Life's lesson

Graduates celebrate their second chance

By Labry O'Connor Staff writer

As a recent high school graduate, Colleen Bradley of Farmington Hills is talking about college and career, as well as her hopes and aspirations.

In that sense, Bradley is no

different than any teenager who has just been handed a diploma. Her accomplishment came 20

different than any teenager who has just been handed a diploma. Her accomplishment came 20 years later.

Bradley, 37, left high school at 16. A job, marringe and having children seemed more appealing at the time, she said.

After a series of jobs in nursing holdren seemed more appealing at the time, she said.

After a series of jobs in nursing home and restaurants, Bradley realized an impetuous decision made in her youth wasn't paying dividends. So, she went back to school, which wasn't easy as a working single mother.

On Wednesday, Bradley was one of 56 graduates _ ranging 18 to 47 years in age _ from the Farmington Public Schools Adult and Alternative education programs to receive a diploma during commencement ceremonies at Farmington High.

"Once you learn to stick things out, when there are other things that are hard, you learn to stick that out too, "said Bradley, who related her adult education experiences to audience members. "With my high school diploma I learned whatever it was, I can stick it out.

"Once you quit, you keep quiting Once you achieve, you keep achieving."

Many wonder if adults like Bradley will have such second chances in the future.

The state Legislature and Gov. John Engler are debating adult education funding. The legislature has agreed to restore \$110 million — up from a proposed \$66 million but far its current

million - up from a proposed \$65 million but far its current

■ 'Once you achieve, you keep achieving.'

Colleen Bradley adult ed graduate

\$185 million. If passed, specula-tion is Gov. Engler will not sign the bill.

Bradley earned a Farmington Adult Education scholarabip, which she will use at Oakland Community College in the fall. She wants to earn an associate's degree and become a veterinari-an technician.

degree and become a veterinarian technician.

Bradley worked three years to complete her high school education.

After putting her daughter to bed, Bradley would be up until midnight studying. She'd awake at 5 a.m. to be to work at 7:30 a.m. followed by school in the afternoon.

The average female adult education graduate is 28 years old whereas the average age for male adult grads is 19, said Terry Loland, supervisor of Farmington Adult Education.

"The women seem to come back later because of having children," Loland said.

Cuts in adult ed funding will likely affect older students, who are filling a gap in their lives. Critics of adult education programs contend those people had their shot at a state-funded high school education.

Not everyone's life falls in perfect chronological order, Bradley said. Students get pregnant, suffer health problems or fall out socially.

"I can't imagine in his (Gov. Engler's) life there is not mistake he made," she said.





Proud of mom: Malisa Shoup, above, gets help from her sister, Kim, 12, moup, wove, gets netp from her sister, Kim, 12, as she's ready to pose for a photo with her baby Timo-thy Swiercz. She was joined by her parents Bar-bara and Larry Shoup, sister Lori, 16, and boyfriend, Vincent Swier-cz. At left, Colleen Bradley, 37, celebrates her graduation with daughter, Sarah, 9. Bradley worked towards her high school diploma as a single moth-er employed as a dietary aide.

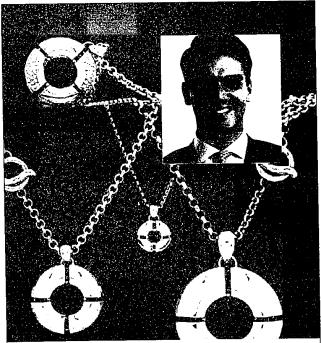




Scholarship recipients: Mark Clifton, left, and Adam Cole both received Oakland Segmental College Sponsored Scholarships. Those awarded Farmington Adult Community College Sponsored Scholarships. Those awarded Farmington Adult Education Scholarships were: Susan Brown, Katie Veeder, and Colleen Bradley.

Educational Educational embrace: Cari Herskovitz, 'an Alterna-tive Academy student, hugs teacher Nancy Pan-teleo at Wadreday's Wednesday's commencement ceremo-ny in Farm-ington High's Auditorium. Some 55 adult and alternative academy stu-dents received their high school diplo-





MEET JEWELRY DESIGNER **CARLO ANTONINI**

Wednesday, June 12 Noon to 6 pm Fine Jewelry Salon

Let the designer personally guide you through his collection. Bold, confident pieces in gold and platinum, highlighted with precious gem stones. Mr. Antonini will be happy to answer your questions and essist with your selections.

Jacobson's