

# Eight Mile readies for sprucing

Eight Mile Road is headed for broom times soon.

On July 25-31, Eight Mile will undergo a clean up. Businesses and individuals will take part in the event, which involves litter pick up, weed pulling and flower planting.

"We encourage businesses to take responsibility for their success by maintaining an attractive facade," said Sharon Douglas, Eight Mile Boulevard Association executive president.

"The Eight Mile Clean Team" seeks to beautify the 27-mile boulevard that stretches from I-275 on the westside to I-94 on the eastside, and beyond.

The event is coordinated by the Eight Mile Boulevard Association, which recently marked its fifth anniversary. The association honored Farmington Hills City Council member Jon Grant, who served as board chairman.

The association consists of 13 cities that border on Eight Mile between the major freeways and has grown to include civic organizations, businesses and individuals.

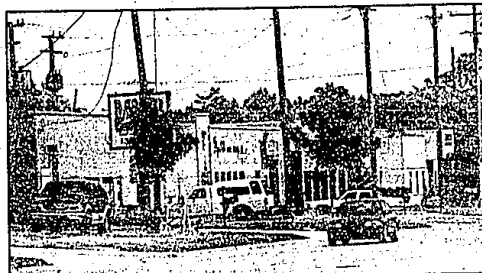
Since forming, the association has planted gardens and signs on the median to identify cities. A marker denotes the boundary Farmington Hills shares with Livonia. Botsford Hospital sponsored the sign.

"When we're finished, there will be 18 of these signs where there are city limits," Douglas said.

Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments and Metropolitan Affairs Coalition honored the Eight Mile association for joint public and private sector partnerships.

The association receives money from individual and business contributors as well as from federal and state grants. Memberships range from \$8 individual to \$1,008 for founder.

"It really is a collaborative effort," Douglas said. "We think the results are greater than the sum of the parts."



Cleaning up: Eight Mile Road will be the target beginning this weekend for a sprucing up, an event coordinated by the Eight Mile Boulevard Association.

## Teen from page A1

will sit next to her piano-playing mother during a Farmington Community Chorus concert at Heritage Park. Last August, about 500 candle-holding people showed up for a similar concert, held to pay tribute to Melissa — at that time still hanging on to life in the hospital.

Part of the community already saw Melissa sit next to her mother at a concert, during the recent Farmington Founder's Festival. "It seemed perfectly natural for her to be there."

Meanwhile, this afternoon, Melissa will return to the swim club for a low-key party to mark the first anniversary of the accident. The party will help the

teen thank those who kept her in their prayers during her long, tough recovery, said Susan Garr.

Among those expected to attend are Laura Hryczyk and Melissa McKay, the Farmington Glen lifeguards who performed CPR on Melissa while paramedics arrived.

"She wants to celebrate," Garr said. "She's inviting her friends."

**'And when people see Melissa now, they see a visible sign of God's presence. People who had any doubts about their faith are really moved.'**

Susan Garr  
—Teen's mom

"She's inviting her friends." Garr added that a blood drive for the American Red Cross, in Melissa's name, is taking place 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 6 at the Farmington Hills Fire Department Headquarters, at Orchard Lake-11 Mile. Melissa's dad is Hills Fire Lt. Michael Garr.

According to Susan Garr, her daughter's appearance at next week's concert is not being done to garner publicity, but for the family to give thanks.

"We normally perform out there once a year," she said. "We're not really dedicating this to her. But we wanted to thank people and we remember the concert from last year. We do want to let people see Melissa."

"And when people see Melissa now, they see a visible sign of God's presence. People who had any doubts about their faith are really moved."

When people see Melissa now, they also see a "pretty typical 17-year-old" except for the fact she uses a cane and ankle splints to get around.

"She is very stubborn, very determined and very tenacious. Which is a good sign for us," Susan Garr said.

The signs also "are good" as far as Melissa's physical and mental recovery are concerned. In February, she returned to Farmington High School for limited course work and in 1998-99, "we'll try a full load" of classes. Susan said Melissa wants to graduate in June, with the rest of her classmates.

And, since April, Melissa has been living with her mother, following two months at the Rainbow Rehabilitation Center.

Although Melissa is on the road toward recovery, the fact that some treat her differently than they did before the accident is bothersome to the teen.

"She wants to get on with her life, with being as normal as she can be," Susan Garr said. "But people react to her differently because she is different."

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