

# Choices

## Program gives students experience with life skills

**R**OLLER SKATING, playing chess or cooking may not lead students directly into a career.

But the variety gives them a smattering of life's choices — something teachers at St. Paul Lutheran School believe is important.

Students in grades five through eight at the private Farmington Hills school at Eight Mile and Middlebelt were given a chance to try out various life skills this week, during the school's annual "Winter-in" program, traditionally held before the school's winter break.

Coordinator of the program, Sue Fisher, said the program has been in place since 1981 and is successful.

"It teaches them life skills, and gives them things we can't do otherwise," she said. "We don't offer a vocational education program, and Winter-in covers this important area."

"They enjoy doing it, and it's fun to watch them."

For four days, students can select

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— Sue Fisher  
coordinator,  
life skills program

from various activities, including drawing, ceramics, cooking, wood-working, chess and two out-of-building activities, which included bowling and roller skating.

Not only do teachers and staff lead the sessions, but parents also come and participate. The program has served as a model for other Lutheran schools in the Michigan District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Students from throughout the metropolitan area attend St. Paul, with a concentration from Farmington Hills, Livonia, Redford and Detroit.



Photos by RANDY BORG/Farmington Hills

Seventh grade teacher David Stellwagen shares his cooking skills in the St. Paul school kitchen. Learning are (from left): Justin Slaughter of Livonia, James Appleton of Detroit, Cedric

Leguayder of Farmington Hills, Brandi Bruce of Detroit and Jason Brasgalla of Livonia. Also part of the class was Kurt Brunell of Detroit.



St. Paul parent volunteer Deborah Jensen (right) of Livonia gives eighth grader Jeff Marinelli of Farmington Hills some advice on a drawing. Seated behind is eighth grader Jeff Cooper of Redford.



St. Paul student Jim Birk, an eighth grader from Livonia, works on a ceramic egg as part of the weeklong Winter-in project.

## Career program to stress science

Several hundred Farmington Public Schools students and their parents will hear about future career choices during a Wednesday, March 7, seminar entitled, "The Future and Technology."

The annual Choices Seminar is one way the district is involving members of the community in education. It is co-sponsored by the American Association of University Women, Farmington Branch.

The seminar will include an engli-

neer from Chrysler, a speaker on artificial intelligence from AT&T, and speakers on other high technology topics. Keynote speaker for the program will be Sandra Smith of the Future Society.

Students in grades four through eight are invited to attend the evening program, which will be held at Farmington High School.

Students and parents can get more information at various schools, or by calling the district's gifted department at 489-3399.

## Hills council spruces up plans for beautification

News briefs from the Farmington and Farmington Hills city halls will appear regularly in this column.

### ● FARMINGTON HILLS

• Landscape plans — The city council Monday authorized the beautification commission to establish a more appropriate and harmonious selection of indigenous materials along natural beauty roads, in keeping with the idea of total natural beauty.

Commissioners were asked to specify suggestions by late spring so small projects can be included in the city's 1990-91 budget.

• Assessment forum — The city council will meet with the city assessor and board of review at 6 p.m. Monday at city hall.

The council will discuss with the assessor the kind of property valuation movements taking place for the 1990 tax roll. It will discuss with the

## CITY HALL

### newsbeat

board of review some philosophical questions on hardships.

• Special proclamation — In honor of the 72nd anniversary of the re-establishment of the independent state of Lithuania Feb. 16 and the 73rd anniversary of the founding of the Lithuanian Kingdom, the city council Monday proclaimed Feb. 16 as Lithuanian Independence Day in Farmington Hills.

The proclamation called on people everywhere to "commemorate the strength and pride of Lithuanians and to denounce the illegal policies of the Soviet Union with regard to basic human rights and freedoms in this country and the other Baltic States."

• Year 2000 — The city council Monday applauded the 150 volunteers who worked on the Year 2000 planning committee. It named the steering committee to a two-year term to further study goals, objectives and strategies in the Year 2000 report.

The new advisory committee will come up with a plan to implement programs and projects outlined in the report. It will serve as a liaison to city boards and commissions, administrators, council members and citizens.

The Year 2000 plan provides a quality-of-life blueprint of what residents desire in the 1990s.

## Students look at the real world

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middle school is an especially important time to involve the community.

MARY BETH Sikora agrees. The career development resource person for middle schools in the Farmington district, she is busy planning a career day for power that will involve 30-40 speakers from the community. The career day rotates annually between the four middle schools.

"I think the schools benefit so greatly by having community people come in," she said. "You can see what's going on around us. If you don't explore, or have access to it, how do you learn about it? A kid could go right up through high school and think they want to be a doctor, then find they don't like school."

Lois Kluever, a science teacher at Dunckel Middle School, keeps an ear open for parents who might fit in with her curriculum. For example, one child's mother is a pilot, while a father is involved in solar panels. "Books are only so interesting," she said. "If you can get someone to come into the classroom, that's great."

IN ELEMENTARY school, much of the community involvement

comes directly from parents who share various hobbies and careers.

Wood Creek principal Barbara Novatis credits parental involvement in the classroom as a primary success of her career, and teaches other Farmington teachers through workshops how to reach out and best use parents as a resource. "Ten years ago, it changed my career as a teacher dramatically," she said. "My goal in the next 10 years is to have all the elementary teachers use it."

Novatis suggests a bit of organizing in the fall can yield a full school year of speakers and activities from their students' families. "It brings in these important people in children's lives," she said. "And teachers learn by watching their kids interact. It brings a whole new dimension to what education is."

"It brings the school back to the community."

AT FOREST, fourth grade teacher Dottie Harris is promoting her own program called Parent Pizzazz. "I believe in enrichment," she said. "It's called Parent Pizzazz, but it also brings out grandparents and aunts and uncles."

Harris' program brings about five different parents into the classroom each month, she said.

Third graders at Highmeadow Common Campus have gone out of

the classroom to meet the community, building special relationships with residents of the neighboring Detroit Baptist Manor senior apartments. Students visit there four times a year.

"My goal is that they find out not only how history was, but they're learning that these people, at their (the students') age, had the same feelings, and the same family bonds, and the same things," said teacher Vicky Shaw. "The values we hold haven't changed."

Although a lot of community involvement occurs in the elementary grades, it sometimes stretches into high school classes as well.

AT FARMINGTON High, Gina Van Horn's mass media and English students have regular contact with people in related professions.

Advertising executives, radio personalities and poets are just a few of the people who have been invited into her classroom during the past 15 years. Every year, she takes students to the Specs Howard School of Broadcasting, where she has developed a number of contacts.

"They've treated me like gold," she said. "So many people say they don't know anybody. I think it (community involvement) makes it a lot more realistic to kids."

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