

CLOSED

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Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

The Farmington Hills branch will stay closed for two weeks between Dec. 31 and Jan. 12, to prepare for a grand opening celebration.

AREA POST OFFICES

The downtown Farmington

branch in the Downtown Farmington Business Center and the Farmington Hills post office on 12 Mile Road west of Orchard Lake, will be open regular hours on Christmas and New Year's Eve days, but will close for the holidays.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Chamber offices will be closed from Monday, Dec. 23 through Wednesday, Jan. 1, and will reopen with regular hours on Thursday, Jan. 2.

STUDENTS

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make sure students succeed, whether it's staying at the high school or finding an alternative education program.

Simowski said young people don't decide to drop out when they reach their teen years.

"It's usually built up over time," he said. "They don't just come into high school and suddenly fall apart."

SOAR identified kids before that occurs, Simowski said. This year, block scheduling has allowed time for kids to get help with courses in which they're having trouble, so the program was dropped.

Clarenceville's size also works in favor of efforts to reduce the number of students who leave school before graduation.

"Before a student falls too far, a lot of people start notice

ing," he said. "Teachers know all the kids in the building, and we have a great staff. It really starts there."

The district has also placed an emphasis on tracking student progress, because of its involvement with the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools program.

Clarenceville earned NCA's Transitions accreditation last year, with an effort that involved all staff members.

Through Transitions, the district defines educational goals, conducts regular assessments of its programming and documents each student's academic growth.

The result has been a kind of academic "safety net" that helps the district do as much as possible to help kids succeed, despite its relatively small size and budget.

"We stretch," Simowski said. Clarenceville Schools serves students in Farmington Hills, Livonia and Redford.

Center links volunteers, needs

Eating more vegetables, exercising at least three times a week, losing weight, quitting smoking and becoming more organized are all common New Year's resolutions.

One that is not so common, but can be good for one's mental health, is to volunteer in 2003.

The United Way Volunteer Center of Oakland can help people make this a resolution that is easy to keep. Through a new on-line matching tool called Volunteer Solutions, people can quickly and easily find volunteer opportunities in their community.

The Volunteer Center is a partnership between United Way of Oakland County and United Way Community Services.

People can access Volunteer Solutions by going to www.unitedwayoakland.org/assistance.volunteer.html. Once on the site, volunteers can search for opportunities based on interest, skills and geographic location throughout metro Detroit.

This matching system was introduced at the end of October; since then, over 280 agencies have been listed on the site and more are being added daily.

This new matching tool connects potential volunteers more quickly because it gives an email link to the contact person for the volunteer

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opportunity. The site also provides detailed information on the organization that is requesting volunteers.

United Way Volunteer Center of Oakland promotes volunteerism by facilitating and supporting volunteer opportunities to improve the quality of life within the community.

The Volunteer Center provides recruitment and placement of volunteers along with training to non-profits in volunteer and board management.

For more information, call (248) 874-1621.

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STING

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The operations were started after a fatal traffic death involving an underage drinker in the city in the mid-1980s, Dwyer said.

Regorah said once a violation is made, police submit a report to the state and the server is issued a fine. The detectives also take a sample of the beverage after it is served to the minor.

The decoys, a male and female, both age 19, go into an establishment and act as though they are on a date. One orders a water, the other an alcoholic drink.

In the two-day sting, only four of the

city's 58 restaurants and bars were ticketed for selling alcohol to the underage decoys.

They are Tiramì Su, 30005 Orchard Lake; Alfocchino's, 39205 Grand River; Macaroni Grill, 32729 Northwestern Highway; and Steak & Ale, 27590 Orchard Lake.

The four current violators will face a hearing before the Liquor Control Commission. The four adults who sold the alcohol were issued appearance tickets and will face misdemeanor charges for the sale of alcohol to a minor in 47th District Court.

All the establishments ticketed except Tiramì Su had at least one previous violation for selling alcohol to a minor in the past. The Hills Police Liquor Compliance

program has been in place since 1985. Dwyer said the effort helps keep minors from purchasing alcohol at establishments considering the number of violators has decreased sharply since the program's inception.

During its early years, 60-75 percent of the licenses were issued violations compared to only 7 percent this year.

He noted the department does its part to educate liquor license holders of their responsibilities and the city gives plaques yearly to establishments that pass the tests.

"We're here to educate and reward those who do not violate the law," the chief said.

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