## Wages from page A1

policies because a worker has to file a complaint with the state and in turn risks losing his or her job.

Hellmer said contractors who

Hellmer said contractors who pay prevailing wages as determined by the state should make bids based on those figures.

"Wo're not bidding apples to apples here," he said of companies that underbid and make up for it by not paying the strong wages.

proper wages.
Court Administrator David
Walsh said the bids for the
construction were based on

**M** An official with the construction manager for the job, Monal Inc. based in Farmington, said he was not aware the workers are not being paid what they should.

prevailing wages for all the skilled trades, including elec-trical, mechanical and finish-

ing work.

An official with the construction manager for the job, Monal Inc. based in Farmington, said he was not aware the workers are not being paid what they should.

"The contractors working on the job have signed a contract that requires them to pay pre-vailing wages per the Michi-gan Department of Labor," and John Allen, vice president with Monal. "If a worker does-n't feel he is being paid fairly, he can file a complaint with the state."



Picketing: Mike Wood

carries a sign for the

Interna-

tional Brother-

hood of

Electrical

Workers

during picketing. The pickets object to

non-union employees

working on construction of the new court-

house.

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## Mentors from page A1

taking that first step isn't casy, but it's absolutely worth the

but it's absolutely worth the effort.

Like the other mentors and mentoes, Sasha Fowler and I met during the first part of the school year. We learned we had a few things in common, and we both looked forward to getting to know each other.

know each other.
Things didn't go exactly as planned. As Observer & Eccenplanned. As Observer & Eccen-tric newspapers experienced lay-offs and restructuring, my time was taken up with meetings and an increasing work load. So while other mentors were visit-ing the school and spending reg-ular time with their mentees, Sasha and I had a little trouble connecting.

connecting.

She could have given up on me. But Sasha's not that kind of

Sne could have given up on the But Sasha's not that kind of kid.

Every time I went by to pick her up, she had a smile on her face. She talked to me like a real person, introduced me to her friends and tenchers when I visited the school. She told me about her family, her classes, the sports she enjoyed and how she plans to spend her summer.

We managed only a handful of visits, but the time we spent together helped me remember something another mentor also learned.

Cynthiu Underwood was new to the area and in a new job when she was teamed with Courtney Browne.

"Courtney helped remind me what's important in life, 'Underwood said, 'It's not the next meeting, it's not the next sale.

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It's relationships."

My last few hours with Sasha were on Thursday, when photographer Bill Bresler and I took her on a tour of our Livonia offices. We watched the press run as Bill explained more about the history of our company and its operations than I knew. We walked through the newsroom, where I showed Sasha how stories she watched me write end up in print.

If nothing else, she knows more about the newspaper business now than most kids her age, and probably most adults. As Farmington Schools moves more about the newspaper business now than most kids her age, and probably most adults. As Farmington Schools moves more and more into the philosophy of preparing students for the real world workplace, that's an important aspect of the program. Sasha's not sure she wants to be a journalist, so I figure I've done my part. Go for the bucks, I told her, (Adding, of course, that I do really love my job.).

But she has gotten a look at a number of other careers – photography, ad sales and marketing, telephone sales and printing, she's kept a journal about the things she's learned.

And I think she learned more than a way, it does kind of help you," she said. 'It tells you what kinds of jobs are out there. It is see what it's like and at least try it out for a few weeks. It's just really fun learning out of the habit of being in school with books."

Teacher Lisa Drane said this year's students seemed a little shy at first. Some mentors alked at the breakfast about the initial difficulty in relating to the students.

But by the end of the year, those relationships warmed and became friendships. I know that was true for me. And it certainly seemed true for every child and adult at the Tuesday morning breakfast.

adult at the Tuesany morning breakfast.
You could hear it as, one by one, the kids got up and said thanks to the adults who had taken the time to enrich their worlds. Some talked about bond-ing even outside the workplace, becoming not of one another's becoming part of one another's

Arsenio Burns worked with Ed Gates of Comerica Bank, who taught him about banking and even showed off the inside of a

even showed off the inside of a vault.

"Thank you, Mr. Eddie Gates. I'll never forget this," Burns said.

Looking around the room at tables full of warm smiles, I had the feeling none of us would.

Joni Hubred is editor of the Farmington Observer. She wel-comes your comments at 33411 Grand River, Farmington, MI 48335; by FAX (248) 477-9722; and via e-mail, jhubredCoe.homecomm.net. To

take part in the unforgettable experience of mentoring a child, contact Mary Beth SiKora at East Middle School, (248) 489-3601.

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