

Toys For Tots



BILL BRESLER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Toys, anyone?: Total Fitness, a health club at 23311 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills, is a drop off point for the Marine Corps Reserve "Toys For Tots" program. Total Fitness' Russ Pauling (left), Farmington Councilman Richard Tupper and District Judge Fred Harris are involved in the program. Unwrapped toys may be dropped off anytime before Tuesday, Dec. 8. For more information, call 478-8393.

Seniors wheel into dinery thanks to new curb access

By BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Thanks to the combined efforts of a bank, a restaurant, a retirement residence, a service group and one dedicated man, some handicapped and senior citizens are enjoying eating out again.

For many residents of Grand River Village, an assisted living residence at Grand River and Halsted in Farmington Hills, the short trip to the nearby Bill Knapp's family restaurant wasn't possible.

Wheelchair-bound seniors could not get from the lower (employee) parking lot at Comerica Bank to Bill Knapp's because of a curb.

"All that was needed was a curb access," said Robert Winters, a former GRV resident.

"We had tried before, but it didn't work out."

Then Winters, who has since moved to Northville, contacted the Novi South chapter of the Kiwanis Club. After attending a few meetings, he proposed having the club make an access. After only 2 1/2 months, the project was completed at a cost of \$625 to the club.

The new access, which was ready in late October, has made a big difference for many of the 160 GRV residents, said its administrator, Ann O'Dell.

"The residents tried to initiate it, but didn't get anywhere," O'Dell said. "They'd been trying for maybe a year and a half."

Winters found the bank and restaurant more than willing to help.

"He didn't actually need the access, because he had moved out," said Julie Lezenby, Comerica branch secretary. "He continued to work to help them get the ramp."

And the change has been a real benefit for Bill Knapp's.

"What surprised me was how many more senior citizens we gained as customers," said restaurant manager Richard McCarthy.

Although the Kiwanis Club paid for the access, Winters said the restaurant and bank have offered to help. And according to O'Dell, the improvement hasn't been lost on GRV residents.

"I've heard a lot of comments," she said. "They're really happy about it."

Zone compromise paves way to complete senior complex

By BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Although nobody got what they wanted, a zoning settlement will allow the completion of a senior housing complex in Farmington Hills.

The Macropolis Village on Edgemoor Street ran afoul of city zoning regulations, because it restricts tenants based on age. The special RCE zoning designed for multiple senior housing, would have required residents to be at least 62 years old.

Some neighbors also complained about the number of units, which would affect the "density" of the neighborhood.

The original project would have included 68 single-family units on the nine-acre site. The city agreed

to a compromise that allows 58 units in a RA-1, single family zoning.

"We have to cut our losses," said councilman Terry Sever. "It's dangerous to leave it RCE. Now we're protecting the (lower) density."

The project, planned as a community for elderly parishioners of the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church, ran into problems because prospective mortgage lenders shied away from an age-restrictive condominium that might present resale problems. Those problems didn't surface until 17 units and the water, sewer and concrete curbs had been installed.

In addition, some residents in the area of Middlebelt between 10 Mile and 11 Mile roads said they were worried about increased traf-

fic created by the project. The incomplete project, with vacant fields, has also become an eyesore, they said. Councilman Aldo Vagnozzi agreed.

"Why weren't they (Macropolis) required to take care of those problems?" he said.

But City Manager William Costick said the project will not be a blight on the neighborhood once it's complete.

"It's just not finished," he said. The council gave the agreement the green light by a 5-1 vote, with Vagnozzi voting against it at its Nov. 23 meeting. Councilman Larry Lichtman, whose law firm represents Macropolis Village, abstained.

Vagnozzi said he voted against the agreement because it puts the city in "too defensive" a position.

Cops hail shoplifting crackdown

By SUP BUCK
STAFF WRITER

Farmington police say they are pleased that retailers and shopkeepers are cracking down on shoplifters.

"We're glad to see increased enforcement by retailers," said public safety director Frank Lauhoff at a recent city council meeting.

Lauhoff's third quarter operations report reflected an increase in reported shoplifting reports.

Some 88 incidents were reported as of the September report.

'This is the second year that we've seen the lowest rate in part one (serious crimes) in 20 years.'

Frank Lauhoff
public safety director

This compares to 65 reported incidents in last year's report.

"This is the second year that we've seen the lowest rate in part

one (serious crimes) in 20 years," Lauhoff said.

For example, both Farmer Jack and Kmart have independent security companies, said deputy director Gary Goss.

Increased diligence and vigilance overall by retailers has resulted in more reports, Goss said.

Each retailer determines his individual stance on shoplifting. Smaller retailers often stop shoplifters at the door or have installed detection devices, Goss said.

Sometimes, all the retailer can do is observe and take down the alleged shoplifters license plate number, Goss added.

Chancellor talks at church

Dr. Lee Roberson will be the guest speaker during the 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. services on Sunday, Dec. 13, at Northwest Baptist Church in Farmington Hills.

Roberson pastored the Highland Park Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tenn., for 40 years. During those years the church grew to be one of the largest in the entire world in membership.

In 1946, he inaugurated Tennessee Temple School, which later became Tennessee Temple

University. He presently serves as chancellor of the school. Students attend Tennessee Temple from all states of the union and from many foreign countries.

Now in his 80s, Roberson continues to speak daily all across the country, and is in great demand as a conference speaker, teacher and evangelist.

The public is invited to attend. The church is at 23845 Middlebelt.

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