

# City, schools meeting focus is safety, preparedness

BY SUZ BUCK

STAFF WRITER  
sbuck@oe.homedecomm.net

Strengthening school safety and emergency preparedness is an ongoing goal for Farmington Schools and the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills.

It also means continued training for both public safety and school personnel.

Guidelines for safe schools and crisis management were discussed before a handful of residents who attended a meeting of city and school officials, hosted by the Farmington School Board Feb. 26 at the Farmington Training Center.

"We used to say Columbine changed the way we looked at things," said Estralee Michaelson, director of Safe Schools and Student Services. "Following Columbine, the state and nation rallied. 9-11 (Sept. 11) changed the face of the world."

Michaelson is the school

resource officer, a representative designated as the school liaison to share information with public safety agencies. She talked about the critical components of school safety: prevention, response and recovery. The district has established three levels of building lockdown in critical incidents, she said. A building lockdown means the district is concerned and is on somewhat of an alert. All the doors are locked, visitors are monitored but business goes on as usual.

A classroom lockdown means students are kept in the classroom because there may be something going on in the hallway. A "lockdown take cover" is used in case of the most serious threats to student safety.

## Preventive 'what if'

Farmington Hills Police Commander Patrick Browne addressed the "what if" situations public safety agencies encounter. "By

exchanging critical information, it allows us to intervene at an early stage," Browne said. "We hope all the prevention methods work. But, what if they don't?"

Police response is initiated with a 911 call to an emergency dispatch center. Browne talked about things like deployment of officers and setting up a temporary command center.

The police response plan includes a critical incident manual with descriptive information, aerial photos, floor plans and handheld photos of school buildings.

Continued training by special response units will provide a quicker response in Farmington and Farmington Hills than in Columbine, where it took 35 minutes before people realized there was an active shooter on site, Browne said.

## Working together

Farmington Public Safety Direc-

tor Gary Goss commended the joint effort of the governmental and school units, which provided the initial groundwork for a formal safety plan. Public safety agencies once concerned about risks like bomb scares and hostage situations now have to think about risks connected to weapons of mass destruction and chemical and biological hazards, Goss said.

"We have to take an honest look at ourselves and in our ability to respond to these threats," Goss said. "All the equipment and training in the world can't take the place of good information and communications."

Councilman Bill Hartsock asked what training students receive, recalling his years when students ducked under their desks during practice drills to prepare for possible air raids.

"Not enough yet," Michaelson said. However the lockdown situation in schools following the Sept.

11 air attack on New York City and Washington D.C. directed the district's attention to the subject.

Michaelson said some buildings have had drills and the district hopes to add "developmentally appropriate" drills in the future.

Parents have commended the district for the sense of security they felt in the schools following the Sept. 11 incident, said Farmington School Superintendent Bob Maxfield.

Today's students have grown up with information and training on peer mediation and conflict resolution, he said.

Parental satisfaction with school safety was also evident recently, after reports of a man accosting children in the Farmington and Livonia area. Police haven't arrested anyone in connection with those crimes.

"As much concern as there was in the community, neither I nor the principals received a call from

a parent unhappy or concerned about security," Maxfield said. "They have confidence in the police and confidence in the school."

Officials also discussed other risks to students, including one that has been a continuing problem for decades: chemical use.

School Board Member Linda Enberg mentioned a national news report that underage drinking and drug use is increasing.

"Movies are back to focusing on open partying," Michaelson said. "HBO's 'Sex in the City' is watched by a lot of teenagers. Two weeks ago they focused their entire show on partying under the influence of Ecstasy."

This jeopardizes how young people perceive the risks of their behavior, Michaelson said. She advocated increased education.

"We're too soft on what we present," she said. "We need to get more reality based."



STAFF PHOTO BY BLANCKE LEMLEY

Space explorers: Parapro Terry Schneider helps Amelia Pasquelone with her simulated oxygen tank, which was actually two pop bottles taped together.

# Science lover honored by FPS

BY SUZ BUCK

STAFF WRITER  
sbuck@oe.homedecomm.net

Terry Schneider, recently selected "Support Person of the Year" for Farmington Public Schools, admits he was oblivious to the plans leading up to the announcement.

The community education science paraprofessional at Alameda Early Childhood Center received his award about two weeks ago. He will be honored by the Farmington Board of Education at their March 5 meeting.

"I will accept the award on behalf of Alameda," Schneider said. "I wouldn't be the person I am without every small bit of everyone here."

He recalled how he learned about his award. It began when Alameda Principal Helene Blackman told Schneider the school staff's regular "lunch bunch" was celebrating the Chinese New Year. "OK, I'll pick up Chinese," he volunteered.

He thought something was odd when the list of 12 or 13 people in the regular group grew to almost 30 people staying in for lunch that

day.

Schneider received a puzzled look from the employee in House of Lee, a Chinese restaurant who waited on him when he announced the school was celebrating the Chinese New Year - because it wasn't the Chinese New Year.

Schneider also thought it was strange that Steve Barnes, a friend of his whose wife works at the school, appeared and started talking about a shower.

Still busy handing out food, Schneider saw both Superintendent Bob Maxfield and Larry Lobert, executive director of personnel, arrive with balloons.

"They handed the balloons to Helene," Schneider said. "I thought 'Oh my God, I think Helene is retiring.' It never dawned on me what was going on."

Then Lobert announced why the group was gathered.

"I realized it was me," Schneider said. "I never thought of myself as a support person. I thought of myself as a teacher or a para-pro. Besides my marriage or my kids being born, it was the most incredible thing I ever felt. He and wife Lisa recently cele-

brated their 26th wedding anniversary. They have two sons, Matthew, 24, and Bradley, 16.

"He was nominated by staff," Blackman said. "He has a lot of enthusiasm and wants to be a teacher."

Schneider, who's worked at Alameda for four years, is working toward a teaching certificate in elementary education.

## Science is discovery

Science comes alive when Terry Schneider is around. Working in conjunction with the science committee, he uses his creativity to introduce and reinforce science concepts.

Last week, students experienced outer space. They climbed through a make-believe rocket ship hatch, which was an entrance to an observation room complete with stars, the sun and a black light that made the moon rocks look reflective. Mr. Bones, the classroom skeleton, wore a moon suit outside the hatch.

White paper plates spun on a turn table as students used magic markers to create galaxies. At another table, they used bingo

daubers to add planets to the galaxies.

"We're trying to make them use all their senses," Schneider said.

In other years, Schneider helped the students create a rain forest, an ocean and the Arctic Tundra.

Just as Schneider brings science to life, he learned to turn his life around and find a new career.

Five years ago, Schneider fell off a ladder while working as a meat cutting supervisor, resulting in a work-related injury. About a year ago, he was in a traffic accident in Livonia with his younger son. "We turned over three times. We were broadsided. We had concussions."

More than ever before, he knows life is precious, and Schneider takes that attitude into the classroom.

"Hopefully students will look back at Alameda," he said. "It's the best. We plant that little seed of science and technology. It's the environment that we create. We try to create the whole thing. We set the stage for knowledge."

# GRAND OPENING

## At Our New ROCHESTER Location!

With Savings At All Locations!

★ No Interest

★ No Money Down

★ No Payments

★ For 12 Months!

\*with approved credit

**AS SEEN AT OTHER FURNITURE STORES & EXPRESSES**

**TRANQUIL Jumbo Pillow Top Back Supporter**

- QUEEN SIZE - 2 PC. SET

Reg. Price Competition Our Price

**\$1198 set \$598 set \$498 set**

**SAVE 55-75% OFF**

**WOODCREST Jumbo Pillow Top Back Supporter**

- QUEEN SIZE - 2 PC. SET

Reg. Price Competition Our Price

**\$1698 set \$798 set \$598 set**

**FREE DELIVERY FREE REMOVAL FREE SETUP**

Call store for details

**QUEEN MATTRESS SETS**

Starting from **\$198**

Sold in sets only

**THE NeverTurn MATTRESS**

**Metal Futon with Mattress**

Starting at **\$147** take with

**Futon Bunk Beds with Futon Mat**

Starting at **\$247** take with

**Complete Day Beds**

Starting at **\$87** take with

**Wood Futon with Mattress**

Starting at **\$297** take with

# THE MATTRESS SUPERSTORE

Grand Rapids Bedding Co.

**TROY**

WAREHOUSE CLEARANCE CENTER

32301 Stephenson Hwy.

(Between Ford Ham on Hwy 1 & Mt. St. El. Mt.)

**1-800-668-MATS**

**NEW ROCHESTER**

5123 Rochester Road

(Between Plaza Drive & Hwy 100)

**1-800-579-MATS**

**WATERFORD**

CLEARANCE CENTER

4895 Dixie Hwy.

(Next to Circle K Car Wash at Wal-Mart)

**1-800-929-MATS**

**ROYAL OAK**

32222 Woodward

(Next to Buddy's Pizza 1/2 Mile S. of I-480)

**1-800-339-MATS**