

SHARON LAMIEUX/staff photographer

Punching at pinatas

Larkshire Elementary fifth grader Nick Seric winds up to hit a homemade pinata as the rest of the class shouts directions to him. The fun came last Thursday after all three classes of fifth graders at the Farmington Hills school completed a study unit on Latin America. Games, dancing, reports, language, music and the pinata project were all part of the unit, designed by student teacher Cookie Markowitz.

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Residents help police in fight against crime

By Noreen Flack
staff writer

In Farmington Hills, citizens are serious about fighting crime.

For the past two years, the citizens crime prevention advisory committee has participated in police programs as part of a citywide effort to pool ideas for combating break-ins, thefts, stickups, car thefts and other common crimes.

"It's really nice to have a police department that welcomes civilian input," said resident Alex Keurejlan, chairman.

"We are really serious about this. If someone can't be productive, we don't want them on our committee. We are here to render our civilian opinion to the police department."

Chief William Dwyer organized the 18-member committee in November 1987 — the byproduct of a goal in the police department's 5-year plan. Its thrust is limited to crime prevention programs.

Members meet the first Friday of each month at noon with Dwyer and Lt. Richard Murphy, liaison between the department and the committee.

"My thoughts were to have input from a cross-section of citizens from the city to make recommendations on how we can be more efficient and effective for the people they represent," Dwyer said.

The cross-section includes homeowners, business leaders, civic leaders, the schools and the clergy.

"It is important that we get input from the advisory board," Dwyer said. "We feel the police department alone cannot provide the most efficient service, not without the input from the citizens."

The committee is split into five subcommittees: funding, legislative, enforcement, education and membership.

The membership subcommittee screens residents interested in joining the committee to make sure applicants are dedicated to crime prevention, Keurejlan said.

Although the committee has no policy-making power, members review ordinances and legislation to propose possible amendments.

The committee boasts a 19-point action plan, "Say No To Drugs, Yes To Life," designed in April 1988. Supporters include Farmington Families in Action and Oakland County Mothers Against Drunk Drivers.

"WE SUPPORT the police department's efforts to keep pornography out of the city," Keurejlan said. "We don't want anything to do with that."

The committee encourages enforcement of handicapped parking regulations and accessibility for handicapped citizens, he said.

The police department's crime prevention section helped organize a Neighborhood Watch program in September 1987 to battle the high rate of burglaries and larcenies in Old Town in the southeast part of

the city.

The Initial Neighborhood Watch meeting was attended by more than 100 residents of Section 36 — bounded by Middlebelt on the east, Inkster Road on the west, Eight Mile on the north and Nine Mile on the south.

Neighborhood Watch's thrust is to promote concern and awareness. It encourages citizens to look out for neighbors and beef up home security.

It doesn't condone citizens taking dangerous situations into their own hands by patrolling streets and trying to nab criminals, Dwyer said.

"Now we have over two-thirds of our city involved in Neighborhood Watch," Dwyer said. "We have found the program to be very effective and it shows with the considerable decrease in the number of burglaries in the area. For a city that has grown as fast as Farmington Hills, that's pretty good."

To further feedback, the police department designed an incident questionnaire in July 1987 for burglary victims. The nine-question form asks citizens victimized by thieves to answer questions about the courtesy and professionalism of the reporting officer and the promptness of officers investigating the crime.

Bookstore stocks Reader's Catalog

The Reader's Catalog, Random House's new 40,000-title book catalog with a toll-free ordering number, has been anathema to many booksellers, who fear that their customers will buy their books from the catalog instead of from them.

But the Little Professor Book Center in Grand River/Halsted Shopping Center is stocking the catalog

and welcomes the chance to sell it.

"The Reader's Catalog is actually going to help my business," says Richard Ilersheim, Little Professor Book Center owner. "I either have in stock, or can quickly obtain for my customers, any of the titles listed in the catalog. This saves customers the headache and expense of the shipping charges, long waits, and

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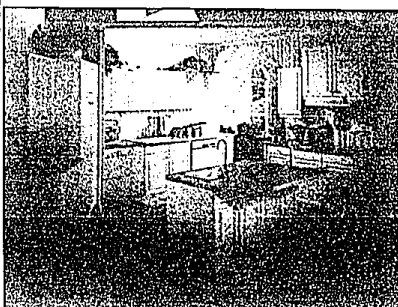
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