

Steppingstone kids create Terrera, city of future

By KATIE O'DONOHUE
SPECIAL WRITER

Imagine it's the 11th century and you're looking for a decent place to live and work. Perhaps you might consider "Terrera," a city built within an extinct volcano's crater whose environment provides not only extremely fertile soil but also a plentiful natural mineral dubbed "Terranium" used in computer manufacturing. Terrera has superior education and health systems and low taxes.

Such is the city five students from Farmington Hills' Steppingstone School envisioned then constructed in miniature scale to compete in the Future City Competition 2000, sponsored by ESD and hosted by Ford Motor Company at the Spirit of Ford in Dearborn.

The level of creativity was astonishing, and judges consisting of professionals in engineering and related fields from a variety of companies had the difficult task of choosing first, second and third-place winners.

Students were required to design a city based on the "SimCity 2000" software produced by Maxis, then construct a portion of their city on a board.

Teams from two dozen schools competed in the event held on Jan. 10. Each team consisted of seventh and eighth grade students, a sponsoring teacher and an engineering mentor.

Steppingstone team members included Chris Boguslawski, Amanda and Ashley Hochstein, Trevor Swan, and Jeremy Wojcikowski. Teacher Keiko Morse backed the group, and DamilerChrysler engineer Mitch Boguslawski mentored the team.

Though the team didn't win, Keiko Morse describes the event as momentous.

"The purpose was for the students to learn how engineers work - to create something on the computer and then actually build it. They all gained presentation skills and learned how to work in a time limit. It was a positive experience for them; they had a lot of fun doing it and were excited when people kept coming back asking them questions about their city."

Back to Terrera.

Dubbed by the students as the most high-tech city of its time, they designed it around Graphic Corporation, a computer company which is the primary driving force of Terrera because it pro-

vides employment for citizens and is responsible for the discovery of Terranium, a silicon-like substance that not only furnishes computer chips but also fuels Terrera's power plants.

Tourists are attracted to the city because forested areas - legally enforced - display natural beauty.

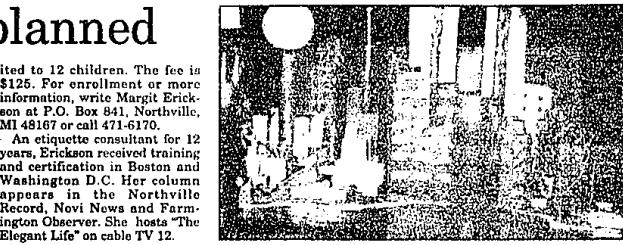
Each team in the Future City competition needed to include a moving part. Chris Boguslawski explains one of Terrera's unique characteristics. "We have a 'smart bus' system. The driverless bus goes instantaneously where people wait, and we are working to have the bus respond telepathically."

Speaking like a true CEO, Boguslawski describes the philosophy behind Terrera's vacation centers. "They were structured as old-fashioned, yet very comfortable and crowded accommodations, so people wouldn't enjoy their vacations much and would want to go back to work."

Steppingstone student Amanda Hochstein said "It was a lot of fun creating the model and was a good project to work on as a team. It was hard at first and it took a while, but we all came together."



The Team: From left, Ashley Hochstein, Trevor Swan, teacher Keiko Morse, Amanda Hochstein, Jeremy Wojcikowski, mentor/engineer Mitch Boguslawski and Chris Boguslawski. Below, a closeup view of Terrera.



Children's etiquette seminar planned

Local etiquette expert and columnist Margit Erickson will again present her popular children's etiquette seminar, "Growing Up Gracefully," at the County Epicure restaurant in Novi from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Saturday, March 4.

Topics to be included are letter writing and thank you notes, the proper way to answer the telephone, how to introduce your parents and friends to others, people different than ourselves,

developing good grooming habits, proper behavior at the beach, parties or theatre, what to do and not to do when traveling, the fun of "sleeping over," and other topics of proper social graces.

This newly revised seminar will include topics such as family values, behavior at school and on school buses, participating in sports events and being with people different than ourselves.

The seminar includes a three-course luncheon where children can learn by hands on experience the proper use of silverware, knowing what to do with the napkin, learning how to cut foods, table conversation and handling stemware. It also includes a workbook, handouts, pertinent literature and other items.

It is open to boys and girls ages 8 to 12 years old and is lim-

ited to 12 children. The fee is \$125. For enrollment or more information, write Margit Erickson at P.O. Box 841, Northville, MI 48167 or call 471-6170.

An etiquette consultant for 12 years, Erickson received training and certification in Boston and Washington D.C. Her column appears in the Northville Record, Novi News and Farmington Observer. She hosts "The Elegant Life" on cable TV 12.

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