

OWEN

FROM PAGE A1
Government Day held in Farmington last week.
Students spent the day "shad-owing" city employees to learn more about how government works. The event has been sponsored by the Farmington-area Rotary for more than 20 years.



BILL BRASLER/OBSERVER

Public Safety Director Gary Goss works on problem solving strategies with students Steve Kish and Chris Holt. The students spent time with Goss during Student Government Day.

Owen served as keynote speaker for a noon luncheon. He said his philosophy of finding more right than wrong can have an amazing effect in the workplace.
The owner of nine fast-food franchises, Owen put the statement, "Expect to win by helping others" on employees' paychecks, in the hopes of promoting his positive philosophy subliminally.
He considers each restaurant a community store. "Without that community, that business would not be successful."
Owen was raised on Detroit's east side as an only child, but his mother is the oldest of 13. He attended Mumford High

School, where he met his wife Michele in 10th grade.
"I thought, 'Maybe I need to marry this person,'" he said. "I knew at 16 I'd have to find my wife in high school because I didn't have time to date. She's my third girlfriend ever. I'm blessed to have her. She was a tutor and helped me along the way."
Owen struggled with reading,

because he is dyslexic. "My teachers called it slow," he said. That didn't stop him from aggressively pursuing his goals. Owen started cutting chickens for Church's Fried Chicken when he was 16. He cut 200 chickens every other day, in an environment that was less-than-inviting.
"I had a goal. I wanted to hurry up and get out of that

walk-in cooler because it was very cold."
To better himself, he started reading manuals. It was hard because of his dyslexia, but Michele helped him. Owen moved up as a server, cashier, shift leader, store manager and area manager.
"Like most dyslexic people, I'm a fast learner once I get it," Owen called himself the youngest manager in the history of Church's Chicken, a position he attained at age 17, while still in high school.
"No one ever asked me how old I was. They watched my ability, my attitude, my drive and my passion for helping others."

He didn't go to college because of his learning problems but learned he could be great by helping people. "I surrounded myself with people, and I made sure they were better than me. The more people I helped, I found, the higher I became."

Now in addition to running three Church's Fried Chicken stores, Owen owns six Papa John's Pizza stores. He encouraged students to focus on their hopes and dreams and to be true to those ambitions and themselves.

"Being accountable means doing the right thing when no one is watching you," he said, advising students to guard their eyes and ears.

"You have to be careful with your eyes and what you allow to go in there and what you are reading, because it can eventually penetrate."

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Hanukkah starts early this year

BY PAUL R. PAGE
STAFF WRITER

Hanukkah, the Jewish celebration of freedom, starts early this year.
Jewish people locally and across the world will celebrate the holiday for eight days and nights starting at sundown Friday.

"It's our celebration for freedom and the right to survive," said Rabbi Herbert Yoskowitz of the Adat Shalom Synagogue in Farmington Hills.

Hanukkah celebrates the victory of the Maccabees or Israelites over the Greek-Syrian ruler, Antiochus, about 2,200 years ago, after Antiochus attempted to have one religion and remove all others, Yoskowitz said.
At that time, the Greeks were trying to impose their language, customs and religious practices upon the world, including the people of Israel.

After almost seven years, a group of Jewish fighters known as the Maccabees overcame Antiochus' armies.

The Jews returned to Jerusalem only to find that their Holy Temple had been desecrated by their enemies. After cleaning the Temple, the Jews went to light the Holy Eternal Light, or Ner Tamid, and found only one jar of sacred oil, enough to light the lamp for one day.

It was an eight-day journey to get additional oil. However, one jar of oil burned for eight days and eight nights, which was proclaimed a miracle.

Yoskowitz said Christians and Muslims owe it to the Maccabees for their religions, since they developed from Judaism.

Also an important part of the Hanukkah ceremony is lighting the Menorah, a special nine-branched candelabrum, also known in Hebrew as a Hanukkuyah.

'It's our celebration for freedom and the right to survive.'

Rabbi Herbert Yoskowitz on Hanukkah

The eight candles represent the eight days and nights of the Miracle. The Ninth candle, the Shamash or servant, is used to light the other candles. Each night an additional candle is placed in the Menorah from right to left, and then lit from left to right.

On the last night, all eight candles plus the Shamash are lit.

Prayers and blessings are recited in Hebrew each night before the lighting of the candles.

Gifts among family and friends are also typically exchanged during the eight nights as a way to celebrate each day.

"It's a way to show appreciation of the gift of freedom," said Yoskowitz. "It's so we don't take our freedom for granted."

Also, families sing traditional songs and play dreidel, a four-sided top that has a Hebrew letter on each side. Prizes are usually chocolate, coins or nuts.

The Rabbi Sherwin Wine of the Birmingham Temple in Farmington Hills said Hanukkah to him means the celebration of courage.

The hero of the Maccabees tried to teach the people to live their lives with courage, he said.

The temple is holding a family event on Friday with a Hanukkah dinner at 6:30 p.m. and later a program performed by the children at 7:30 p.m.

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