

# Task force asks Farmington for more funding

City of Farmington councilmembers agreed to dip into the city's cash box one more time to help fund the Oakland County child killer task force.

The council unanimously voted to provide \$200 per month for six months from July through December at Monday's meeting. Farmington is one of 21

communities in Oakland County and the city of Livonia which have been asked for extensions to keep the task force operating.

Farmington Hills councilmembers have not yet received the request for additional funding.

It was the second extension granted the task force, which was organized in January, 1977. The multi-jurisdictional police task force is investigating the kidnap-murders of four Oakland County children in 1976 and 1977. The body of the last victim, 10-year-old Timothy King of Birmingham, was

found in Livonia near Eight Mile and Gill Road.

Currently 21 communities in south Oakland County, the city of Livonia, the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office and the Oakland County Sheriff's department are paying for the task force.

That funding expires in June. In seeking extension of the funding through December, Michigan State Police Lt. Robert Robertson said the size and expenses of the task force would be reduced in July.

MONTHLY contributions will drop from \$280 to \$200, he said. Task force staffing will be reduced from 16 local investigators, five state police and five clerical workers to nine local detectives, three state police and three clerical positions.

"We estimate that if we fail to apprehend the killer and there are no further abductions, we should exhaust our good tips by late fall or early winter," Robertson said.

"Since March 16, 1977, through April

10, 1978, the task force has received 15,237 tips. 10,006 have been cleared."

The task force chief said, 5,229 tips are still in the "open category."

About 40 tips are received daily, said Birmingham's Acting Police Chief Edward Ostin.

Farmington Public Safety Director Dan Byrnes recommended extension of the funding. The task force has been beneficial in ways other than the investigation of the child slayings, he said.

Numerous arrests in crimes non-related to the investigations have been initiated by the task force work, he pointed out.

TWO COMMUNITIES from which children were abducted—Berkley and Royal Oak—have withdrawn detectives from the task force. Troy has refused to give more manpower to the task force. Farmington has not contributed manpower directly to the task force's efforts.

The pared-down task force in July will consist of two investigators from the Michigan State Police and South-

field, and one each from Ferndale, Southfield Township, Oak Park, Birmingham, the prosecutor's office and the sheriff's department.

During the height of the task force's investigations, 24 state police detectives and 130 local investigators were assigned to the case.

From April to December, 1977, the task force was funded by a \$340,967 grant from the federal Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. Local contributions have funded the task force since that time.

The task force has been operating out of the former Valley Woods School, in Beverly Hills.

The detectives are seeking the killer of Timothy King; Jill Robinson of Royal Oak, found shot to death along side I-75 in Troy; Mark Stebbins of Ferndale, discovered suffocated in Southfield; and Kristine Mihelich of Berkley, whose body was found in Franklin.

All the victims were between the ages of 10 and 12 and were abducted, and held captive for a number of days, prior to their murders.

## Safety tips stress caution for children this summer

By JOE MARTUCCI

The kidnap-plays of four Oakland County children have spawned safety programs aimed at avoiding another tragedy.

Children have been warned to "Stay out of reach" and "Don't talk to strangers." At least one police official, Acting Chief Edward Ostin of Birmingham, believes the programs have helped.

"The person responsible for the child murders has not struck again due to the intense investigation being conducted by the (Oakland County Homicide) Task Force and by public awareness of the potential of another crime being committed," Ostin said.

One safety program that has received little public attention was developed by Dr. Bruce Danto, a Bloomfield Township psychiatrist and Jerry Tobias, director of the Southfield Township Youth Bureau. Dr. Danto and Tobias have been working with the task force.

Some of their tips are recounted here for parents who may want to review them with their children prior to summer vacation, when most youngsters have less supervision. The list was compiled for police and men-

tal health workers who are developing safety programs.

In deciding whether to make new friends, Dr. Danto and Tobias suggest that children:

- Always be courteous and polite to people—some can be real friends.

- Talk and share feelings with your parents and teachers about your friends.

- Follow parents' and teachers' advice to avoid meeting "pretend friends."

- Always go straight to and from school.

- Walk with a buddy when you can.
- Check in with parents when visiting friends—keep them aware of your comings and goings.

- Take time in making friends. Good friendships develop slowly. It takes a while to get to know one another.

- Look for friends who are your age and have similar interests.

- Bring new friends home to meet your family.

- Tell parents about adults who want to be your friends.

- Tell parents and teachers about people who may try to be your friends by offering a gift or inviting you to go somewhere.

Equally important, according to Dr. Danto and Tobias, are some "don'ts."

- Don't hitchhike—you don't know these people.

- Don't accept a ride with someone you've just met.

- Don't place yourself in a situation where you wouldn't ordinarily meet potential friends.

- Don't take shortcuts home from school.

- Don't run away from home.

- Don't go out alone at night.

- Don't walk home alone at night from babysitting jobs or other places.

- Don't sneak off to places your parents or friends disapprove of.

- Don't accept gifts or offers from

someone special you've just met or have only seen a few times.

- Don't go with any adult until your parents have met and approve of him.

- Don't be fooled by adult friends who may use different false stories to get you to go with them.

- Don't approach a car with people you don't know inside. Keep a safe distance.



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Richard Headlee, president and chief executive of the Alexander Hamilton Life Insurance Co., will be the speaker at the May 11 Farmington Chamber of Commerce legislative breakfast. He will speak on his drive to have state taxes limited. The program will be at 8 a.m. at the Holiday Inn of Farmington. Cost is \$5 a person. Advanced registration should be made by calling Ed Lane at the chamber office, 474-3440.

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