

Skit with a message: High school students and members of SADD (sitting, from left) Shamita Shah and Veronica Horvath, and (standing from left) Kelly Odey and Sarah Wayne act out a skit with an anti-substance abuse theme.

GRIP

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It was a great program, parents said. Those for whom the program was intended were a little more reluctant with their endorsement.

Some kids said many of those who needed to hear the message weren't there.

"There's a lot of kids who should be here," said Daniel Katz, an eighth grader at Warner Middle School.

Added another Warner eighth-grader Hillary Rubin, "...nothing is going to make them stop what they're doing."

Organizers were likely to agree that not every at-risk kid attended the first-ever program. With more than 600 people signing up, chances are some did, said Don Cowan, director of Farmington schools' Kindergarten through Grade 12 instruction.

The message still needs to be reinforced to all kids, he added.

"Hopefully these kids will talk about it to other kids... so it will be 'cool' to be here," Cowan said.

Members of Farmington High's Students Against Driving Drunk chapter did their part.

Entering to the virulent guitar sounds of Green Day's "Welcome to Paradise," high schools spelled out the many forms of peer pressure.

Fourth and fifth graders appeared curious, especially during skits that demonstrated how kids can avoid someone else's in-

fluence they drink alcohol.

At one point, Farmington High student Dan Burgoyne walked in hunched over to illustrate someone with low self-esteem. Another high schooler asked the audience what was wrong with him.

"He's drunk!" responded one elementary-aged child, bringing laughter.

Students worked on skits after school for several weeks. SADD chapters at North Farmington and Harrison High also did peer counseling Saturday.

"I think everybody needs to be here," Farmington High student Kelley Oxley said. "Hopefully, we made a strong enough impact that they'll carry with them through middle school, high school and the rest of their lives."

Some SADD members, like Courtney Quinn of North Farmington, are involved because of a family member who had a substance abuse problem.

"If you're dealing with it, tell someone else at school or someone in your family... anyone who can help," Quinn said.



A chat with Karp: Motivational speaker Michael (Karp) Karpovich talks with Eagle elementary student Carrie Bayer.

STAFF PHOTOS BY JOHN STORMEAD

Red Cross effort lauded

The American Red Cross will present Dan Bladoso a Certificate of Merit for saving his cousin's life in 1993.

The event, which will take place at 6 p.m. Friday, March 3, at the Farmington Hills Activities Center on 11 Mile, is part of the Red Cross Lifeguards Challenge course for lifeguard recertification.

At least 15 lifeguards will be taking the course and will demonstrate the reach-and-rescue technique.

Bladoso, son of Farmington Hills police Lt. Martin Bladoso, saved his cousin's life after the boy, then 3, fell off a dock at the family's Upper Peninsula cottage. Gregory Lipple, now 4, was saved by Bladoso and will be at the ceremony.

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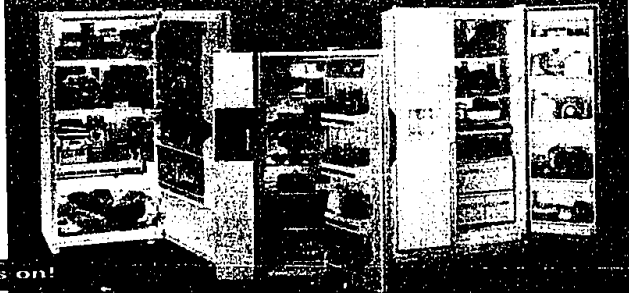
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