

Innovation

Activity center wins award

BY JOANNE MALISZEWSKI
STAFF WRITER

In the first year a special award was handed out by the Public Library Association, the Farmington Community Library got it.

It's called the National Achievement Citation and the library received it for its "exemplary learning activities center," which is designed to facilitate the learning interactions between parents and children, and has resulted in parents working independently and effectively with preschool children, said Jane Garcia, president of the Public Library Association.

The award is nothing to snub. Created in 1991 by the association, the award is designed to give national recognition to "significant, innovative activities that improve the organization, management, and services of public libraries," according to the organization.

The idea for the learning activities center — for children ages 2, 3, 4 and 5 as well as kindergartners —

came out of the library system's continuing attempts to change with the community, said library director Beverly Papai.

"The scope of services for public libraries are changing to be more responsive to the needs of the community," Papai said.

The learning activities center, which is offered for free to fall, winter and spring, is based on the notion that "the parent is the first and best tutor," Papai said. "We want to meet the needs of the young child. We are linking the child's natural inquisitiveness with parents' desire to learn skills to assist their child's education before they get formal schooling."

Parents are encouraged to participate in the learning centers. Each center offers a theme with six or eight activity stations that follow the theme. Each station is designed to promote the development of reading readiness, motor skills, hand-eye coordination, balance, concentration, counting and identifi-

cation of shapes, colors, letters and sounds are some of the skills that are developed in the centers, Papai said.

Parents or caregivers are given simple activities to do at home with the children. Each center also provides a bibliography of books on a particular theme.

"We think by offering the community this opportunity for parents and children to work together, we are fulfilling a need in making young children ready to learn when they go to school," Papai said.

Library officials have found that participation in the learning activities centers is greater than with the traditional children's programming. Attendance for the winter 1990 learning activities center for five years old was 328 children for the four sessions during the month.

A comparable program for the same age group using traditional programming could only accommodate 64 children, Papai said.

POLICE/FIRE CALLS

Listed below are some of the Farmington-area police incidents, fire calls and court cases reported during the past week:

HILLS MAN INDICTED
A Farmington Hills resident is one of four men and two corporations charged with fraud in connection with receiving financial aid for computer classes, according to U.S. Attorney Stephen Markman.

Douglas Cash, 46, was among those named in a seven-count indictment for fraud and misapplication in connection with the enrollment and handling of federal aid provided for students taking computer classes. Others named in the indictment were from Waterford Township, Bloomfield Hills and Mt. Clemens. Two companies, one in Southfield; the other Detroit, also were included in the indictment.

The indictment charges the defendants with conspiring to defraud the U.S. Department of Education from 1986-1989 by evading rules governing a school's eligibility to participate in federal financial aid programs, such as the Guaranteed Student Loan and Pell Grant programs. The indictment also charges that the defendants caused the Southfield company, Com-Tech Computer Training Institute, Inc., to participate in such programs, when it was not eligible, Markman said.

The indictment alleges that Com-Tech paid a fee to the Detroit company, Detroit Engineering Institute, Inc., so it could use DEI's name and federal eligibility to obtain financial aid for Com-Tech students and that the defendants prepared and used documents to deceive and mislead regulators and further the conspiracy. Cash is listed in the indictment as an officer of Com-Tech, Markman said.

The indictment also charges Cash and two of the other men with failing to refund financial aid provided for students who enrolled in computer classes but did not complete their courses. Tuition paid to a school that is attributable to any portion of a course not completed by the student is called unearned tuition. The law requires that unearned tuition be refunded promptly to the source of the unearned tuition, such as lenders or the federal government, Markman said.

DEI lost its accreditation in March 1989 and was closed by the Michigan Department of Education.

Each count of the indictment carries, for the defendants, a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Each of the corporations faces a maximum fine of \$500,000.

The investigation was conducted by the Office of Inspector General of

the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Secret Service.

THEFTS REPORTED

An AM/FM stereo, amplifiers, briefcase and toolbox with tools valued at \$1,820 were reported stolen from a 1991 Jeep on Glenmoor Heights, May 29.

A radar detector and sunglasses valued at \$400 were reported stolen from a car parked at North Farmington High School, 32900 13 Mile, May 29.

An AM/FM cassette player, tackle box, fish finder and cassette belt with 48-50 tapes valued at \$1,500 were reported stolen from a 1986 Pontiac on Jefferson, May 29-30.

Two large tool boxes with tools and a socket set valued at \$850 were reported stolen from a garage on Hopkins, May 28-30.

Jewelry valued at \$7,000 was reported stolen from a unit of the River Pine Condominiums on River Ridge, May 28-30.

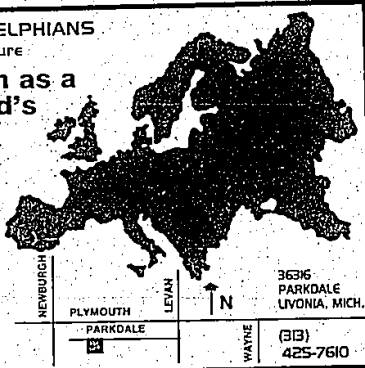
DAMAGE REPORTED

Damage was estimated at \$1,500 when someone used a garden hose to plug up a drain pipe, causing the basement to flood at the clubhouse of the Chestnut Ridge Condominiums on Amber Drive, May 21-22. The furnace also was destroyed.

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Rouge Rescue volunteers needed

There's nothing better than playing in the mud. And Rouge Rescue '92 can give you the reason to do just that.

Volunteers are urged to participate in the annual rescue effort 8:50-11:30 a.m. Saturday, June 6.

This year's cleanup site is just off Tuck Road, north of Eight Mile, adjacent to the Botsford Continuing Health Center (better known as the Farmington Nursing Home), 30405 Folsom Road. Registration will be-

gin 8 a.m. Volunteers will help remove debris and smaller log jams from the branch of the Rouge River which flows through the area. City workers and equipment will do the heavier lifting and hauling.

T-shirts and a free lunch will be provided. About 250 to 300 volunteers are expected to participate, said Jean Barrett, assistant to the Farmington Hills public services director.

The idea behind the cleanup, usually done in areas where there is room to get in and work, is to remove obstructions and keep the water flowing. In previous years, volunteers have taken tires, stumps and even office chairs from the river. Farmington-area residents who live along the Rouge are urged to remove debris from the stream in their areas.

For more information, call Barrett at 473-9520.



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