

Involvement

Community relations tack is praised

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Farmington school trustees appear pleased with a department that has developed a new measure of parental involvement in the district.

Trustee Janice Rolnick, an outspoken proponent of community involvement in schools, called the new school/community relations department's activities "overwhelming" and "exciting."

"I don't think you need any direction," Rolnick told the department's director, Pamela O'Malley, at a recent board meeting. "You just keep on doing the directing."

One of the major achievements of the department has been coordination of the School/Community Forum. The forum is a communication

network of parents from the building level up, who are meeting regularly, defining individual school and overall education issues.

Rolnick was the trustee who continued to push for such a group, as requested by a number of parents.

NOT ONLY is O'Malley involved with the forum group, but she also works with other groups in the community, handles both external and internal public relations for the district and oversees the community education program that Farmington shares with the Clarenceville district.

"I'm feeling very good about what's going on," O'Malley told the board. "It speaks to the direction the district is taking. I'm pleased with

the pro-active stance we are taking with parents.

Parents Michelle Harris serves on the building coordinating committee for Wooddale Elementary and Dunckel Middle School. These committees are part of the School/Community Forum program.

Harris said members are pleased to be involved with the educational process. "Parents are very, very happy to have the opportunity," she said. "We know we have a voice and a group and we can stand together." Tina Jensen, who serves on the Power Middle School and Farmington High School councils, echoed similar sentiments. "Parents are glad there's finally a time to talk to a principal without calling on the phone."

"It's a time for a conversation, not a complaint," she added.

OTHER PROJECTS implemented this year by the school/community relations department include:

- formation of an Internal Communications Committee,
- creation of a staff newsletter,
- revamping of a newsletter, which goes to residents,
- creation of a board/district brochure, to give basic information to newcomers to the district,
- compiling a school directory of all employees.

• expansion of the community education department, using other buildings in the district and offering additional opportunities. New programs this winter will allow adults and children to take classes together, O'Malley said.

The school/community relations department is also seeking more widespread involvement of residents who are not parents in the district. It is estimated that more than 70 percent of those paying taxes in the Farmington district do not have children in the schools.



PETER BALDWIN

A special moment

Brad Maddern, son of firefighter Jon Maddern, receives a present from Santa Claus at the Farmington Hills Fire Department's annual Christmas party for children Dec. 13 at fire headquarters. Santa is assisted by firefighter Denny Hughes.

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Holiday hours are announced

New Year's will mean several closings next week.

The Farmington and Farmington Hills city halls, the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce, the 47th District Court in Farmington, the Farmington Community Library, the Farmington Observer and all banking institutions will be closed Friday, Dec. 31, New Year's Day.

Most retail outlets also will be closed. On Thursday, Jan. 31, New Year's eve, the Farmington City Hall will be open from 8:30 a.m. to noon. The Farmington Hills City Hall will be closed.

Trash normally picked up on Fridays will be picked up on Saturday next week only.

The district court will be closed New Year's eve. Some banking institutions will have limited hours.

The Farmington Community Library will be closed Thursday through Sunday.

The Farmington Observer will be open New Year's eve until 3 p.m.

Farmington Youth Assistance will be closed through Jan. 3.

The Farmington and Farmington Hills post offices will be closed New Year's Day. Special Delivery, Express Mail and perishables will be delivered as usual on the holiday. Mailbox collections next week will be done according to the schedule posted on individual boxes.

clarification

Monday's Farmington Focus column incorrectly listed the newly resurrected position to which Peter Baldwin, then a Farmington Hills

Fire Department lieutenant, was promoted. He became deputy fire chief one year ago this month.

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IGA Taberlite Whole New York Strip Loins **2.49 lb.** Trimmed Beef Tenderloin Cut & Wrapped Free **3.89 lb.**

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