

## Mercy principal stuck on students



Special events coordinator Erin Porth cheers as principal Carolyn Witte sticks to the wall.

Mercy High School Principal Carolyn Witte was true to her word Friday morning, as she allowed students to duct tape her to the wall in the school gymnasium.

The top fund-raiser for the school's Walkathon fundraiser were allowed to affix strips of tape during a special assembly held in honor of Spirit Week.

The Walkathon is a healthy and spirited 10K walk around Mercy's campus to raise money for gymnasium improvement and chapel renovations.

For every \$1,000 raised, students received a strip of duct tape.

## Families plan Walk to School

BY SUE BUCK  
STAFF WRITER

Sometimes people think today's children lead a cushy life because their parents drive them to school instead of making them walk.

After all, 30 years ago, more than 60 percent of children walked to school.

For at least one mother, who's organizing the Walk Your Child to School Day Oct. 2 at Wooddale Elementary School in Farmington Hills, the issue is more complicated.

"I'd love my children to walk to school," said Alison Chapkis, who lives one half mile from the school. "There's no sidewalks. That's a safety concern."

Sometimes, time is also an issue, but on Wednesday Chapkis and other parents at Wooddale, Forest and Lanigan Elementary Schools in Farmington Hills will make time.

So will other parents in Michigan, thanks to the partnership with the Oakland County Health Division, Oakland Fitness Council, Healthy People/Healthy Oakland and the Michigan Department of Community Health, which have worked together to coordinate this

event.

Families will fill out a walkability survey with six questions about safety concerns like sidewalks, accessibility, and how drivers behaved during the walk.

The forms will be turned in to the Farmington Hills Non Motorized Advisory Committee, said Lloyd Lewis, principal of Forest Elementary. The committee is headed up by Dana Whinnery, assistant city manager, who couldn't be reached this week.

Copies will be made available to Oakland County and to the Michigan Department of Community Health, said Kathleen Altman, a health educator for the Oakland County Health Division.

Altman expects a quick turnaround time. "The community needs to know the small changes it might make," Altman said.

The morning of the walk, students and parents will form a walking bus, picking up children at different points, said Kathy Jennings, a physical education teacher at Lanigan Elementary.

"It's invigorating," Lewis said. "Students will get to school bright-eyed."

Students will likely walk along the side of the road

because there's no sidewalks in the Forest Elementary subdivisions though there are some community paths, Lewis said.

The OCHD's Services to the Aging Unit added a unique twist to the event this year by recruiting senior volunteers from the community to assist parents. Adults will be called "safety volunteers."

Healthy People/Healthy Oakland, a community health initiative in Oakland County, is donating bright yellow tee shirts for the parents and senior volunteers and water bottles for each student participant, said Libby Hrabon, of Healthy People/Healthy Oakland.

Information provided by this group said 85 percent of trips children make to school are by car or school bus and only 13 percent of all trips to school are made by walking or bicycling.

Safety concerns preventing more children from walking to school include a lack of sidewalks, busy or difficult to cross intersections, scary dogs and poorly maintained sidewalks.

Missing an opportunity for walking to school, a physical activity, increases traffic congestion and threatens the safety and quality of the environment, said representatives of Healthy People/Healthy Oakland.

stuck@oakcountymich.com | (248) 477-5450

## SONIC investigation leads to Detroit PD officer's arrest

BY JONI HURRED  
STAFF WRITER

A drug investigation that started in Farmington Hills ended with the arrest of three people Thursday, including an off-duty Detroit police officer.

Hills Police Chief William Dwyer said Friday that the South Oakland Narcotics Intelligence Consortium (SONIC), consisting of officers from Farmington Hills, Novi, West Bloomfield Township and the Oakland County Sheriff's Department, along with Detroit Police Department and Oakland County Sheriff's Department's Narcotics

Enforcement Team executed search warrants at two residences in Detroit.

At a home on Appoline, officers confiscated three kilos of cocaine, packaging and weighing equipment, as well as a large quantity of marijuana and guns. Two women were taken into custody.

The second warrant, for a residence on Clarita, netted 85 grams of powdered cocaine, a quantity of crack cocaine, packaging materials and guns. The off-duty Detroit officer arrested there was assigned to the 3rd Precinct, Dwyer said.

All three were arraigned at the Oakland County

Courthouse on Saturday on conspiracy charges. Dwyer said officials have not publicly identified the police officer.

"With the amount of presses and equipment, these were major dealers," he said, adding seized drugs were valued at around \$1 million.

The operation had the capability of processing 40-50 kilos of cocaine, officials estimated.

"It was very disappointing to have an officer involved," Dwyer said. "You have 99.9 percent of officers who are out there risking their lives to protect the public. This is not indicative of the average police officer."



Kristin Porubsky tapes Principal Carolyn Witte to the wall.

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