

Center in Farmington

# 'Talking book' program aids the blind in area

By JACKIE KLEIN

The world need never be so small again for the blind and physically handicapped.

A sub-regional library for Oakland County residents who can't read normal printed material has just been established in the Farmington Public Library.

Material for the handicapped comes from the Library of Congress to the State Library and then is funneled through the Farmington Public Library to the patron.

Record players and "talking books" are available free of charge at the Farmington and Southfield public libraries.

"WE ACT as an intermediary or referral service," explained Southfield Deputy City Librarian Douglas Zyskowski.

"We have certificates of eligibility applications for the visually and physically handicapped, and we urge them to contact us.

"We will help the patron process his application for the 'talking books' and we'll make arrangements for the record players to be picked up.

"We'll be more than happy to supply information about the program."

Anyone who cannot read normal printed material because of blindness or visual loss or physical handicap which limits the ability to hold a book or turn pages is eligible for the service, Zyskowski said.

ALL THAT is required is verification by a qualified physician.

Record players, referred to as "talking book machines," operate at a slower speed than commercial players. Earphones, remote control units, and pillow speakers are also available.

"Another important function of the program is to help blind and handicapped students," Zyskowski pointed out.

"If the textbook isn't available, the state library and the Library of Congress have a staff of volunteers who record the book on magnetic tape."

"The students may receive the first few chapters within two to three weeks."

IF THE handicapped "reader" has no specific need, he can request a novel, history book, science fiction, biography or whatever else satisfies his interest.

## C'ville high opens shop

Distributive education students at Clarenceville High School have gone into business. They operate a store in the school from 6 a.m. until 2:15 p.m. each school day.

The new shop features such items as candy, records, greeting cards, posters, sculptures, school items, pens, combs, emblems, cosmetics, incense burners, student art work, tapes and coffee, hot chocolate and donuts.

According to Ken Zornes, of the school's cooperative training department and faculty advisor for the store, students, after working with the store, learn of pricing, how to market merchandise and how mark up of goods actually works. The students even go on wholesale buying trips.

"The visually handicapped aren't the only patrons who can take advantage of the service," Zyskowski said. "Anyone with a disability such as muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, or crippling arthritis which prohibits handling a book is eligible."

Also eligible are persons with severe learning disabilities, determined through testing to have a physical basis.

The Farmington Public Library is circulating only fiction and non-fiction recorded disc books. The state library will continue to circulate recorded magazines, cassette and open-reel tapes, braille and large print.

"PATRONS are mailed records or cassettes on a regular basis from the state library," Zyskowski said.

"Users send back the materials postage free to Lansing and are automatically sent new talking books in the same category."

About 21 persons in Southfield use the state facility and will now be closer to the service. The Farmington Library has a full-time staff to assist the handicapped.

"Many blind persons are getting away from braille," Zyskowski said. "They find it cumbersome and difficult to store. That's one of the reasons for the popularity of talking books."

Other aids for handicapped readers are magnifiers, special closed circuit television, tactile reading machines, book stands, mechanical page turners, handwriting aids, special typewriters and other equipment.



Christina Perkins sets a "talking book" on the turntable.

(Photo by Fran Evert)

## Program holds an open house

A new program for the blind will be demonstrated at an open house at the Farmington Public Library, Twelve Mile Road branch, April 5 at 2 p.m.

The "talking book" program, funded by the Library of Congress and sponsored by the Oakland County Library Board, began this month.

The Farmington library is the county office, staffed by Beverly Daffern, Christina Perkins and Gary Foreman.

Over 900 titles are offered in special slow-playing records. They are for the use of the blind, or anyone with a handicap which prevents them from reading a normal book.

"WE NEED it to be more personal," Mrs. Daffern said.

As Oakland County coordinator for the program, she is concerned as many people as possible who need the service receive it.

James Hahn, of the Library of Congress, will be a guest at the open house.

Subscribers to the service for the blind contact the library. The records are sent out by mail, and users get a special record player to play them.

Another new addition to the library services for the blind is a large print typewriter, a contribution of the Nardin Park Braille transcribers.

## Hills sends thanks to road commission

The City of Farmington Hills formally thanked the Oakland County Road Commission recently for the improvement of the intersection at 12 Mile and Orchard Lake Rd.

"Not only is traffic moving smoothly through the area without the previous, dangerous and annoying backups," a letter from the city read, "there has also been a dramatic reduction in personal injury accidents."

Farmington Township frequently

took critical positions relative to the road commission and its work in the area. The letter may be a "first" in relations between the new city and the commission.

The road commission made extensive improvements to the two major roads in the area last summer. The Farmington Chamber of Commerce also received cooperation from the commission keeping the 40 business places along Orchard Lake open during construction.

## County seeks federal grant

Oakland County will apply for a \$15,000 federal grant from the Office of Substances Abuse Services.

According to the county board of commissioners health committee the grant could pay for a consultant to plan the combining of county drug and alcohol programs.

By Michigan law the two programs were required to merge.

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