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Hills cops wow crowd — at annual open house

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

There's nothing like a little boy's eyes when they behold a massive, M1A1 Abrams tank.

"That's a big one, huh?" said the little boy's father as his son put out his hand to make sure the big tank,

the type used in Operation Desert Storm, was real.

And real it was. Just as was the Army gas refueling truck that weighed a couple of tons and a huge utility truck.

The tank and military equipment were among the eye-catchers at the fourth annual Farmington Hills Police Department open house Sunday.

That's not to mention the Farmington Hills fire trucks and rescue squad, as well as the Oakland County Marine Division's rescue boat, police cars, the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Agency bomb truck, and the Oakland County Sheriff's Department Mounted Division.

"They get antsy standing around in the same spot," a sheriff's deputy said when his horse got a little frisky in front of bystanders.

THE DAMP and cloudy weather Sunday didn't daunt the crowds or the fun.

"There were people all over the place," Farmington Hills police Chief William Dwyer said.

"We are very proud of this year's open house. We had good crowds and a lot of special interests for everyone," Dwyer said.

He said it was tough to estimate the number of participants, "but it's the largest we've had since we started the open house."

WHILE ASKING mom and dad to hold their pizza and pop, children took their turns at the dunk tank.

"A little higher," an onlooker shouted as a child readied for his second throw to dunk a police officer. "A little lower. Bull's-eye. Good shot." The boy walked away smiling.

In the police building, where visitors got a close-up look at the inner workings of the department, including the cellblock, parents and children waited their turn to practice on Firearms Training System. Scenarios on a screen filled with good and

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bad guys confronted participants. It was up to each participant to decide when to shoot.

"It has the same trigger pull as a real gun," Detective Darnel Krause said when some youngsters couldn't pull the trigger.

But watching others take their turns excited the small crowd.

"Do you see how loud that gun shoots?" a mother whispered to her children as they sat on the floor and watched everyone take their turn.

Clown, Sparky the fire dog, and McGruff the crime dog meandered through the crowds posing for photos with children.

FOR ADULTS, there was also plenty to do and see. Information booths — handicap parking, crime

prevention, smoke detectors, traffic safety, drug displays, evidence gathering techniques — filled the police station.

Adults also could get their blood pressure tested for free, take a rest while the North Farmington High School Jazz Band played or take in a few informational videos.

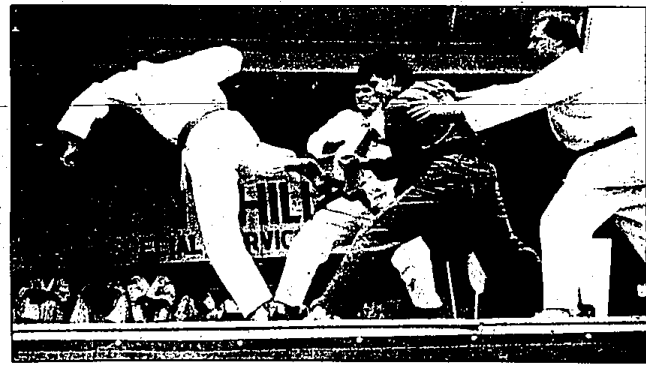
And then there was the open house raffle. Winners included Gary Thomas, who won a \$50 gift certificate from Kmart; Diane Connor, a \$25 certificate from Target; and Robert Clark, also a \$25 certificate from Target.

Five open house visitors won Polaroid cameras: Merle Grossman, Robin M. Weatherford, Karen Podges, Emily Nacy and Claudia Rozum.



Rusty, an equine member of the Oakland County Sheriff's Department Mounted Division, meets twins Kimberly (left) and Kristy

Anderson and mother Lori Anderson at the Farmington Hills Police Department's open house Sunday.



Karate kicks thrill spectators as the Plymouth Karate Club puts on a demonstration during

the open house at the Farmington Hills Police Department.

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