Recovery from page A1

because as you can see, there's a happy ending," said Melissa to her classmates. "I'm going toward being completely cane-free. I got rid of the wheelchair." Melissa and Amanda filled up the 90-minute SMART session by: showing large "Get Weil" placards signed by classmates and community members; talking about the importance of donating blood to the American Red Cross to help save lives; and by talking candidy about Melissa's accident and recovery. They also provided information to help students better understand tragedies and how to deal with them.

"A tragedy is different to all different people," Amanda snid. "Like parents getting divorced, or fighting with your best friend.

"But knowing how to deal with tragedies), ... you need to be around friends and family, and know that people care about you."

Keening a positive attitude and sense

Keeping a positive attitude and sense of humor during times of adversity undoubtedly had much to do with how well Melissa has bounced back.

"After spending seven weeks in the hospital (after emerging from her coma), they took me shopping," Melissa said with a wide smile. I never thought I'd see a mall look so great." Amanda noted that, after initially feeling sorry for herself about losing the fonly person whe understood me," and then feeling helpless about not being able to help her friend, she came around and helped support Melissa's family throughout the crisis.

"Just by being there and supporting the family," said Amanda, "that's helping out the family a tremendous amount."

Their presentation proved to be inspirational and thought-provoking, said some of the students in the audience. "It proves that if you put your mind to it, you can do anything you want," said ninth grader Ashleigh Bartlett.

Stacey Robinson, a 10th grader, choed others who call Melissa's recovery and return to a relatively normal life "amazing."

Stacey, however, did note that "it's

quite depressing to hear what happened to her, it makes you think about what's going to happen next."

For example, Amanda Faughnan told the class about how she and Melissa were having a good time "running around in the park" the day before the accident. "I never thought that the next day she'd be in a coma."

But that's what happened.

The accident took place the afternoon of July 23, 1997, when Melissa was baby-sitting three small children by the pool at Farmington Glen Aquatic Center.

For no explainable reason, a heavy tree branch fell, struck Melissa on the head and knocked her into a come.

The recovery began as soon as alert lifeguards and paramedics performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation on the injured girl. It continued during the next several months, at two hospitals, a rehabilitation center and finally home.

"I really did feel like an infant," Melissa said, recalling painful physical therapy. "Learning how to walk again.

Each step I took was really difficult, but I wanted to keep pitching myself further to make improvement."
The SMART session also gave classmates other important messages; Don't take life for granted; donate blood whenever possible.

"You don't think how difficult breath-ing, walking, even blinking is until it's too hard for you to do," Melissa said. The need to donate blood was stressed by Melissa and Amanda.

by Melisaa and Amanda.

"This one (get well card) is for one of the blood drives in her name," Amanda anid, displaying the placard. "An overwhelming number of people came to donate ... It's very important to give blood. Melisaa needed blood. It makes a humongous difference."

Melisaa credited get-well wishes from the community for making a positive impact on her recovery.

Nothing stands out more than the August 1997 Farmington Community Chorus concert at Heritage Park, where 500 people attended and gave a collec-

tive prayer for the teen, who was still comatose at that time.

Melisan's mother, Susan Garr, is the pinnist for the chorus.

A year later, miraculously, Melissa and Susan sat next to each other at another Heritage Park chorus concert, with Melissa turning pages for her mom at the pinno.

I know people were thinking about me, "Melissa said." I just wanted to fight, and get myself back here.

Her return to FHS – beginning on a part-time bais – also has played a major role in Melissa's unbelievable saga.

major role in McJissaa's unberievature saga.
Recalling her time at the Rainbow Rehabilitation Center, McJissa, her family and doctors "all knew I had a very long journey ahead of me... So (it was) decided to come back to school and do therapy through school."

These days, Melissa is doing well in school, even taking two correspondence courses to catch up for work missed dur-ing 1997-98.

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Haven from page A1

"Haven has been experiencing steady increase in the total a steady increase in the total number of clients they serve and the number of phone calls from those seeking help," according to Hedy Nuriel, Haven executive

Hody Nuriel, Haven executive director.

"We see a stendy increase every year," she said. "I don't know if that's because there's more place or because more person of the see and the see

tion.

In existence for 23 years,
Haven provides services such as
counseling, community education, supervised parenting time
between adults and their children; advocacy; as well as batterers' intervention and counsel-

"It takes courage for those devnstated by abuse to reach out for help," Nuriel said, "Haven is building violence-free communi-ties one family at a time. People

ত 'Haven has been oxperiencing a steady increase in the total number of clients they serve and the number of phone calls from those seeking help.'

Hedy Nuriel Haven executive director

can call us any time day or night. When they call we try to discern if they need counseling or shelter. Many people are look-ing for someone to talk to. The Farmington facility is designed for counseling and supervised visits only. It won't be used as a shelter. "If anyone is suffering from having been obused physically or sexually in a relationship as a child or as an adult there is help, no matter where they live," Nuriel said.

Fees are determined by the

Nuriel said.

Fees are determined by the person's ability to pay. Haven, a United Way Agency, is also funded by government grants; private and municipal donations; as well as other grants and foundations.

dations. In 1997 Haven provided the

following services:

memergency shelter to 348 adults and 400 children and teens during 11,977 nights;
memory and information to 8,276 callers to the Crisis and

Support Line;
counseling to 633 survivers
of domestic violence;
therapy to 872 victims of
sexual assault and child abuse;

sexual assault and child abuse; and

butterers' intervention services to 321 people.

Haven also provided community education programs in schools; hospitals and to lity enforcement agencies.

Consider that 2.9 million cases of child abuse and neglect were reported in the United States during 1992, representing; an increase of 7.8 percent from 1991, according to the National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse. The agency also reported that in 1992 an estimated 1.261 children died from abuse or neglect, which means that more than three children day in the United States.

Anyone in need of services may contact Haven's 24-hour crisis and support line at 248-334-1274.



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Farmington Family Sign Up Now! Winter 1 Classes Begin January 4, 1999 Preschool Swim Schedule .-- Youth Swimming Programs

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aturder	10 00 am	02101-17	Thurwlay	10.00 am	02101-57	
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FOR SIX WEEK SESSIONS - CLASSES RUN FOR 1/4 HOUR Fees: Members \$28 Program Members \$56

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