

Insight At Franklin

They Study Police -- Up Close

By W.W. EDGAR



OFFICER JESSE BARTLETT has two interested listeners as he explains workings of latest equipment to Robin Kroll (center) and Paul Richmond, as part of Franklin High program. (Observer photo)



DISCUSSIONS like these are common in the Franklin High program. From left: Students Julie Stewart and Ted Maddox, going over latest plans with Robert Kugler, liaison officer, and Sgt. Robert Van Dyke. (Observer photo)

"I used to have a negative attitude toward the police. I thought they did nothing but harass people. But I have found out in this program that the police are human beings, too, and that they want to help us. I sure changed my way of thinking."

These words, spoken by Paul Richmond, a student at Franklin High in Livonia, indicate the police-school cooperation program instituted eight months ago is successful and paying dividends.

The program, designed to close the communication gap between the students and law enforcement agencies, is referred to by Livonia Police Sgt. Robert Van Dyke and John Graves, faculty advisor and student activities director at Franklin, as a "marriage between the police and students" and is now one of the most popular in the school.

With good citizenship as the primary goal, the federally funded volunteer program is bringing students and police together in a cooperative effort and providing a better understanding of law enforcement and worthwhile relationships.

"We are placing the students - both boys and girls - with the police officers," Graves said. "In this manner, they get a better insight into law enforcement."

Graves also revealed that the Franklin program is the only one of its kind in the state. There are 37 programs in Michigan, but Franklin is unusual because it is the only one where volunteer students and police work together. They ride together in the police cars and thus get a better insight to the policeman's task.

"On the other hand," Sgt. Van Dyke said, "the police are finding the kids aren't as bad as they thought. As a

result, the entire attitude toward law enforcement has changed.

"We find, too," Graves said, "the attitude of the entire school toward law enforcement has changed. It is found not only among the volunteers in the program, but the entire student body. We now feel like a real community school."

The program is being conducted on an entirely volunteer basis and is an after-class project.

Each volunteer agrees to work 100 hours in the program for which he earns a half credit toward graduation.

"We find many volunteers don't want to leave after serving the 100 hours," Graves said. "Some are planning to continue in police work. In fact, we have some who have applied for service as cadets in the Livonia police department."

Popularity of the program is shown in the fact eight students have put in their 100 hours; 26 others are participating, with another 20 on the waiting list. Since the inception of the program, ranks of the volunteer officers have increased four to 22.

The program is funded by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. Through the efforts of State Sen. Carl Pursell (R-Plymouth), \$26,000 has been received as 75 per cent of the cost.

The City of Livonia has appropriated \$8,700, to bring the available funds to \$34,700 for a one-year period.

Specific goals are: To provide a meaningful learning situation for its intrinsic value where the student renders volunteer service in the community with directed guidance.

To provide citizenship education in school and community situations.

To attempt to bridge the lack of communication between groups by providing op-

portunities for cooperative interaction.

To make the school and community more relevant to students by involving them in volunteer services.

To provide a useful channel for student idealism and altruism while contributing to his self-concept.

To enhance student concerns for the general welfare of individuals.

To offer opportunities to the students to develop his own interests, skills and talents.

To enable the student to identify a problem, assist in planning its solution and experience the satisfaction of involvement.

To encourage schools to undertake new directions in schedules and curricula to meet the needs of the students and the community.

To meet these goals, officials at Franklin and the City of Livonia Police Department started the program in July 1972.

Now, after eight months, the reaction of involved students has proven most interesting.

To get a mid-level evaluation of the program, Police Officer Ronald Kugler, liaison officer stationed permanently in the school, conducted a survey in which he asked: "What is your opinion of having a police officer in the schools?"

Of 20 students surveyed, 17 favored the plan, and here are some of their reasons:

"Because it might help in getting some of the people to stop drugs."

"I think it is great. You can talk to the officer and learn more about law enforcement, and he can answer any questions you may have about law."

"He isn't here to get criminals or to stop anyone from making trouble. He is here for public relations."

"Because if a kid gets into trouble at least he can go

and talk to an officer about the consequences."

"It might encourage some kids to stay out of trouble."

"So students can come in and rap with him and see police on their own level and not as untouchables."

"So kids who want to talk with him about problems know where he is."

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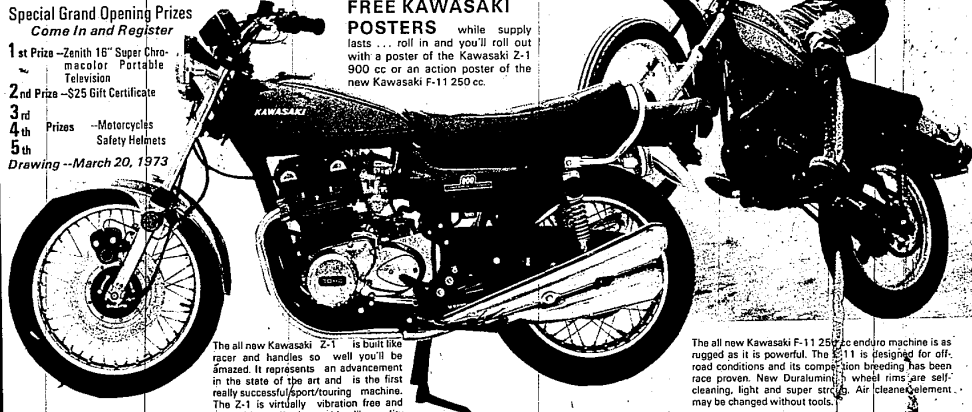
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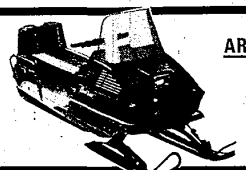
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