district," he said. "Our idea is that if we allow our kids to experience an all-day kindergarten, there will be less remediation, retention and special education referrals in later years. All three of those programs cost money. You pay up front to save later."

Marowski wants to track these children through their school years. Rau took her idea to the district support council, which looks at programs that are subsequently recommended to Farmington Public Schools Superintendent Bob Maxfield. All-day kindergarten is subject to the budget process and has been approved for the second year of a three-year pilot.

What saved the program has been a growing interest in it. This year, there were about 40 registrations compared to 20 last year, Marowski said. He calls the program a quality enhancement.

The all-day kindergarten is finishing the first year of a three-year pilot only at William Grace.

"There's an assessment plan in place which compares our kids to similar kids in an all day program elsewhere," Lanigan and Beechview," Marowski said. "Those seem to be the two schools



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRESLER

**Cooperative learning: Christian Robson and Gaelan Smith help each other with some of the tougher words.**

closest to the demographics of William Grace."

These demographics include socioeconomic and bilingual factors.

Assessment plans take three years to determine whether there is a fundamental impact on kids, Marowski said.

"It's the same curriculum with more time to go into depth with it. They have more time to grasp the content, teachers don't feel as rushed," he said.

Children have the advantage of socializing with the same peer group six hours a day and learning how to resolve conflict and work cooperatively. They have the same teacher all day, and that has a definite appeal.

"I talked to some parents. They said otherwise they wouldn't be coming. They would be in a private school because they need an all day program for their kids. Certain families want it because it fits their lifestyle."

## Harley event benefits several area charities

Motor City Harley Davidson and the Michigan Humane Society Present Hogs for Cats and Dogs on Saturday, June 15, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Motor City Harley Davidson, 34900 Grand River Ave., Farmington Hills.

Dozens of dogs, cats, puppies and kittens will be available for adoption from the Michigan Humane Society. The event will include music, free food, beverages and demonstrations by the Southfield Police K-9 Unit.

Michigan Humane Society's Pet Education Center representatives will offer advice about pet care and training. Free gifts will be given to the first 50

adopters.

Help the animals of the Michigan Humane Society by bringing donations of dog, cat and rabbit food to the event or drop off any donations at Motor City Harley Davidson anytime before the event.

The Harley Owners Group (H.O.G.) is sponsored by Motor City Harley Davidson made up of over 1,100 professional, dedicated motorcycle enthusiasts who spend their time participating in riding events throughout the year in order to raise money for several charities.

A few of the charities helping with donations are Toys for Tots, Children's Leukemia Society,

Susan B. Karmans Breast Cancer Foundation, Michigan Humane Society, United Way, Penikese Center for the Blind Children, American Cancer Society, American Red Cross and 9-11 Fund. The H.O.G. members are especially interested in raising as many items as possible for the Michigan Humane Society.

The items most needed are food, used blankets and quilts, towels, any office supplies, batteries, film (35mm and Polaroid), disposable cameras, crowbars, flashlights, tools, metal bowls, dog and cat toys (non-porous) and rawhides.

For information or to donate items before the event, call Jan-

ice Finkel, Chairman, Donations Committee at 248-474-9274.

Proceeds will benefit the nearly 50,000 animals cared for by the Michigan Humane Society each year. For more information, please call the Michigan Humane Society at 1-866-MHUMAN or Motor City Harley Davidson at 248-473-7433. Again, for pick-up of any items, please call Janice Finkel, Chairman, Donations Committee at 248-474-9274.

## JAKE'S SEMI-ANNUAL CLEARANCE

# 25% to 60%\*

off a great selection throughout the store!

Save on Women's, Men's, Children's, Home, Ms. J, Women's Shoes and Accessories.

\*Savings off original prices of selected styles. No adjustments made on prior purchases.

IT ALL STARTS TODAY!

# Jacobson's

Birmingham • (205) 844-6900 Livonia • (734) 591-7696 Rochester • (248) 651-0000  
jacobsons.com

# AMAZING!

Fifth Third  
**Equity FlexLine™**



**4.24% APR**  
Three Month  
Introductory Rate

**4.75% APR**  
Adjusts to  
Current Prime

Card Access • Fixed Rate Lock Option • 24-hour Online Access

**CALL TODAY! 1-888-797-5353**

www.53.com



**Fifth Third Bank**  
Working Hard To Be The Only Bank You'll Ever Need!

Upon qualification. When opened, the introductory Annual Percentage Rate (APR) will be fixed at 4.24% for three months up to 30% (no-fee-to-value (NFTV)) or for those qualifying for Prime + 0% APR, with Prime rate for the first 12 months. For 41-49% LTV, introductory rate is 4.75% with Prime + 0% (NFTV). For 50-59% LTV, introductory rate is 4.75% with Prime + 0% (NFTV). For 60-69% LTV, introductory rate is 4.75% with Prime + 0% (NFTV). For 70-79% LTV, introductory rate is 4.75% with Prime + 0% (NFTV). For 80-89% LTV, introductory rate is 4.75% with Prime + 0% (NFTV). For 90-99% LTV, introductory rate is 4.75% with Prime + 0% (NFTV). Rates may vary and are subject to change without notice. See other disclosures. Fifth Third and Fifth Third Bank are registered service marks of Fifth Third Bancorp. Member FDIC.

