

New FPS employees learn about district

BY SHE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

Jerry Fouchey clicked off the characteristics that make up the ideal student and graduate profile: collaborative team member, effective communicator, healthy individual, knowledgeable, thinker, lifelong learner, quality producer, responsible citizen and thoughtful problem solver.

"Tattoo them on your hearts," said Fouchey, director of curriculum for Farmington Public School, as he advised the group of 35 new employees — mostly new teachers — who met on the first day of a three-day orientation at the Farmington Training Center.

Fouchey organized the three-day orientation for new employees and those who were hired after last year's employee orientation or mid-year.

Among the new hires after Sept. 1 are 54 teachers, 25 employees in the ESP, secretarial, paraprofessionals, clerks and media technicians group unit, three

administrators and one custodial employee. Three substitute bus drivers and two bus aides were also hired. Farmington Public Schools Superintendent Bob Maxfield reiterated an annual message.

"When we chose you for your position as you decided to join us, you much more than signed a contract," Maxfield said. "More accurately, you entered into a covenant."

The district, which is made up of 12,000 students and more than 900 teachers, has a "powerful vision" of becoming America's Premier 21st Century School District. That means a continuing work in progress.

"Parental involvement is crucial to our success and we must be open to all forms of communication and involvement," Maxfield said. "Sometimes in today's society, it can be a whole different ball game."

He encouraged employees to be role models who exhibit the best qualities of professional and personal conduct. "The



Kristina Avant takes notes on Jerry Fouchey's presentation as new teachers learned more about what to expect in Farmington Schools during orientation at the Farmington Training Center.

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so-called "censoring of America" cannot be allowed to become a part of the day-to-day life in our schools," Maxfield said. "This is particularly true at the secondary level where the challenge of connecting with kids cannot be confused with slipping into the world of MTV or network TV sitcoms."

Maxfield said he has the best job because he gets credit for just showing up.

Sara Duvall an Ann Arbor School District media specialist/coordinator led an afternoon session.

Duvall, who is working on her doctorate degree, has been Maxfield's intern since June.

The Farmington school district models the enthusiasm and behavior they want, she said. "The atmosphere here is so exciting," she said. "They really are here to support every-

thing they do."

"The atmosphere in



Jerry Fouchey offers words of advice to a new crop of teachers.

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the Ann Arbor School District is not necessarily built on, 'Let's model what we want our students to be,' she said.

Though her entire district may not do it, Duvall feels she can go back to the media center and be a better team player and be a better citizen.

HEARING THE MESSAGE

The messages affected everyone differently.

"Bob said something this morning that I never really thought about, but it's true, about being the first class of the day," said Cliff Klaus, a substitute bus driver. "The high school students aren't much of a class because they are still half asleep. It gets progressively better when you get into the grade school. They are all smiles."

Elizabeth Gross, a media specialist at Farmington High School, hoped Maxfield would point out the differences between Farmington and other school districts.

"In a couple of school districts I've worked in they could talk the talk but they weren't walking the talk," Gross said. "When you are saying the things, I am banking on the fact that you are telling the truth. I want to be in a situation where the school climate is learning-centered."

"So, I think we will all kind of be holding your feet to the fire," Maxfield's response was "Check us out." He encouraged future discussion and communication between what was

heard and what is seen.

Bev Neckel, a bus aide who helps children with special needs, now holds her first job in 30 years. Neckel does some seamstress work at home.

Her 53-year-old husband is in a nursing home having been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease 10 years ago, so the job is an answer to many expenses. "I love it," Neckel said. "I really like the kids. Some don't talk. Some smile when you touch them on the cheek."

Student discipline, irate parents and due process at hearings can also be expected in any school district.

"We want you to know that this is a district which supports you first," said Estelene Michaelson, director of Safe Schools and Student Services. "When we get those calls coming in we make sure we get back to you and talk to you first. When you are talking to parents don't always call parents simply because you have something negative to say. Try to go out of your way and tell something positive."

"Sometimes the angriest kid you have in your classroom is the kid who is reaching out to you because somebody finally listens. Your listening and your responding can make the most incredible difference in their lives."

Kids couldn't care less what teachers know. What they truly care about is how much you care about them, she said.

"When you lose that passion it's time to retire," Michaelson said.

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REC NEWS

For more information on the following events call the Recreation Division at (248) 473-1800.

OPEN GYM

Get your exercise in the air conditioning at the Costick Activities Center Gym (11 Mile Road between Middlebelt and Inkster).
Adult Basketball: Sundays 9:00-11:00 a.m.; Adult Volleyball: Sundays 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.; Teen Basketball: Sundays 1:00-3:00 p.m.; Ping Pong: Sundays 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

The cost to participate for residents 17 and under is \$2; non-residents are \$4. Eighteen and over is \$4 for residents and \$5 for non-residents. For more information, contact Farmington Hills Department of Special Services at 473-1800.

MARSHMALLOW FLY & FRY

We did it last year and close to 1,000 people attended the event and had a great time, so we're doing it again this year! Watch over 1,000 marshmallows fall from the sky and see the LARGEST campfire ever in Farmington Hills, while cooking your dinner over it.

We'll provide the hot dogs and s'mores and you do the fireside cooking or you can purchase an already cooked hot dog. The marshmallows are free, as is the live music and entertainment. The Marshmallow Drop will take place just after 6:00 p.m. for all participants between the ages of 2 and 15 - all participants will get a prize!

The Farmington Hills Fire Department will be giving fire truck tours and the Police Department will have the very exciting Mobile Command Unit on-site. The event takes place in Heritage Park (Farmington Road, between 10 and 11 Mile Roads) on Thursday, August 22, 5-8 p.m. Don't miss out on this very unique event in Farmington Hills.

FALL PROGRAM REGISTRATION

Fall Program registration for residents starts August 20 and non-resident registration begins August 28.

MEN'S FALL SOFTBALL

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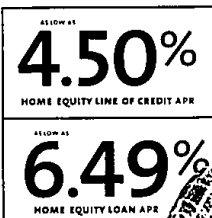


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Advanced Technology Academy is located in the Buell Management Building on the campus of Lawrence Technological University at 10 Mile and Northwestern Hwy. Regular office hours are 8 a.m. - 12 Noon M-F

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