



NEWSDAY PHOTO / KAREN WILES STABILE

From left, Rosmarin congratulates Farmingdale seniors in his program: Cajou, Jean and Ryan.

FARMINGDALE

Gift pays off for grads

BY JOHN HILDEBRAND
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Along with the usual commencement songs and speeches, Farmingdale High School will send off three graduates tonight with something far more tangible: money in the bank.

The three seniors — Kirk Cajou, Bernandie Jean and Matt Ryan — are the first to complete a program known as Earn and Learn that was started four years ago by an area developer and philanthropist, in cooperation with Farmingdale schools.

Earn and Learn offers unique cash incentives: \$5 a day for struggling students who improve their behavior, pass courses and attend biweekly mentoring sessions. But participants say the program's prime motivation comes from philanthropist Jeffrey Rosmarin of Huntington Bay, who personally reviews teens' progress, hands out "paychecks" and delivers pep talks to those in need of an extra push.

"He stuck with me, because he believed in me," said Ryan, 17, who signed up as an eighth-grader. Since then, Ryan says, his grade average has risen from low C's to high B's, and he has accumulated \$1,440 in a

bank account established by Rosmarin. Today, he graduates with 450 other Farmingdale seniors in a 7 p.m. ceremony.

Rosmarin, 58, a commercial developer who seeks to build a 9-acre shopping center in Farmingdale, established Earn and Learn at the urging of local civic leaders there. But his support for Long Island schools goes back further — to 1992, when he launched an initiative to pay for college educations of a group of Westbury students.

His Farmingdale venture seeks to motivate teens by treating their participation in Earn and Learn like a job. Those who skip classes or mentoring sessions can be docked in pay or even "fired." Farmingdale's program has dropped more than a dozen students so far. But it also provides positive reinforcement in the form of matching funds for those who save a portion of their biweekly earnings beyond a \$5 minimum.

Rosmarin wants students to understand that they bear responsibility for correcting their own misbehavior. "I guess it's a little like stopping smoking," he said. "The person has to want to stop."

Rosmarin currently works with 13 Farmingdale students.

A program volunteer, Gary Friedman, an industrial real-estate salesman, recently began working with five students in the South Huntington district.

Earn and Learn's cash incentives appear to be unique on the Island. But New York City is experimenting with similar rewards in a bigger way, also through private funding. A total of 58 schools with 5,000 students launched a program there last fall that pays fourth-graders up to \$250 a year and seventh-graders up to \$500 for earning good marks on the city's tests.

Meanwhile, two schools in the Atlanta, Ga., area have piloted a program that pays 40 students \$8 an hour to attend study halls — the brainchild of former House Speaker Newt Gingrich. Do such rewards work? New York City doesn't expect to know the results of its program until summer's end, and Georgia's program has not released any findings.

While Rosmarin is still trying to arrange a formal research review of his program by a local university, Farmingdale officials already like what they've seen of his work with teens. "He gets the best out of them," said Ellen Krammer, an administrative director.

WESTHAMPTON BEACH

Estate caretaker's wife still critical

The wife of a Westhampton Beach estate caretaker who apparently hanged himself remained in critical condition yesterday, officials said. She had been found unconscious, injured and badly burned.

Lucyna Pawlak, 54, was flown to Stony Brook University Medical Center early Saturday after being found with a serious head injury and burns inside a worker's cottage on Seaford Lane where she and her husband lived, police said.

Smoke from the cottage drew authorities to the historic estate about 7:30 a.m. After removing Lucyna Pawlak, they said they found Ryszard Pawlak, 58, who had apparently hanged himself in an adjacent garage. The fire is being investigated as arson.

Police said they do not believe anyone else was on the property near the time of death. Suffolk homicide detectives are awaiting the results of forensic tests to determine what happened.

Meanwhile, a funeral Mass for Ryszard Pawlak is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. Saturday in St. Isidore Roman Catholic Church in Riverhead.

— LUIS PEREZ

Rosemary Place, East Islip, was driving his Ford F-250 pickup truck Sunday evening south on Woodland Drive when he hit the car near Rosemary Place, police said. Concannon told police he had fallen asleep, and an officer said he was unsteady on his feet, slurred his words, had bloodshot eyes and smelled of alcohol.

His daughter was taken to a hospital and treated for minor injuries. Concannon was charged with driving while intoxicated and endangering the welfare of a child. He was scheduled for arraignment at First District Court in Central Islip. Concannon was released on his own recognizance pending his next court appearance on July 22.

— JOSEPH MALLIA

ROCKY POINT

Beach closed for high levels of bacteria

Beech Road Beach in Rocky Point has been closed to swimmers because of high levels of waterborne bacteria from storm water runoff, Suffolk health officials announced yesterday.

County Health Commissioner Humayun Chaudhry said the beach will stay closed until further notice.

Separately, Chaudhry announced that Peconic Dunes County Park lake beach has been reopened, after sampling indicated that water quality there has risen to "acceptable levels."

Questions about beach closures should be directed to the county health department's beach hotline at 631-852-5822.

— ERIK GERMAN

EAST ISLIP

Dad charged in DWI, endangering daughter

An East Islip man was driving drunk with his 9-year-old daughter as a front-seat passenger when he fell asleep at the wheel and hit a parked car, Suffolk police said.

John C. Concannon, 51, of 29



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See if the X-Team caught you on camera in photos from Montauk's Harbor Festival this past weekend. Go to exploreli.com/xteam

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SUFFOLK COUNTY

College trustees to consider preference law

BY RICK BRAND
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The Suffolk County Community College board of trustees appeared ready to blink yesterday in its dispute with the county legislature, which had threatened the fate of \$58 million in new college building projects.

The board scheduled a special 7:30 a.m. meeting at the college's

culinary center in Riverhead today to consider a resolution stating it "will comply with Suffolk County's preference law" for local contractors — a measure that requires the county to give work to local consulting firms if they can do the work and that lawmakers say the college ignored when selecting an architect for the new library on the East End campus.

Mary Lou Araneo, the college's vice president, declined to comment on the resolution.

The tentative deal was struck through the mediation efforts of faculty union official Kevin Peterman, who first brought the lawmakers a draft of the resolution to a fundraiser in Melville Thursday night. Democratic lawmakers discussed the proposed resolution at a caucus Friday and

had objections. A new version was crafted over the weekend.

Presiding Officer William Lindsay (D-Holbrook) said he was satisfied with the latest version and expects bipartisan support for the college's capital proposals later today, although he also expects a veto from County Executive Steve Levy, who did not include the projects in his capital program.

Two weeks ago, the legislature balked at adding to the capital program a new gym in Riverhead and a new library and more classroom space in Brentwood — in light of the dispute.

College officials were especially worried if the projects were not included in the county capital plan, they might lose \$28 million in state aid already approved.