

Teen Activity Center termed 'another success'

By Sandi Horne
staff writer

Farmington Summer Activities Center, open early in July to offer area teens a place to gather, has been termed another success by Darrel Emerson.

Emerson is now in his second year as the center's director and can expect about 50 teens to show up at any one session or activity he offers, and many more for any one field trip.

"We've continued to have good turnout on the field trips, and a very high level of participation in all the daily programs," he said. "And there is always room for more."

Located in Shawassee Recreation Center on Shawassee Road between Orchard Lake and Nine Mile roads, the center is operated on a drop-in basis. Teens are welcomed from 4-6 p.m. and from 7-10 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Tuesdays are set aside for field trips. At any one time during center hours teens can be seen chatting with friends, playing pinball or pool or signing up for the next trip.

The bulletin board is a popular spot that offers a listing of what's coming

up next on the agenda. Participants need no more than their signature on the roster and a one-time permission slip from a parent.

ABOUT 200 area teens have participated in one activity or another, whether it be the softball games, or euchre tournaments, basketball play, or the open gym.

The center is now in its fourth year, sponsored by Farmington Youth Assistance (FYA), and funded by United Community Services, Farmington Public Schools and the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills.

Emerson works with about a half dozen assistant directors, most of them college students who might do anything from running the movie projector (Friday night is movie night) to aiding a newcomer on the roller rink.

The assistant directors as well as volunteers from FYA furnished the center with games and equipment as they could. Abbey Road Amusement donated a host of games, such as pin ball or air hockey. Some of the games and pool tables have come from residents who loaned the leisure time equipment to the center for the summer.

Field trips are the most popular of offerings among the teens who have spent Tuesdays in July roller skating, swimming in Oakland County Wavepool, picnicing on Belle Isle and touring the Detroit Science Center.

ACCORDING TO center regulars Kim Main and Patty Hope the best field trips are yet to come.

"I like the canoe trip best because everybody works together and it's just fun," said 13-year-old Kim.

The horseback riding trip is the one 16-year-old Patty is looking forward to, who adds, "The center is a place where kids can go without getting into trouble."

There is still time for newcomers who want to participate in these trips by signing their name on the center's roster.

Only one Tuesday spot is still hanging, a spot that was once reserved for a trip to Tiger Stadium. Emerson has given up on that but promised he'd have a substitute to fill the slot early this month.

Sixteen-year-old Mary Hughes said she liked the center because "it's a place where you don't have to spend much money," she said. "There's always something going on, a pizza party or a pinball tournament or something."

Duane Moody, 17, said of the center, "It's a cool place to come when you have nothing to do and no job."



Football advocates in the Teens Summer Activity Center are Tom Osborne (left), Tom Schultz, Kelly Spencer (with back to camera) and Wally Kew. Osborne is one of about six area college students who aid Darrel Emerson in the administration of the center.

Photos by Sandi Horne



Duane Moody and Kris Wolf team up for picnic fun and games during one of the Tuesday field trips. The teens are following directions called out in "People-to-People" competition.



Bill Sutton tries his hand at air hockey. Some of the games in the teen center have come from Abbey Road Amusement, others from residents who loaned pool tables or pin ball machines for youths to use during the summer.

On the coldest Tuesday in July, the field trip agenda called for swimming in Oakland County's Wavepool. Stalwart teens turned out regardless of the weather but Fred Lloyd (left) and Greg McGrath found it hard to keep warm when coming out of the water.



FYA calls volunteers

Farmington Youth Assistance (FYA), 7:30 p.m. Both will be given in the low-level of Farmington City Hall, 23600 Liberty.

FYA is a community service organization dedicated to the prevention of juvenile delinquency and neglect, and to the promotion of youth and family well being.



The Curious Savage

Linda Szymke (center) takes the role of Mrs. Ethel Savage in Quaker Valley Theatre's first production, "The Curious Savage," to be staged at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Aug. 7-8 in Farmington High School auditorium. Tom Szymke (at left)

takes the role of Dr. Emmett and John Kiehm plays the part of Mrs. Savage's son, Samuel. Tickets at \$2.50, (\$2 for students and seniors), can be purchased at the door. Group rates are available by calling Laurie Smalls, 474-5967.

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