

SUMMER FUN

Change of pace provides outlet for youth's energy

By RON GARBINSKI

For hundreds of school aged youngsters, Friday was a change of pace. They gathered at Farmington City Park to spend the day as a group, enjoying activities sponsored by the Farmington and Oakland County Recreation Departments. During the summer, the Farmington Area Recreation Commission conducts playground programs at the various elementary schools for youngsters living in the community. To break the repetition of returning to

the same playground everyday to participate in summer activities, the commission based the children, playground leaders and aides to the City Park for eight hours of fun and games. Kids get tired of going to the same school playgrounds day in and day out to participate in the same programs all the time," says Doug Gayner, area recreation director. So we have been planning this mass get together all summer and it does a lot to provide a little something different for the youngsters," he continues. Oakland County's Recreation Commission

moved in early Friday morning to set up its mobile recreation facilities.

COUNTY RECREATION leaders brought with them the movie-nature and skate mobile, just part of the commission's summer fun program on wheels. The park's empty parking lot was transformed into a roller skating rink as scores of youngsters laced up their skates and took to the pavement. Most of them had never been on roller skates before. Their excitement on the pavement showed they loved every moment of it, although many left with cuts and bruises from falling all the time.

The shaded picnic area became an outdoor theater as the movie mobile rolled up and opened its doors. Youngsters watched a full-length Walt Disney movie as they ate their lunches in the park. Farmington area's recreation staff conducted several other games and contests and everyone walked away a winner.

"The good thing about this recreation day is, everyone wins," one recreation leader says. "All the kids walk away with some kind of prize, whether it's a ball, squirt gun or candy, they never lose."

Each youngster brought a bag lunch and refreshments were provided by the commission.

"It's good for kids between about seven and 12 years old to come out to the park and enjoy activities together," Gayner adds.

"MOST OF THEM have nothing to do during the day, so they go to school playgrounds to get involved in activities with other youngsters their own age," he says. "And that's who we are catering to here, those elementary school aged children."

The Farmington area summer recreation program for the youngsters will end July 31, but the commission has several events planned before the summer season concludes.

Tuesday night at 8 p.m., the recreation department has scheduled a youth fitness contest at Farmington High School.

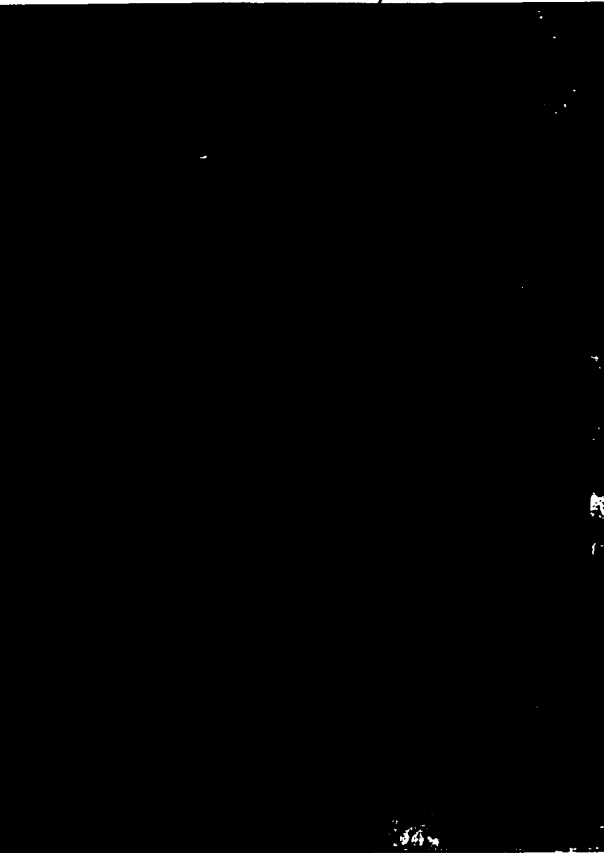
Youngsters who haven't competed on teams at school and want to match their skills against others their own age will be pitted against each other in athletic ability events.

Then, on July 29, the winners from the Farmington program will travel to Wayne State University to compete against the winners from 60 other southeastern Michigan cities.

"It's only a movie thing, but it should turn out to be really something because of all the youngsters who will turn out," Gayner says.

The summer program ends with a trip to Bobo Island for all youngsters involved in the playground sessions.

Nancy Wagner, an Oakland County Skate Mobile worker, joins the fun on the pavement at the City Park parking lot as she teaches Farmington area youngsters how to make a "train" so all the skaters can skate together.



Riding on a swing at the park proved to be just a little bit scary for four-year old Corrie Ruess as he tries to brace himself for the next pendulum motion.

ABOVE: Yvonne McClamroch ate her lunch in the park Friday afternoon and then sat back with a bomb pop to watch a Walt Disney full-length film presented by Oakland County's movie mobile. The movie mobile is just one of the county recreation department's summer activities on wheels which travel from community to community during the summer months. RIGHT: Farmington Area Recreation Department workers planned activities for the youngsters, ranging from the softball throw contest to sack races for boys and girls. And in the end, everyone walked away a winner as the recreation department provided each youngster with a prize.



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