

Parents search out preschool, day-care options

The early birds arrive with lawn chairs, snacks and books, queuing up five hours before registration begins.

"We have a lot of panicked parents who say, 'But I don't know if I'll get in.' For a long time we were among the only preschools in the area," said Judy Wurgis who coordinates Rochester school district's preschool and day care classes.

"You can come any time of (registration) night if you're flexible and can take any class time. Most of the people who want Monday, Wednesday and Friday classes come early."

A queue the length of a concert ticket line for preschool? Yes, preschool.

Some parents started shopping for fall preschool classes two months ago. Some register their youngsters in private schools now or wait and watch enrollment rosters fill and hope they'll find a place in public preschool.

"I have 20 positions available for a morning class. I'm already at 18," said Pat Grandy, director of Greentrees Preschool in Troy. "People start looking in January and February."

"Troy Adult Education runs a program that's pretty inexpensive and fills up so fast," she said. Grandy contends that some parents try the public preschool first, then turn to private schools if public classes are full.

That's because public-run schools usually cost less but may hire staffs with more educational credentials.

"Bloomfield Hills has a lot of private schools with wonderful programs but they cost a lot of money," said Sally Marshall, principal of the Fox Hills Early Childhood Education Center, run by Bloomfield Hills schools.

"We fill up very fast. We've had to open new classrooms." The center, open since 1985, operates a day care center, preschool classes for two-, three- and five-day a week students, houses the county program for the hearing impaired and for the severe multiple impaired.



Quality time: Lorrin Betrus (left) and Maren Vick, both 4, enjoy some quality time with day-care worker Pat Grandy, director of Greentrees Preschool in Troy.

"You might see preschool children playing with a developmentally impaired child. It's a positive environment." The center will begin registering for fall classes in April but won't accept out-of-district students next year.

"We have a lot of Rochester residents right now," she noted. Marshall praised the district-

run Caring Places program housed in Rochester High School but said the growing community needs more.

"In early childhood education people probably should promote the fact that most learning takes place from age 0-5. Yes, the emphasis and money is spent on K-12 education," Marshall said. "The 0-5 group ends up with less

quality or not enough services." Sometimes parents aren't sure where to find the services that do exist.

Betsy Monaghan, a youth services librarian at Baldwin Public Library, Birmingham, says parents periodically stop by the youth services desk and ask the librarians to suggest a school. "We have a hand out we give

them. It's just names, address and telephone numbers."

She expects a crowd for the library's annual preschool information night. Representatives from approximately 30 preschools and day care centers will be on hand at 7 p.m. today in the Rotary Room at the library, 300 West Merrill. Monaghan said about 100

people attended the session last year.

"There was a need for people to find it all in one place," she explained.

Monaghan says parents can get a "better feel" for a school by meeting with representatives tonight. But that's just one step in the process.

Grandy encourages parents to look at several preschool programs, meet the staff, ask questions and then consult intuition.

"They can answer all the questions right, but you just have to have a gut feeling about it," she said.

She suggests that parents first decide what kind of program they need.

"Day care is different than preschool. This (preschool) is a thing that parents have chosen to add as enrichment for their children," she said. "For nine out of 10 people day care is not an option. Some children are there from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. They spend all day at the center."

Preschool programs, like the one at her school, are limited to a few hours of enrichment and play-based academic instruction. Some day care programs also may include a structured preschool component. Cooperative preschools generally cost less than other preschools but require parents to spend some time working in the classroom.

Here's a list of other questions Grandy suggests parents consider before enrolling their child:

- What's the teacher-student ratio?
 - What's the educational philosophy? It's discipline policy?
 - Can parents observe at the school any time?
 - How long has the school been in business?
 - What are the teacher credentials? Is the facility licensed?
- "The more questions they have written down the better," she added.

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

CAR THEFTS
A 1987 blue Pontiac Sunbird valued at \$4,000 was stolen from the Streamwood Condominiums on 12 Mile between March 9-10.

A cranberry 1993 Ford Ranger pickup worth \$14,600 was stolen from Tom Holzer Ford on 10 Mile in Farmington Hills March 10.

THEFTS
Uncle Ed's Oil Shoppe on Middlebelt in Farmington Hills had \$140 stolen between March 8-9. Police say there was no forced entry.

A slip-in plastic rear window valued at \$217 on a 1991 Suzuki Sidekick parked on Maywood in Farmington Hills was stolen between March 9-10.

A ladies white gold and diamond ring worth \$200 was stolen from the Warner Middle School on 14 Mile in Farmington Hills March 11.

Cassette tapes worth \$84 and the handset to a mobile telephone worth \$100 were stolen from a 1992 Olds Delta 88 parked on Briarwyke in Farmington Hills between March 7-8.

BREAK-INS
Items worth \$700 were stolen from a green 1993 Chrysler minivan parked at Botsford Hospital on Grand River in Farmington Hills March 9. The driver's side

window was smashed causing \$200 in damage. A Sony CD player worth \$250, CDs worth \$300 and a gym bag and its contents worth \$150 were taken.

A duffle bag and CDs worth \$165 were stolen from a 1989 Ford Escort parked on Cadillac Street in Farmington Hills between March 7-8. The driver's side door lock sustained \$50 in damage.

A Delco AM/FM radio valued at \$200 was stolen from a 1989 white Pontiac Grand Am parked at Auto West of Farmington in Farmington Hills between March 8-9. The rear window was smashed causing \$100 in damage.

A cellular phone worth \$150 was stolen from a 1990 Mazda MX6 parked at the Polo Club Apartments on Polo Club Drive in Farmington Hills between March 9-10. The driver's side door lock was damaged by the break-in.

An AM/FM stereo and CD player valued at \$500 was stolen from a 1984 Ford Bronco parked on Eight Mile in Farmington Hills between March 9-10. A vent window and the dashboard were damaged during the break-in.

A 28-year-old Farmington Hills man was arrested by Farmington Public Safety officers after a reported breaking and entering at Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce office on Grand River March 12 in which

\$95 was taken. The police found the suspect leaving through the front door when they arrived after midnight. Inside, police found a grey cash box on top of the desk. Police also found a piece of wiring, which is believed to have used to remove molding from a rear interior door window.

BAD CHECKS
The Cellular Telephone Co. on Grand River in Farmington Hills reported that a Warren man paid for air time with two checks from a closed account. One check, for \$1,232.14, was dated April 17, 1992, and the other, for \$350, was dated June 3, 1992.

RETAIL FRAUD
Two Detroit women were arrested and released pending a warrant after a shoplifting incident March 10 at T.J. Maxx in Farmington. Store security noticed one woman concealing items in her purse. The items included shoes valued at \$50, jeans valued \$35 and an outfit valued at \$25.

TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS
Farmington Hills Police report 22 accidents over a 24-hour period from March 10-11 due to the snow storm. The normal number of accidents for that time period is seven. There were five injuries, none of them serious.

Hills attorney charged with money laundering

A Birmingham resident who practices law in Farmington Hills is one of 15 people indicted in connection with illegal money laundering.

David Foster faces up to a maximum of 20 years on a charge of money laundering. He is free on bond and should be arraigned early this week, said U.S. Attorney Stephen J. Markman.

Foster was charged with four counts of money laundering, a federal offense, stemming from an investigation by Internal Revenue Service agents between 1987 and 1990.

"Money laundering is an undisputed part of narcotics trafficking," Markman said. "Narcotics trafficking requires it."

Foster is accused of accepting cash from agents posing as representatives of gambling and drug dealers and then depositing the money in client's bank accounts.

Neither Foster nor his attorney Conrad Kohl could be reached for comment.

Markman said although federal agents actively pursue big time drug dealers, even outside the country, the illegal trade could not exist without the cooperation of otherwise law-abiding citizens.

"This case illustrates how an ostensibly law-abiding citizen in the community can become involved in laundering drug money," Markman said.

Exam April 5 in assault case

A pretrial date has been set for Gerald Joseph Bauer Jr., accused of sexually assaulting an 11-year-old Farmington Hills boy.

Judge Denise Langford-Morris set Bauer's pretrial exam for 1:30 p.m. Monday, April 5. He faces up to life in prison if convicted on the first-degree criminal sexual conduct charge. He is also charged with two counts of second degree CSC.

Bauer, a Westland resident, is on paid leave from the Northville elementary school where he teaches sixth-grade.

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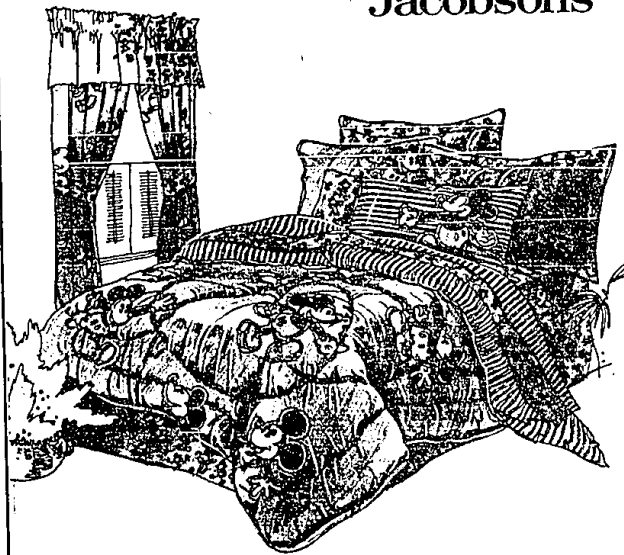
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