

# 3 Farmington students help protect consumers

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By SUSAN AVERILL  
 If you're a fraudulent door-to-door salesman, don't look now but you may

have Farmington High School students on your trail.  
 The three aren't trained professionals, but they're under the tutelage of those who are: the consumer protection division of the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office.  
 Each of the students was fascinated by the legal aspect.  
 "It's interesting to know what is really going on, all the frauds that are happening," 18-year-old Rick Bremer said. "We're learning a lot about the collections made by unauthorized charities and unscrupulous magazine salesmen. It's an introduction to the legal fields."

The students now are involved in calling city clerks throughout the state and compiling a list of varying ordinances regarding door-to-door solicitations.

A LIST of 10 questions has been given the students. The responses then are compiled and written in legal briefs. The information is given to the assistant prosecuting attorney, who will use it to write a law regarding door-to-door solicitations.  
 Copies of the suggested law will be sent to each of Oakland County's community councils. If the law is adopted by the major portion of councils, it will help frustrate would-be frauds, the students say.

"We can't pass a law for the entire county," said Bill McGregor, an 18-year-old senior at Farmington High. "But we do want the city councils to adopt the law we suggest, so it'll be more difficult for the ones with criminal intent."

Gary Chappell, 17, is interested in the business management and accounting aspects of the program.  
 "I'm interested in the problems they (the consumer) actually have."

"I EXPECT to learn a lot out of it," he said. "I'll not take care that I'm not one of those people. It's nice to know what even an average citizen can do to stop fraud."  
 But it's not just a matter of concern for one's fellow human being, either, he said.

"After all, it eventually comes out of your own pocket."  
 McGregor is planning on earning a law degree, and has already been accepted into the University of Michigan pre-law program.

"I think it's pretty good to be able to change a lot of things," he said. "Even in a legitimate organization, the people in it may not act legitimately."

It helps the organizations keep track of employees and helps them rather than hurts them, he said.  
 The students will be working on this program for several weeks before handing the project over to the attorney. After that, the students will be

fielding telephone reports and complaints.  
 "Then we'll investigate and see if it's a legitimate complaint," McGregor said. "If it is, we'll collect the information and give it to the lawyers to follow up on."


ALL VOLUNTEERS the trio works 12:30-2:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. But they're not doing something for nothing.

Because they are working two hours a day instead of just one, they will earn one full credit in six months, rather than the usual year, Dan Collins said.

Collins, accounting and retailing teacher at Farmington High School, is the program's school coordinator.

"The big thing is that these kids are really involved in these things and with the consumer. They'll be giving advice to the consumer," the former business law teacher said.

Supervisor at the prosecutor's office is Sherry Perelli.  
 The volunteer program is not yet open district-wide. Schools in the Bloomfield Hills school district are also participating.



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