

Creativity Flourishing



WHILE TEACHER Mary Harkless leads the children in a song, they put a character together made with felt, carrot sticks for arms, celery for legs and roast beef for a body.

By KATHY MORAN

Creativity is swarming all over University Hills Christian Church in Farmington on Tuesdays and Thursdays when young artists and musicians get together.

They aren't always in tune, but the four- and five-year-olds in Artstart think they are the greatest musicians around.

And when they get their tiny fingers into paints or around some clay, their genius really shines through.

Artstart is a pilot program started in Farmington by Nancy Bates and Fran Gunderson. It is designed to nurture creativity in each child.

The preschool program is modeled after one which started in Pontiac and which has been acclaimed for fostering creativity in children.

Early elementary school sometimes "turns off" creativity in children by pat-

terning them into certain modes of behavior, such as coloring within the lines.

In the Artstart program, the children are given a chance to develop string, scraps of paper and material, paint and clay, and setting their minds free to create their own projects.

Their imagination is also set free when they are confronted with a pile of odds and ends and can play make-believe in front of a large mirror and their peers. Along the way, the children are learning coordination and good manners as well as to express themselves.

Jarah Heartburn, a hand puppet used by teacher Sally Sawyer, visits the children every day to relate a lesson in manners drawn from a personal experience.

"You know what, child?" the puppet asks. "I had just a terrible time at the hospital yesterday when I let a very rude man..."

Before the story is over, the children have learned that it is polite to say "please" and "thank you."

Children work in small groups with one of the three teachers including Mrs. Sawyer, Alice Nichols and Mary Harkless.

"Our teachers are highly creative," Mrs. Gunderson said. "They have more ideas than they have had time to develop."

While one group of children is working on art projects with Mrs. Nichols, another is playing make-believe or putting on a puppet show and another is listening to stories or performing in their "rhythm" band.

"It's really exciting to see the things they come up with," Mrs. Bates said.

The program counters the effect that television has on children, Mrs. Sawyer said.

"I've worked with children for many years and have seen a progressive decline in creativity," she said. "I think it's due to television. We are in agreement here that unsupervised television is an imagination stealer."

Photos by Fran Evert



THE FARMINGTON Arts Council donated \$300 to the Artstart program from a grant through the Michigan Arts Council. Presenting the check is Margo Belanger (right) from the arts council to Mrs. Nancy Bates who started Artstart. (Photo by Fran Evert)



LISA DUNN gets some advice from teacher Alice Nichols, known as "Miss Alice" to her students.

Concert Band Plays Sunday

The Farmington Community Concert Band will open its "Sunday in the Park" concert series at 3 p.m., Sunday, June 17.

This will be the first of three appearances scheduled by the band this summer in the amphitheater of the Farmington Community Center, Farmington Road north of 10 Mile.

The concert will be open to the public without charge and will be typical of the old-fashioned band concert

that was presented in the town square.

The concert band has 11 members, and has thrilled audiences throughout the tri-county area for more than three years.

This year, it is concentrating its appearances to the community center, with the exception of the annual Founders' Festival concert in the downtown shopping center on July 27.

The band will present concerts in the amphitheater at 3 p.m., Sunday, July 8; and at 3 p.m., Sunday, Aug. 12.

Dancers Roll Back Calendar

GARDEN CITY
Garden City's Parks and Recreation Department is rolling back the calendar Friday night, June 22, to sponsor a big-band sound outdoor dance. The event will be held from 8:30-11:30 p.m. at Garden City's Park pavilion at Merriman and Cherry Hill.

The Metro-West Big Band, a 17-piece dance orchestra, comprised of members of The Garden City Adult Concert Band, will perform.

"Because of the time, it isn't something that's geared toward young children," said Ray Wiacek, parks and recreation superintendent. "but we are hoping for a good turnout of young and old adults."

Dancers will be treated to music from the Harry James, Glenn Miller, Count Basie era to that of the new generation. "Tuxedo Junction", "In the Mood", "Begin The Beguine", "Stella By Starlight", "Mood Indigo", "Star Dust", are scheduled.

In the modern vein, dancers will hear "For Once in My Life", "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy", "Black Magic Woman", "Goin' Out Of My Head", and others.

Wiacek pointed out that the Metro-West Big Band is made up of what he hopes the audience will be comprised of both young and older adults.

Rose Show Is This Weekend

If you enjoy growing roses, plan to visit The Detroit Rose Society's 42nd annual Joint Rose Show at the Tel-Tel Mall this weekend.

The show, largest in state of Michigan, is on June 16 and 17 during regular hours. It will feature classes of roses.

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PUTTING THE FINAL buttons on is Jennifer Smith of Farmington.

The pilot program will end this week, but already the teachers are working on next fall's program which will be coordinated by Mrs. Harkless.

Already a program is planned for the youngsters to celebrate the Chinese New Year by cooking rice and eating it with chopsticks, listening to Chinese music and making Chinese pictures.

Members can register their

pre-school children for the fall session by contacting Artstart, University Hills Christian Church, 27000 Farmington Road, Farmington 48024.

Two sessions will be offered from Sept. 17 through Jan. 18. One session will be Tuesday and Thursday mornings and the other will be Mondays and Wednesdays.

Registration is \$10 and the charge is \$3.50 per session.

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