Parents and students get their marching orders

When Farmington Public Safe-

When Farmington Public Safewhen Farmington Public Safetwo Director Gary Goss saw a television news report about the 16vision news report about the 16ment of the 16ment of 16me

kids;
- Be positive role models, both regarding actions and words around young people.

Setting an example

Settling an example
"Do you joke about your partying? About your weekend recovcries?" asked Estralee Michaelson, director of Safe & Drug-Free
Schoola for the Farmington disrict: "Watch ears surrounding
you because humor is never
appropriate when describing any
drunken episode."
Michaelson implored the audience to: use accurate information
for the basis of talks with childron about the perila of substances, talk to them at as early
an age as possible; and toenforce rules clearly and logicalby."
"The hattern line is cleaked."

enforce rules clearly and logically.

The bottom line is alcohol, tobacco and other drug use by minors is illegal, dangerous and wrong, Michaelson emphanized. If we do our job right we can change attitudes and we cachange behavior. Farmington Hills Polico Chief William Dwyer began the summit by listing a number of so-far effective initiatives by the department in curtailing the problem of alcohol and drug use among youths.

Get in tune

Get in tune

Those include: T.H.I.N.K.
(Teaching, Holping, Involving,
Noticing Kide); locker drug
searches in schools; the stationing of police liaison officers at
Harrison and North high
schools; an "open house party"
ordinance, with 43 homeowners
cited over the past three years
for hosting parties where alcoluand tobacco sting operations,
targeting retailers for sales to
minors.

Dwyer then called on those in

Dwyer then called on those in the audience to start a ripple

What to say to your children:

Adults must "send intolerant, but caring messages" to children when they joke about things such as partying, said Estrales Michaelson, Farmington Public Schools' director of Safo & Drug-

ACQUIRING & SELLING

effect of community dialogue.

"My message tonight may be interpreted by some as a minister preaching to the choir," Dwyer said. "But it's my hope (that) if we all sing the message of zero tolerance tonight, promoting it to other members of the community, it will expand and become stronger."

"Please sak yourself, 'What can I do to promote zero tolerance in Farmingtion and Farmington Hills?"

Also during the summit, school officials reported key survey findings on use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs among

officials reported key survey indings on use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs among youths. The Co-Operation Hoalth survey (of students in grades five-nine) was a collaborative effort of the Farmington district and Botsford Health Com Continuous.

rative eilort of the Farmington district and Botsford Health Care Continuum. Some of the findings: about 59 percent of ninth-graders reported having had a first drink before age 15; about 28 percent and they used marijuana at least once; about 23 percent of ninth-graders who answered they survey reported they smoke cigarettes.

"We are no different than other communities," Michaelson said. 'And the numbers, in actuality, do not matter. What matters is that our kids are using as are other kids nationally.

The audience thon broke off into small discussion groups, to talk about four key questions about zero tolerance and coalition building.

Where are they?

Where are they?

Following the program, parents expressed hope that the summit could be the catalyst for

"It (use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs) is illegal and dangerous."

"That offends me."

■ "That scares me."
■ "I'd like to talk further with

Please see ORDERS, A11



Involved: Estralee Michaelson, Safe & Drug-Free Schools director for Farmington Public Schools, and Betty Nicolay of Farmington Families in Action applaud speakers at the Call to Action summit.

Summit from page A1

needs to be drawn up to embar-rass parents and merchants who supply or sell substances to minors.

"I think embarrassment stops a lot of stuff," said Harrison High School student Loreal Burns. "What if parents who give their kids stuff are put ... on TV? I don't think they'll do it again."

again."
During the breakout portion of the program at Farmington Training Center, students made up one of numerous groups, who discussed what is and isn't being done to contribute to zero tolerance.

Time to talk

The moderator for their group was Estralee Michaelson, direc-tor of Safe & Drug-Free Schools for the district. All of the groups later summarized those discus-sions before the entire audience, comprised of about 120 community leaders, students and par-

ents.
"I think zero tolerance needs I think zero tolerance needs to really be enforced in our schools because I don't think (it's) ever been mentioned, said Power Middle School student Amanda Mergener. "Nobody ever talks about it. None of the kids even knows what it means. I did-

(22)

conduct needs to be rewritten of conduct needs to be rewritten in their jargon, in order to help them better know what behavior is acceptable. Michaelson asked them if they would consider being part of a "youth summit" to do just that, beginning in March.

March.
"It's dumb that we're getting consequences and we don't even know what they are," Amanda

know what they are," Amanda said.
According to student Michael Zakalik, "kids make a big joke out of it because they don't understand what it's saying." The student code of conduct, I've never held one in my hand, added Aaron Cole, who attends East Middle School.
Even parents think rewriting the student code of conduct would be a positive step.
"I open that book I get overy year and it's 'yade, yada," said Cindi Helisek, who brought son Aaron to the summit. "It's full of words that I don't understand, and the words when the summer and the words when the conduction of the summit. "It's full of words that I don't understand, and the words when the summer and the words when the words were a summer and the words when the words were a summer and words were a summer and words when the words were a summer and words when the words were a summer and words were a summer and words when the words were a summer and words words were a summer and words words were a summer and words words were a summer and words words words were a summer and words words words were a summer and words words were a summer and words words words were a summer and words words

words that i and timestain, i don't want to understand. "To write the book in a lan-guage that kids understand, to sit with them and go through that book and literally have them sign it as a contract ... is a wonderful idea."

Another view

WERSEN PRE

Brandon Brown, a Harrison student, said regular open

n't know any of this stuff until I came to this summit."

Amanda and other students concurred that the student code of conduct couldn't hurt.

"It'd be interesting to have open forum discussions like tonight, maybe once a month in the classroom," Brandon said.

Several students said zero tol-erance efforts are short-circuited by some parents, who aren't the kind of positive role models they need to be.

"We need to promote stronger standards for our parents,"
Brandon said.
Use of substances by teens

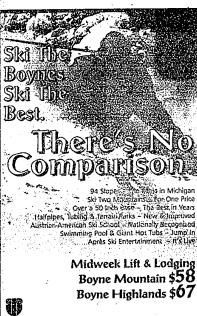
"does have to do with peer pres-sure," said Rana Zaya. "But it also has to do with parents."

Aaron Cole said cigarettes are "far too accessible in the commu-nity ... and to get from parents. (Cigarettes) shouldn't be out in the open" so kids can take them.

Meanwhile, tougher enforcement of the student code of conduct would be a good start to solving what Harrison sophomore Dave Kinchen called a

"scary" problem.
"Zero tolerance, we need to have that enforced," even through measures such as in school drug searches, Dave so "... This problem has to be stopped."





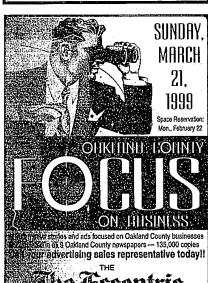
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