

Investing in futures: Schools get business partners

PARTNERS

Now in its second year, the Farmington Public Schools Community Partnership Advisory Council is dedicated to bringing the schools and local businesses closer together and inspiring them to share talents and resources. Direct queries to Betty Wolford, school/community relations, at 489-3349.

Good things happen when concerned people work together to try to make a difference. This has been true of the Community Partnership Advisory Council, formed in the 1992-93 school year to strengthen community involvement and support in Farmington Public Schools through partnerships.

Council members include students, teachers, parents, administrators and representatives of government, business and community organizations. They meet monthly to discuss issues related to partnership policies, programs and ideas. The variety of interests and perspectives represented contributes to lively discussions. More importantly, it ensures that many points of view are heard and considered.

'From the city's perspective, the Community Partnership Advisory Council serves the vital function of outreach from the schools to various public and private entities in the community.'

Steve Brock
assistant city manager
Farmington Hills

"After participating in an early evaluation project that the school district held to find out how the community saw the district and its efforts, I could see the need for more two-way communication between school and community," said Dick Carvell, active community volunteer and Farmington Lions Club member. "I wanted to help provide these channels of communication."

The council's role is to act as an advisory committee and coordinate district partnership activities. In its first year, the council was responsible for the distribution of a revised, updated Partnership Resource Book to every teacher in the district. The Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce provided help through its newsletter in identifying community members willing to act as resources for classrooms.

The council also designed a program being piloted at Gill Elementary School and Power Middle School to encourage and increase partnership activities in those two schools. Parent volunteer coordinators are available to assist teachers in finding, contacting and scheduling resource people for their classrooms. Experiences of the two parent coordinators will be shared with others who wish to institute similar programs at their schools.

The council has identified and is at work on several ambitious projects for the 1993-94 school year. These include:

- Designing and delivering training and orientation for partners and staff.
- Promoting and marketing partnerships.
- Finalizing a district partner recognition process.
- Evaluating existing programs and progress.



Reaching out: Mayna Schumacher (second from right), Farmington Schools career development coordinator, asks for council input on a project she's developing. Council members pictured are (from left) are Bill Harvey, Bob Sklar and Betty Wolford.

Not all efforts are directed at providing programs that benefit students and schools. The council also is looking at ways to better involve students in activities that benefit the community, such as the recent Farmington Area Goodfellows canned food drive in which students collected more than 19,500 cans for needy families and senior citizens in the community and high school students packed and delivered food bags to more than 325 families. Can the council make a difference to schools and the community?

"From the city's perspective, the Community Partnership Advisory Council serves the vital function of outreach from the schools to various public and private entities in the community," said Steve Brock, assistant city manager, Farmington Hills. "Both the city and the school district are committed to and continue to work toward forging partnerships among the schools, businesses and other agencies in our area. This type of interaction enhances the educational experiences of our students."

Mary Brown, a Harrison High School teacher, strongly supports the council's goal to strengthen partnerships. "Showing the relationship between classroom activities and the real world has always challenged educators. The opportunity to join hands with the community bridges the gap and gives fresh excitement and relevance to learning."

Anyone desiring more information about the Community Partnership Advisory Council may call Farmington Public Schools Office of School/Community Relations at 489-3349.

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Partnership advisory council features variety

Community Partnership Advisory Council members for 1993-94 are:

Dina Ascenzo, Farmington Schools superintendent's office; Earl Baumunk, Farmington Schools applied technology and career development director; Steve Brock, Farmington Hills assistant city manager; Rhonda Brown, Oakland Community College counselor; Mary Brown, high school teacher; Dick Carvell, Farmington Lions Club, Farmington Historical Society.

Loretta Conway, Farmington Hills Senior Adult Division supervisor; Evan Ellis, high school student; Annette Gasparotto, Farmington Schools senior coordinator; Carol Hansen, Farmington Schools elementary teacher;

Bill Harvey, retiree/former Farmington Schools administrator; Pat Hauser, community relations coordinator; Nissan Research & Development; Rande Horn, Harrison High School principal. Pat Isham, AAUW; Michelle Kerns, Greiner Inc., Farmington Schools graduate; Frank Lauhoff, Farmington city manager; Linda Lynch, Uniglobe Arboretum

Travel, Chamber of Commerce board; Kathy McAdaragh-Hain, Farmington Schools science coordinator; Anita Mergener, parent, Kelly Services; Laura Miner, middle school principal.

Dick Ruiter, elementary school principal; Bob Sklar, special projects manager, Observer & Eccen-

tric Newspapers, parent; Naomi Smith, high school student; Jody Soronen, executive director, Chamber of Commerce; Sean Whalen, teacher, Staff Development, Farmington Schools; Betty Wolford, Farmington Schools communications supervisor; Pam O'Malley, chairperson, Farmington Schools director of School/Community Relations.

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