

Online education project recognized

Oakland Schools online education program — Oakland Virtual Connection — was highlighted in the National School Boards Association's ITTE: Education Technology Programs publication *Virtual Realities: A School Leader's Guide to Online Education*. Oakland Schools was one of seven programs featured in the report.

Oakland Virtual Connection, or OVC, is an online learning program that began in the 2000-2001 school year. The program is designed to weave together the paths of traditional learning and technology in order to create an online community that recognizes and affirms individuals, their learning styles, and talents. OVC is available to Oakland County students in grades 5-12 for \$350 per semester. Students who live outside Oakland County and those who are home-schooled are also eligible, but fees may be slightly higher. Most courses are delivered

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entirely online, although some combine distance learning and face-to-face instruction. The three courses chosen most often by students are Science and Ethics, History of the Holocaust and Advanced Placement Computer Science. For more information regarding OVC, call Mark Hansen, director, New Media at (248) 209-2039 or e-mail him at Mark.Hansen@oakland.k12.mi.us or call Lyn Allen, distributed learning consultant, at (248) 209-2210 or e-mail him at Lyn.allen@oakland.k12.mi.us.



BILL BRISLER/CHSENER

Good neighbors

Members of the Farmington Hills chapter of the Mom's Club presented a check for \$1,877.08 to Gloria Vanderlught and Loretta Zahn of Neighborhood House. Club president Jennifer McFall said the money came from the sales of the club's cookbook.

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BROE

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closed-head-injury patients who live at the three addresses. Broe is seeking a temporary restraining order, preliminary injunction and permanent injunctive relief against the civil actions of the city.

Neither Mayor Bill Graham nor any of the other six city commissioners will discuss on-the-record talks aimed at stopping the federal lawsuit. However, attorneys, judges and other legal authorities have said "the case isn't winnable and could end up costing the city huge amounts of money in damages, especially if the Justice Department becomes part of the case. The Federal Housing Act will supersede anything on our books. The needs of the handicapped outweigh interest in any other issue."

It is likely that the federal

government would get involved in the lawsuit, Bator said.

"We received a call from the U.S. Justice Department shortly after we filed the complaint, and they expressed an interest in the case," said Bator. "They couldn't get involved by next week's court date but said if the case wasn't resolved by then, they intended to recommend the Justice Department pursue entry in the case. They reviewed our complaint and briefs and felt we had a very strong position."

The negotiations revolve around a settlement involving the city paying Broe's attorney fees and court costs, Bator said.

"The city has literally made a federal case out of this and cost my client plenty of money to defend himself. If they drop the tickets, we'll consider dropping the federal court case. We are willing to have all of these issues handled in a responsible way, out of court, anytime."

If the negotiations are successful, the tickets likely will be rescinded by the end of this week. Both sides would then appear before Cleland next Wednesday to complete the deal.

Both sides were planning to ask that a 35th District Court hearing in Plymouth on the same day be postponed, pending outcome of the federal case.

The cost of the lawsuit became a point of contention when the city's insurance carrier, St. Paul Fire and Marine, reportedly told city officials they would cover legal fees but not any damages awarded in a prospective judgment.

The city's attorney, Jim DeGrazia of O'Connor, DeGrazia and Tamm of Bloomfield Hills, said, "We're talking with our clients to see if there is any way the matter can be resolved."

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