

# Library reaches out to hearing-impaired kids

By Joanne Moliszowski  
staff writer

Claire can't hear. But a television world of fairy tales and fables is opening for her, thanks to the Farmington-Farmington Hills Optimists Club.

The 60-member organization, known for helping the community's youth, donated to the Farmington Community Library five tapes of fairy tales in American Sign Language for children who are deaf or hearing impaired.

"We saw a need to have something for preschool children to learn fables and fairy tales," said Dave Clappi-

son, Optimists member in charge of the tape project.

The signed tape collection titled, "Four For You," apparently is the first available in southeastern Michigan. It is not available at video stores, said Jerry Wasen, Optimists vice president.

When John Roberts and his wife, Lauren, learned that 2½-year-old Claire was deaf, they began teaching themselves and helping her to sign.

"From 0-5 years is the language acquisition period," Roberts said, stressing the importance of learning to sign at such a young age.

"It's being over exposed to this. That's the only way she'll learn. After she watches it over and over, it will finally click in," he said.

THE ROBERTS are from Ann Arbor but travel to Farmington Hills for programs, support and materials — such as the tapes at the library — to help their daughter. "You need to have parents who are advocates," Lauren Roberts said.

In Farmington Hills, that's exactly what they find. The library's special collection and services for the deaf and hearing impaired has been a great help, she added.

"It's like any language. You have to start when the child is young. It's like doing things over and over in

school," said Carole Hund, librarian in charge of the Farmington Community Library Extension Department, including services for patrons who are deaf and their families.

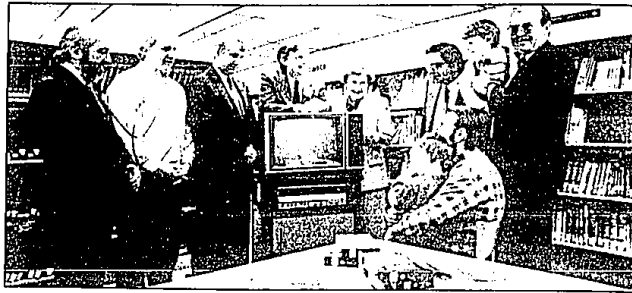
The Optimists' tapes, which may be checked out of the Hills branch, are part of the library's continuing commitment to children and adults who are deaf or hearing impaired, their families and professionals, said Beverly Papal, library director.

The library's commitment to the deaf community began when a mother of a child who is deaf came to Hund and said, "I want to make sure my daughter has the same things other children do," Hund said.

Offering programs and services for the deaf community fit right in with the Oakland County Blind and Physically Handicapped Library in the Farmington Community Library, Hund said.

THE LIBRARY began its services in 1981 when it received a grant to buy books and magazines on deafness and offered a workshop for librarians to promote deaf services.

Since then, the library has added a telecommunication device that allows people who are deaf to call the library as any other patron would. A telecommunication device was bought to allow patrons with hearing impairments access to captioned television



RANDY BOST/Staff photographer

Farmington Area Optimist Club members Paul Sowerby (left), Bob McDonald, Jerry Wasen and Dave Clappison (near TV) gather around the video screen with Carole Hundt, director of the Oakland County Library for the Blind and

Physically Handicapped. On her left are Optimists Tom Booth and Neil Wolfson, who is holding Claire Lauren of Ann Arbor. Seated are Peter Dale and his 2-year-old son, Martin Dale-Hench of Livonia.

shows. It's available for free home use for a month.

In 1985, the library and the Michigan Society for Deaf Children, Oakland County branch, joined forces to promote and present programs for children who are deaf or have hearing impairments.

Since then, 11 family story hours in American Sign Language have been presented. A 12th presentation will be expanded to a chamber theater presentation with mime and sign language scheduled for 10 a.m. Saturday, May 5.

And less than a month ago, the li-

brary began classes in American Sign Language. "We do have an outlook to serve the entire community," Hund said, adding that there is a lot of participation and cooperation in the library's programs, with as many as 125 attending some programs.

## clarification

The caption of a photograph provided by Farmington schools that ran in the Feb. 12 issue of the Observer & Eccentric listed the name of a student, Neto Segura is the student whose story was mentioned in the photo.

## President's Day means some office closings

President's Day — on Monday, Feb. 19 — will mean some closings next week.

Farmington Hills City Hall and 47th District Court in Farmington will be closed Monday. Some banking institutions also may be closed. Trash collection won't be affected

in either Farmington or Farmington Hills.

The U.S. Post Office will operate on a holiday schedule. There will be no regular residential or business mail delivery. Special delivery, express mail and post office box service will be provided.

Limited after service will be available only for customers who regularly pick up their mail at both local post offices from 8 to 10 a.m.

Mail will be picked up from all residential collection boxes as late in the day as possible to meet first-class mail service standards.

All business collection boxes, with the large 5.00 decal, will be picked up after 5 p.m.

Farmington City Hall, the Farmington-Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce, the Farmington Community Library and the Farmington Observer will be open as usual Monday.

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