

Police, schools join forces to battle drugs

By Casey Hans and Joanne Maliszewski staff writers

School and police officials say they are pleased with recent efforts to promote drug awareness. They realize they face a big challenge in reaching all students at all levels.

But, everyone concurs, education is key to helping fight drugs in the suburbs. And that responsibility falls on parents, educators, police agencies and everyone in the community. "It seems to me so reasonable and so logical that you work with the kids. It only makes sense," said Farmington's public safety director, Frank Lauhoff, a longtime advocate of a police liaison program in the schools.

Such a program was recently approved by the Farmington school board as part of the district's efforts to incorporate drug education into the general curriculum.

"The history has been, there hasn't been any action (in the schools) unless there's a problem," said Lauhoff.

"THERE'S NO doubt about it — there's a problem," added Farmington



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Chief William Dwyer. "I think the spirit of cooperation is moving in the right direction. The new (school) administration is cooperating."

In the past, Dwyer said, drug problems were "handled" within the schools. They seldom called if any-

thing is confiscated.

That attitude appears to be changing. There are a variety of programs, including several new ones, which involve both school and community resources:

• The Farmington Families in Action BABES alcohol and drug

awareness program is done by FFA volunteer parents in early elementary grades.

• The THINK program, co-sponsored by both police departments, the school district, and the Maple Grove Chemical Dependency Center in West Bloomfield, is a four-week program for fifth graders. Drug self-esteem and other pre-teen issues are part of the program.

• Peer counseling and building support groups are being set up at all Farmington middle schools and high schools, to deal with problems that arise, involving drugs and other matters. For example, at Power Middle School, plans are under way to train more staff and students in 1990-91 to run listening and counseling groups.

• With its new budget in June, the Farmington school board approved a program allowing a police liaison officer in the schools, mainly at the high school level, to help in the education process. Details of the program are still being worked out.

• School officials have proposed a beefed up Student Code of Conduct. The new code offers strict policies on drugs and enforcement of rules in



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cooperation with local police departments.

LAUHOFF REMAINS concerned about the quickly changing drug scene. Although young people are aware of the dangers of cocaine, for example, synthetic drugs are coming back to vogue, he said. "They have no fear of it. They haven't been

talked to a lot about synthetic drugs.

"The point is, it's back." The Farmington community got a taste of the problem in March when a 16-year-old Farmington High student overdosed on a synthetic drug thought to be LSD. Police and school officials are still investigating the incident.

Hills drug crackdown leads to 100 arrests

By Casey Hans and Joanne Maliszewski staff writers

A snort can mean losing your car in Farmington Hills.

Drug users are being held accountable in the city under a relatively new program, "Do Drugs, Do Time."

Since its inception in October 1989, Farmington Hills police have made 100 arrests in 75 incidents through June 11, 1990.

In the past, when police found someone with drugs, a ticket was issued and the drugs were confiscated.

Now, people — with even the most minute amount of drugs — are arrested, taken to the police station

and fingerprinted, said Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer.

To make matters worse for the drug user, forfeiture proceedings, allowed under state and federal law, are initiated when people are arrested for possessing any type of illegal drug, other than marijuana.

IF CONVICTED, users serve their sentences in Oakland County Jail or are forced to attend a rehabilitation program. And users pay for the program.

"It's time to look at the responsibility of the people who use drugs," Dwyer said. "This is just another approach as far as dealing with the drug problem. We are still going after the dealers."

The city's version of the Phoenix,

Ariz., program began in October 1989 with the assignment of detective Patrick Monti, formerly a member of the Oakland County Narcotics Enforcement Team, to the program.

In addition to the 100 arrests, police have impounded 38 vehicles and began 20 forfeiture proceedings. About \$11,000 cash, cellular phones and beeper pagers have been subject to forfeiture since the program's beginning.

Police use forfeiture proceeds in drug education and enforcement.

Police also have seized a variety of drug paraphernalia, including syringes, roach clips and straws. Drugs that have been seized include crack cocaine, marijuana, heroin, methadone and prescription pills.

Drug use not trendy, but often overlooked

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ability," Lauhoff said. "In this type of community, any dealing is at the juvenile level or outside the community."

In both Farmington and Farmington Hills, the majority of drug-related arrests are made during routine traffic stops.

Drug violations in Farmington in 1989 totaled 37 compared to 30 in 1988. In Farmington Hills, drug violations came to 103 compared to 90 the previous year.

Farmington Hills contributes a police officer to the Oakland County Narcotics Enforcement Team. With no one from the small, 23-member public safety department

to spare, Farmington contributes financially to N.E.T.

Both departments get drug-related phone calls from residents. "We get calls now from people who see certain people in the parking lot. Then our (uniformed police officer) presence moves it out of the community," Lauhoff said.

IN FARMINGTON HILLS, a majority of drug-related complaints come from the southern end, bordering Eight Mile. More arrests also are made in this area.

"The reason is obvious — because of Redford and Detroit (along the Eight Mile border) and the access into the area," Dwyer said.

Police information puts the big-time drug dealers in Farmington Hills' more-affluent northern end, though most crack houses reportedly are in the southern end.

"Crack houses are definitely out there and will stay out here. The same violence, it will happen here in Oakland County. I think we've been very fortunate. But it's only a matter of time and we're going to see some violence," Dwyer said.

As in other Oakland County communities, powder cocaine and the smokable version, crack, are the popular drugs. LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) is around and Dwyer expects that sooner or later other, synthetic drugs such as PCP will make an appearance.

New program teaches kids to think about drugs

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That means teachers, other education officials and police, are talking the same language and concepts about drugs and alcohol to kids. "Kids have been getting mixed signals for too long," Michaelson said.

THINK appears to be having a different kind of effect than many other drug and alcohol programs. One of the program's fifth grade students stopped at the Farmington Department of Public Safety with his mother just to follow up with a question.

"That's different from anything I've ever seen before. It's really made children think. And it has carried over into the family," said Farmington Public Safety Director

Frank Lauhoff.

The officers, trained by Maple Grove associates, were armed with the knowledge and methods for getting the message across to kids.

"Kids are sophisticated in terms of what they are exposed to. That doesn't mean they can handle it all," said Sherry Murphy, Maple Grove coordinator, who co-authored the THINK program for the police departments and school district.

In the THINK program, officers just don't stand in front of a class and tell kids not to drink or take drugs. "They (children) have had a tendency to see it (drug education) as a flash-in-the-pan kind of thing," said Farmington Public Safety Officer Maria Putt.

'We give them tips on how to get out of the situation. We give them a password — like they have to call their parents for something — that will help them save face.'

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Farmington public safety officer

THE FIRST of four lessons began with the physical effects of alcohol and drugs on the body. The second lesson covered what it's like to live in a chemically dependent family. "It's opening a whole new area. It

makes the children more aware that other people understand it and it's OK to talk about," Lauhoff said.

The third lesson focused on self-esteem and the goal of saying no to drugs and alcohol comfortably and

without fear of ridicule from peers.

"We give them tips on how to get out of the situation. We give them a password — like they have to call their parents for something — that will help them save face," Putt said.

In this lesson, officers showed kids how they can make decisions. The fourth lesson covered the legal and safety aspects of chemical use and how to get help.

Because kids have all kinds of information — and a lot of misinformation — about alcohol and drugs, the officers try to sort through it and fill in the voids with facts, said Farmington Hills Officer Bert Cook.

THE PROGRAM also helps kids "break through the rules of secrecy and (speak) to a trusted adult," Sherry

Murphy said. That's the officer's role. But teachers remain in the classroom during the THINK program.

"We want teachers to sit in because they too are hearing new information," Michaelson said. "Teachers sometimes don't realize how responsible they are in substance abuse."

The program's results also extend to providing students with an adult with whom they can talk to without fear. Kenbrooke fifth graders, for example, gave Farmington Hills Officer Tim Connor a toy black sheep.

"Sheep are followers. We want the kids to be independent thinkers. We tell them to make their own decisions," Connor said.

Leave sledding hill open, say Farmington residents

By Casey Hans staff writer

James Wilson moved to Farmington 18 years ago after seeing a hill full of children sledding and having fun.

"I came in here in February," said Wilson, who lives at the base of a sledding hill owned by the Farmington Public Schools. "I was by myself, the family was still down in Texas. It was just a lousy day, and there was only one bright spot in Farmington, and it was that hill down there with the kids."

"I couldn't believe it. I called my wife in Texas and said, 'I found a house.' I'm right there where the kids sled into my back yard."

"It would just bother me to death if I thought the city of Farmington was going to take that away from the kids."

He asked that it be put to a vote of the people before a closing of the hill is considered.

WILSON WAS one of several residents who spoke during a discussion of the issue at a Farmington City Council meeting Monday where a motion to recommend to the school board that it move sledding from the hill was defeated on a 2-2 vote. There was no discussion of the sled hill issue at Tuesday's school board meeting, where the issue first came to light June 5.

The ultimate decision about sledding on the hill will be made by the Farmington school board, which owns the property.

Laura Myers, an eight-year resident of Shilawasse Street, said she views Shilawasse Hill as a "community resource."

It's "an opportunity for our children to get out from behind the TV sets and get out and do some healthy physical activity in the winter," she said. "I think the hill and the ice rink have been an embarrassment of sorts to the school system. They have ignored it, they don't keep it up the way they used to. There's potholes and crevices in the hill; they haven't repaired them."

Residents said they believed the district could repair the hill and maintain it to keep it open and safe.

In addition to safety, liability has also become an issue, as injured people file suit against the district and city, which helps to maintain safety in the hill area.

Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman said the city "will cooperate in any way we can" if the school board keeps the hill open. "The decision is the school board's. It's their property."

City awaits school action; sledding hill fate in limbo

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due again Tuesday night; board vice president Susan Rennels said it would be discussed on a future board agenda.

Safety and liability issues appear to be the main concern because of the large numbers of sledders, their varying ages and short stopping distance at the hill's base, which ends at a busy Farmington intersection.

Deadman recommended Monday that the council take a position supporting the school district moving sledding from the hill to "Heritage Park, where the terrain is more conducive to safe sledding."

FARMINGTON PUBLIC safety director Frank Lauhoff reported that in a two-year period beginning in 1987 five people were injured

due to sledding on the school hill, with three requiring hospitalization. Deadman said in the past five years there has been at least one serious incident each year on the hill.

A committee of administrators from both the school district and city have discussed safety issues for several years. That committee recently recommended prohibiting tobogganing on the hill because of the short stopping distance at the hill's base at Farmington Road.

Several lawsuits against the school district and city have also been filed over the years, Deadman said. The school's insurance company and its attorneys have traditionally handled such cases, but school officials said they could not provide figures of the number of lawsuits or settlements.

Although the school district owns the property, in past years the city has installed fencing, straw bales and trees at the base of the hill to keep sledders from coming onto Farmington Road and onto a nearby ice rink.

Closing the school hill, commonly known as Shilawasse Hill, could potentially shift hundreds of sledders to the sledding hill in Heritage Park. The Farmington Hills City Council discussed the sled hill issue at its meeting Monday, as well.

Hills City Manager William Costick said his staff is preparing for the possibility of the school hill closing, by making improvements to the Heritage hill and moving sledding facilities for younger children to another hill within the park to avoid safety problems.

Cops call magazines seized from Hills store obscene

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a police officer walking outside the store. The officer then entered the store and told the owner that warrants would be sought, Murphy said.

This is the on-going investigation on the identification and prosecution of those people involved in pornography, Farmington Hills police Chief William Dwyer said.

THE FIRST undercover crackdown, June 8, 1989, resulted in charges against David Tomasz Soroki, owner of the Grand Square Liquor Shoppe, 38441 Grand River.

Soroki faces two counts of distributing obscene materials to children, which are high misdemeanor charges, and two counts of violating the state obscenity law, a misdemeanor. If convicted, he faces up to two

years in prison and a \$10,000 fine on the high misdemeanor charges and up to one year in prison and a \$5,000 fine if convicted of the misdemeanor charges.

Soroki was scheduled to go to trial today before Oakland County Circuit Judge Fred Meester. But the trial has been put on a standby, pending other, more pressing cases, assistant prosecutor Gregory Townsend said Tuesday.

Not-guilty pleas were entered on Soroki's behalf at his arraignment in court in Farmington in June 1989. He remains free on \$1,000 personal bond.

"I've taken the position there won't be any plea bargaining," Dwyer said, referring to the trial delay.

UNLIKE SOROKI, Hanna was not charged with violating the state obscenity law. "The prosecutor is

trying to form a countywide policy on how to handle these cases," Murphy said, referring to the type of charges brought against store owners.

The undercover operations were prompted by the Farmington Hills Police Department's Citizens Crime Advisory Committee, which expressed concern about the availability of pornographic materials to minors in Farmington Hills.

Last year, police checked all establishments that sell hard liquor licenses for off-premise sales and book stores in the city for the sale of pornography. In the latest effort, only three stores were checked, Murphy said.

"We are not looking at those establishments that are selling 'Playboy' and other similar type magazines," Dwyer said.