

SUPPORT

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lighted in statistics presented by Farmington Public Safety Director Gary Goss. "Untreated addiction cost one thousand dollars for every man, woman and child in the United States," he said, adding 80 percent of jail inmates are incarcerated for reasons related to drug addiction.

He quoted Major General Arthur Dean, Chairman and CEO of Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) who said community coalitions are effective because they "employ multiple strategies across multiple sectors of the community."

"With such energy, we can't help but be successful," Goss concluded. "But it's time to get down to work."

COHESIVE COMMUNITY

Keynote speakers filled out the balance of the program. Penny Norton of FACE - Truth and Clarity on Alcohol talked about a 1990 Rand Institute study that found while tobacco use among kids in rural areas had decreased, alcohol use was still at unacceptably high levels.

The Institute concluded, in part, "You cannot teach what a community will not support."

When kids leave school, Norton said, they learn there are stores that will sell them liquor, bars that will serve them drinks and police officers who will pour out bottles of alcohol



Jeff Jay spoke of the need for interventions when families deal with addiction.

PHOTOS BY BILL BAESELER / OBSERVER

rather than writing an underage drinking tickets. Heads nodded as she talked about parents who say they'd rather their child drink than do drugs, who will buy the kegs for the party and take everyone's ear keys, thinking that will prevent tragedy.

"What the Rand Institute was saying, and it's still true today, we can have the best health program... we can do the best of the best, but if what kids see and experience every day of their lives is something different, it won't work. We set our schools up to fail."

Norton talked about a web of support created by everyone in the community shares responsibility for a number of specific actions, such as allowing kids to

experience the consequence of their actions. That's undermined when police officers pour out alcohol rather than write a ticket and school policies may not be implemented for the "right" students.

INTERVENTION

One of those students was Jeff Jay, a noted speaker on intervention in treatment of chemical abuse. In high school, he was a National Merit Scholar and "excelling in a way anyone would want their 18 year old to be excelling."

By age 26, he was homeless, in declining physical health and had been disowned by his family. Still, he didn't recognize that he had a problem.

"If it had not been for a structured intervention, I don't believe I'd be standing here today," he said, noting Friday marked his 21st year of sobriety. "I don't know why I'm standing here today... It was because a lot of people helped me when I couldn't help myself."

Jay explained that very well-intentioned family members enable those who are chemically addicted and shutting down that process is key to helping an addict recover. Allowing someone to "reach bottom," as is the common wisdom, isn't always the best way to deal with the problem.

"For many people, bottom is going to be death," he said. "When we let people hit bottom, we also let the family hit bottom."

An addict has to want help; intervention is a way to make the addict want help, he said. In a successful intervention, family and friends should learn about addiction and start talking about it, then form a cohesive plan that everybody can buy into and follow through with it. Jay called it "concrete spirituality."

"God doesn't work through a lightning bolt. God works through people. God works through you."

CALL TO ACTION

Veteran nurse Nan Reynolds, who is now family programs coordinator for Oakland Family Services, doesn't just work with families affected by addiction, she lives in one. She stressed

that every day action isn't taken to help, the addiction gets worse.

"It's addiction you're up against," she said. "The person has been beamed into a different world. You're pitted against denial, delusion and compulsion."

Three of her four children have been treated for substance abuse, she said. The only thing she's seen that's strong enough to get through the elements of addiction is pain.

"Pain is a call to action," Reynolds said. "Pain is an alarm clock. Pain is a good thing."

She wants her son, Bill, who is still using to have pain so that he confronts his addiction again and has another chance to recover.

"Loving, Kind, Nice. More harm has been done in the name of those three words," Reynolds said. "It's loving, helpful and kind to wish something would intervene with Bill's addiction."

"I thought good parenting meant you did all you could for your children, all the time," she said. "It's a wonder my kids didn't die from my benevolence."

Following the breakfast, all three presenters worked with small groups of community leaders participating in a strategic planning session.

They identified "red flags" in the community based on the results of surveys conducted among Farmington and Farmington Hills youth.

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PARKINSON'S

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"I would recommend it to anyone," Walter said with a smile.

As active members of the facilitator's board of the Farmington/ Farmington Hills Parkinson's support group, they have learned the value of such groups as an important support system. The two are co-leaders in the Farmington area group that has about 40 active members. When they winter in Florida, the couple also belong to the Parkinson's support group there.

Their support group refers to them as "George Burns and Gracie Allen," said Debby Orloff-Davidson, COO of the Michigan Parkinson Foundation. Walter has a somber, serious side and Noreen finds humor in everything they do, she said. Besides meeting once a month to share ideas, share support and friendship, the group tries to help others learn about the latest techniques in exercise, handwriting and speech therapies.

"My wife hosts parties like for Christmas and a picnic," said Walter. The group meets at 7 p.m. every second Tuesday of the month at the Farmington Hills Baptist Church, 28301 Middlebelt in Farmington Hills. Noreen said the gathering helps people understand what others are going through and the disease.

"We've all become close friends," said Noreen. The Raymond B. Bauer, M.D., Humanitarian Award is presented each year to the person or people who exemplify what Bauer, founding president of the Michigan Parkinson Foundation, displayed, outstanding effort and dedication to the cause of Parkinson's disease in Michigan. Orloff-Davidson said, Walter said Parkinson's is the type of disease that "you have to accept. You can't do the things you used to do."

In order to get better, "Your attitude has to be right," he said. To learn more about the Farmington/ Farmington Hills Support Group, call (248) 426-9323 or the Michigan Parkinson Foundation at (248) 433-1011. poace@oehomecomm.net | (248) 477-5450

CAMPAIGN CORNER

VAGNOZZI SIGNS PLEDGE

The state of Michigan's public schools is one of the most important challenges facing the state, according to Aldo Vagnozzi, candidate for the 37th District House of Representatives, which represents Farmington/ Farmington Hills.

Democrat Vagnozzi was joined Tuesday by House Democratic Leader Buzz Thomas, D-Detroit, who is leading the Michigan Education Tour, a journey that will take him to communities throughout

the state to promote public education in the state and not raise property taxes.

Parents and school administrators joined the pair as Vagnozzi signed a pledge that stated he would support public education at his campaign headquarters.

"To hold our schoolchildren hostage to the budget process is unacceptable, and I promise that I will never try to balance the budget on the backs of our kids," said Vagnozzi in a statement.

The candidate pledged to not raise property taxes and focus his attention on improving

infrastructure in the state's schools. Vagnozzi, former mayor of Farmington Hills and a former Farmington school board member, said he is endorsed by the Michigan Association of School Administrators, the Michigan Federation of Teachers and the Michigan Education Association.

His challenger in the November general election is Republican Valerie Knol.

- By Paul R. Pace

9TH DISTRICT DEBATE

The League of Women Voters

Oakland Area has scheduled a forum with candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives 9th District from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 30.

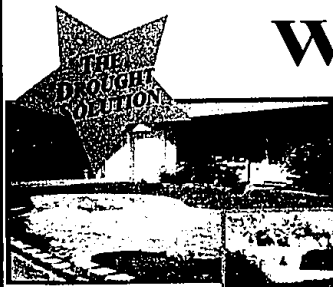
The 9th District includes Farmington, Farmington Hills, West Bloomfield, Orchard Lake, Keego Harbor, Sylvan Lake, Pontiac, Lake Angelus, Birmingham, Bloomfield Township, Bloomfield Hills, Southfield Township, Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, Franklin, Berkley, Royal Oak, Clawson, Troy, Rochester, Rochester Hills, Auburn Hills,

Oakland Township, most of Waterford and part of Orion Township.

The event will be held at the Bloomfield Township Library, 1099 Lone Pine Road, Bloomfield Hills.

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

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