

Drugs from page 1A

Council also spoke to the high schoolers, and Farmington Hills Officer Duane Fox spoke to a group of middle school students, telling them about "gateway drugs" like cigarettes and marijuana.

"Saying no 'isn't always easy,'" Fox told the younger students. "Why not a cigarette? Why not drink some alcohol? Alcohol is all around. Mom and Dad have it. It's in a bottle called wine — there's a beer or two in the refrigerator."

Although a drug awareness breakfast is held each fall for the community, this is the first year organizers of awareness month activities have sponsored a breakfast for students. A total of 78, including a number of student leaders, were selected to attend the event at the Community Center of Farmington/Farmington Hills which was sponsored by Farmington Families in Action and the school district.

Students who had a strong interest in their schools and who have the potential to influence others positively were selected, FFIA officials said.

Friends important

FFIA and other anti-drug groups are using the theme of "Alcohol & Tobacco — The Most Abused Drugs" as their theme for this year's activities, which stretch throughout October.

Worley, an "A" student whose performance dropped because of his drug and alcohol use, told students that selection of friends is one of the keys to not getting involved with drug use. He changed his friends after his rehabilitation, he said.

"There's a lot of choices you can make," he said. "If you hang around with positive people, you're going to do positive things."

"I was a good student. I carried a 3.0," he added. "But when you look at where I should have been, I was a full point below."

Students asked a lot of questions, including what to do if a parent has a drug or alcohol program, why people use drugs, and what to do if friends are getting into trouble.

"That's the time to do something," Worley emphasized. "You need to come forward and say something. They may not want to listen to you, but you have nothing to lose. Tell someone else."

He said friends alerting school officials saved his life.

Students attending Thursday's breakfast had several observations. Farmington High School student Dave Cline said student leaders need to be especially aware of their role. "I think if you're going to be a leader in your school, you have to realize people are going to look up to you," he said.

Cline also suggested that such a program be offered to students who are at risk for drug and alcohol abuse, and that people be "more positive" toward those who have problems. School assemblies become "negative toward people that do it (drugs) and that makes them feel even worse," he added.

Classmate Tammy Hsuan said she believes a story like Worley's is important to bring to students. Someone spouting statistics at an assembly doesn't have the impact, she said. "I don't think people really listen. You have to have people like that talk and say what it was like to go through it . . . and live through it."

Wetlands from page 1A

In particular, authority members wanted to see the replacement of wetlands at Woodland Hills Park on Farmington Road, south of I-696.

"We really want to find out more about the project," Merkle said. "We want to know how to do it (wetland mitigation) in an urban area."

Authority members work with farmers who are beginning to use artificial wetlands for the treatment of waste water.

They also are working on extension services in the watershed, which includes London, and want to know how to involve the public in water quality projects.

"You've got to educate people in your own communities. The real power behind saving the environment is in your general public education," said Michael Hayes, supervisor of the Natural Areas Department of the University of Michigan-Dearborn. Hayes also is a member of the Friends of the Rouge River board of directors.

Farmington Hills resident Joe Derek, also a Rouge River board member, took the Canadians to the wetlands site. "They had reservations about it," he said. Authority members were concerned about the shrubs planted at the site and had expected they would be under water, Derek added.

"They said they try to save a lot of natural wetlands in Canada. They do it by flooding areas. Not by digging holes," Derek said, referring to the excavation that took place to make the wetlands at Woodland Hills Park.

Like Derek, authority members expressed concern about plastic mesh used in the wetlands to prevent erosion.

In addition to touring the site, authority members also met with Jack Smiley, executive director of the Detroit Audubon Society, former Farmington Hills councilwoman Jean Fox, vice chair of the Oakland County Parks Commission, and Grim Gidelson, director of U-M-Dearborn's natural areas department.

Discussion focused on preserving natural habitats and controlling urban sprawl. "We are still fighting our battles at Heritage Park. We try and score a victory every now and then," Fox told authority members.



Middle school audience: Students (from left) Marc Solomon of Warner, Lauren Jones of Duncel and Maggie Surma and Katie Grilkes, both of Power, hear police officer Duane Fox.

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