

SENIORS

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This was the sixth year Mercy seniors went to that city to work during Senior Alternative Spring Break. The Mercy-sponsored trip assists Habitat for Humanity.

Other students who participated were Jessica Watson, Andrea Ernst, Gina Perna, Charlotte Grabman, Laura Meloche, Chloe Kraft, Lauren Budesky, Kelly George, Elyse Carnegie and Margot Spera. "It was very rewarding to help the human community," Grabman said. "We go around a lot and forget that we are part of a community as a whole. It's a good experience." George also felt good about the experience: "It was nice to see how the community appreciated us. They were such a happy couple and so happy to meet us."

The annual trip draws student interest well ahead of sign-up deadlines.

"It's almost filled for next

year," said Pat Atchinson, Mercy's service learning coordinator. "I chose Beattyville initially because it was a day trip. The kids wanted to go someplace warm and they gave up the traditional spring break to do this."

Typically, the people Mercy students help have been single, older women. "This was the first time the students did something for a young couple," Atchinson said.

Students aren't told the personal circumstances of the people they help. "We just assume the circumstances aren't good," Atchinson said. "This home was new construction."

The Sparks' home is located on top of the mountain. "The street winds down the mountain and at the bottom is the small town of Beattyville," she said.

The community houses an IGA supermarket and the Purple Cow Restaurant. Mary Buckley, the campus minister, was a chaperone. "I heard the girls talking about it and it sounded like fun," said



BILL BRASLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Charlotte Grabman and Lauren Budesky move clay dug out from the area of the front porch.

Buckley, in her first year at Mercy High.

The town itself stood out in Buckley's memory. "It was really humbling," she said. "It's a totally different surrounding than people see in the Detroit area."

The girls stayed in a renovated jail/court house which was given to Habitat, Atchinson said.

FHS student wins McKennett Scholarship

BY SUE BUCK - STAFF WRITER

Ideen Baghdadchi, a Farmington High School senior, is the recipient of the second Megan and Michael McKennett Memorial Scholarship.

He will receive the award at the May 22 Gill Elementary

PTA meeting.

The award is presented by the PTA in memory of the McKennetts, who attended Gill Elementary and died in a car crash last year.

"The Gill PTA remembers them and honors their wonderful memories by presenting a \$500 scholarship each year in their names," said parent

Lynn Hinton.

Baghdadchi attended Gill Elementary for six years. He submitted an application with a moving essay entitled, "Orange Dignity" about his experience on the Gill Safety Patrol, Hinton said. Baghdadchi will attend the University of Michigan this fall.

WEST NILE

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human, but only through a bite from an infected mosquito.

"Birds are the primary host for blood," she said of the insect's bite. But humans are a good enough second option.

Federal health experts who visited Farmington Hills last year said odds of developing a life threatening illness from an infected mosquito was one in 15,000 bites.

The first human case of West Nile in the U.S. occurred in New York City in 1999.

Weinert said while there is still no cure, the effort is to reduce the breeding sites of mosquitoes in the county.

"They need still conditions (on water) to breed," she said. Residents can limit the breeding habitat by not allowing stagnant ponds or puddles of water near their homes.

Other ways to lower the risk of infection is to avoid being outside at dawn or dusk when mosquitoes are more prevalent.

People can also use insect repellents with a Deet content of up to 35 percent.

Tracy Slinkak, Farmington Hills' environmental coordinator, said the city has 5,000 catch basins that can be treated for the type of mosquito that favors breeding in sewers and is apparently the species most responsible for carrying the virus.

A brick known as a growth hormone inhibitor will be put in the city's underground water catch basins to kill the mosquitoes in the larvae stage.

"We're going to see how the year pans out," Slinkak said.



BILL BRASLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Farmington Hills Environmental Coordinator Tracy Slinkak takes a water sample from a catch basin. There was no evidence of mosquito larvae so no larvicide was added to the basin.

"We're also trying to spread the message that just because you have a wetland, you should not just dump a pesticide in there."

Slinkak said there are different ways to treat wetlands without pesticides.

She added residents should try their best not to let stagnant water sit on pool covers,

children's play toys and plant pot saucers.

Weinert said residents who see any large areas of stagnant water or want to report crows that may have died from the virus should call the county at (977) 377-3641.

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