Students try on disabilities to understand others



Eagle students how everyday objects, such as waste baskets and objects left on the floor, can pose obstacles to people who use wheelchairs.

ARM BRACES held one student's arms rigid, making it tough to put on a shirt.

Another could use only his head against a switch to draw on a computer screen. His hands didn't work.

work.
"For kids who have never ever drawn a picture before, this (the computer) can be very exciting," sald Kathy Nicholas, helping a fifth grader learn the special computer

grader learn the special computer program. It was all part of Changing Places, an annual event at Eagle Elementary School, in which general education students learn about the problems encountered by special education students attending the Farmington Hills school. Stations involving speech, physical therapy and other specialists guide general education students through a variety of activities designed to help them understand classimates who have disabilities.

"It's really nice how the other children accept them," observed Jo Esper, a paraprofessional who has worked with special education students in the Farmington district for the past 10 years. "They love it. Each one is annious to try the next thing."

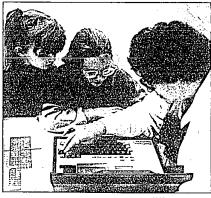
Occupational therapist Laura Barker said after each exercise, she could sense students' fursivation at being "handicapped."

"We're trying to increase sensitiv-

"We're trying to increase sensitiv-ity to what it's like to be handi-capped," she explained.

Part of her program taught general education students what it was like to have muscle weakness in one side of the body. Students learned to tie a shoe with the use of one hand.

The Changing Places program also helps general education students deal with special education peers — students mainstreamed into regular classroom settings.



Joan Crawford (adult) shows Eagle students Tracy Weiss (cen-ter) and Brends Bittikofer how a computer speaks back words that have been typed into it by a person with a speech handi-

Drowning death suspect not insane, report says

Anthony Bonelli was not insane when he allegedly drowned his girlend, and he is competent to stand trial, according to a state report. But a defense autorney disputes the findings in the long-awalted state Forensie Center report and has called for another psychiatric evaluation of Bonelli.

"We obviously feel that he (Bonelli was not criminally responsible for

"We obviously feel that he (Bonelli) was not criminally responsible for his actions," altorney Howard Witcheberg said "Qur whole defense is not guilty by resson of insanity." Bonelli is accused in the drowning death of 17-year-old Kristina Marie Fracchia, whose fully clothed body was found face down March 17 in Orchard Lake by! Oakland County Drain Commission workers.

A pretrial hepring scheduled for his week was postponed until next Wednesday after attorneys received the state forensle report, which was requested aix months ago under a court order.

"THEY DIDN'T feel that he rose "THEY BIDN'T feel that he rose to that level," Witcoberg said. "They feel that he is mentally ill, but they feel that he understood his conduct and, therefore, didn't meet the statutory criteria for being insane. That is basically what we're taking issue with."

issue with."

Assistant prosecutor Fred Miller
said Monday that he is "disappointed
that there's going to be a further delay in this case."

"I felt that his (Bonelli's) actions
were rather calculated from the beginning." Miller said But he added
that defense attorneys "have that
right" to seek a second psychiatric
opinion.

right" to seek a second psychiatric opinion.
Wittenberg said the defense is con-tending that Bonoill was "definitely having mental problems at the time of the offense" and that "he still is." Bonelli has had a history of men-tal illness, Wittenberg said, adding that Bonelli's "whole adolescence was just a very terrible experience."

THE DEFENSE is in the process of seeking a psychiatrist to conduct second examination of Bonelli, who was a 17-year-old student at the Farmington Training Center for remotionally impaired students when he was arrested and charged with open murder. He remains in the county jail.

The defense is expected to choose

The defense is expected to choose a psychlatrist prior to Wednesday's pretrial hearing before Oakland County Circuit Court Judge Alice Gibert, Wittenberg sald. The judge may decide at the pretrial hearing to set a timetable for having the second psychiatric evaluation completed.

Wittenberg said he expects to ask Gilbert to grant the defense 60 days for the process.

Wittenberg noted that Gilbert "wants to get this thing moving." But he added that defense attorneys consider the psychiatric tests "a se-rious matter" that should not be rushed. That is why they have not pushed the issue of a speedy trial. Wittenberg said he exocets the tri-

Hills couple's backyard named a designated haven for wildlife

Continued from Page 1

Communed from Page 1;
has been near. Blood will mar their
wooden deck. And he knows when
abandoned baby rabblits near death
belong to a first-time mother rabbit
— a noviect to the responsibilities of
marking feet and there's nature.
There's a balance. And that's the
way it is," Derek said. "It's a very
uneducated thing to lotterfere."
Judy Derek has groomed her
knowledge of nature from her busband, who has nurtured his love for
wildlife by reading and experimenting. "It's the life cycle. I like watching nature like this," she said.

THEIR LIVES are filled with a lot of noticing, watching calmly and standing still for something to move. On the tarp covering their aboveground pool, the Dereks one day discovered that ducks found it a perfect place to act out their courtship and matting.

'I thought something had to be done to bring back wildlife habitat. We're here to share a planet. Somebody's got to do something.'

- Joe Derek

served as a "wintering area" for garden snakes. "On a warm spring day, you'll see little periscopes pop-ping up," Derek sald, referring to the snakes awakening from their season-

snakes awakening from their season-al homes.

Along the way, Derek also discov-ered that opposum and skunks cau-tiously share the dens of hibernating woodchucks. And with a cleaner creek, Derek has found builfrogs and

small-mouth bass.

The Dereks also discovered that sometimes they have to manage the habitat. "When you take care of a

natural area, you have to filsy Mother Nature," Derek sald. For example, the fox squirrels have hid to be relocated, as have some of the raccoons, to make way for fox, jed and gray squirrels.

Looking forward to spring, Derek already has plans. Praying months eggs will be attached to a free branch when it's warmer, ready for hatching. Vines will be planted in a downed tree as a means of altracting humming birds and butterfiles—one of Derek's true loves.



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