

# International Academy takes kids to scene of crime to learn



Line up: Farmington Hills officer Brian Bastianelli poses with his wife, Audra, a teacher at the academy, students (from left) Susan Huang, Karen Doerr, Barbara DeMatta, Elina Pilnits, Emily Schutze and Jennifer Sheyman.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
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Farmington Hills police officer Brian Bastianelli brings everything but the yellow crime scene tape. Nonetheless, kids are still wrapped up in his class-

room presentations.

For three years, Bastianelli has given ninth grade biology students at the Bloomfield Hills-based International Academy an insight into forensic science and how it is used at crime scenes. The public academy formed in 1996 spe-

students countywide, including 30 from the Farmington area.

Kids, who can put their recently acquired scientific knowledge to real life situations, are transfixed by it all. Some have expressed an interest going into forensic science as a result of the officer's presentations.

"They love it," Bastianelli said. Bastianelli is an evidence technician and has been with the Hills department for three years. He was named the department's 1997 VFW Police Officer of the Year.

He started visiting the classroom at the behest of wife, Audra, who is a biology teacher at the academy. They have been married for seven years.

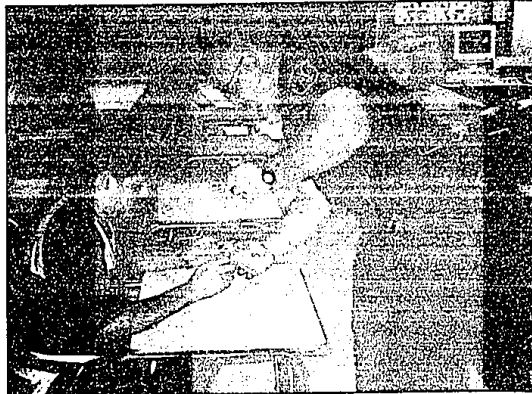
Audra thought her husband's day-to-day work would be compelling fodder for students, who are grappling with scientific methods and equations for the first time.

The patrol officer manages to tie genetics, DNA and other sciences into evidence gathering — such as finger and footprints and ballistics at crime scenes.

Bastianelli even pulls out a fluorescent light around a bathroom sink to show how police find what otherwise might be hidden evidence.

"A lot of them say, 'Oh that's gross,'" Bastianelli said. Students are not too aghast to follow up with at least a dozen "who dunnit?" questions.

Audra builds up to Brian's annual presentations with a series of lab activities on genetics and other related topics.



Learning: Officer Brian Bastianelli works with student Wisam Zako, a ninth-grader, on the use of forensic science at crime scenes.

"At first the kids really didn't know how that could be used in the real world," said Audra, who taught in Berkeley schools before joining the academy when it started three years ago. "As it goes on, the presentations have evolved into this thing where kids look forward to it and where other students even come by to just say, 'hi.'"

International Academy principal Bert Okma said students see a practical application of what they learn in the classroom. The principal sees another highlight.

"He (Bastianelli) also presents a positive image of law enforcement," Okma said.

## EVIDENCE OF EXCELLENCE

Following is a rundown of "Evidence of Excellence," notable school and community achievements as noted by the Farmington Board of Education at a recent meeting.

### MAY 18 MEETING

#### MASB award recipients

In recognition of outstanding achievement, the following awards were presented by Bob Maxfield, superintendent, on behalf of the Michigan Association of School Boards:

Linda Enberg, secretary - Award of Merit; Board of Education - Standard of Excellence Award.

#### Content-based French

Pam O'Malley, Dunckel Middle School principal, and Sandy Chamberlin and Candace Cerny, Dunckel staff members, presented a progress report on the content-based French program.

This pilot project allows students at all

grade levels to not only study the French language but also to use it within the content of their academic classes. The program is nearing the end of the second year of a three-year implementation plan. A mini-drama was performed by Dunckel Middle School students Jenny Adams, Julie Swardlow, Mark Fitzmaurice, Ali Grossi, Luke Digia and Ben Ryberg.

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## Cruise the Grand

The second season of "Cruise the Grand" in downtown Farmington begins tomorrow and will take place 5-9 p.m. every Monday throughout the summer.

"Cruise the Grand," co-sponsored by The Pasta Stop and Pages Food & Spirits, was a big success in 1998, with thousands of classic car enthusiasts and nearby residents coming out to

### MONDAYS

the southwest corner of Grand River-Farmington Road.

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