

Neighborhoods hold 'night out' to combat crime

By SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

The scene on Cumberland Drive in Farmington Hills Aug. 3 could have been vintage small town. But it took place in a suburb of a big city.

Gary Pitt, safety coordinator for the Greenacres Civic Homeowners' Association, hosted an ice cream social for about 50 people. He scooped four different kinds of ice cream into cones in front of his house, feverishly working against time to prevent melting.

The gathering was for a modern-day, symbolic reason: to give neighborhood crime and drugs a "going away party."

On that Tuesday people in Farmington-area neighborhoods joined with those in thousands of communities across the nation for "National Night Out" sponsored by National Association of Town Watch, the Farmington Public Safety Department and Farmington Hills Police Department.

The purpose is to combat crime and drugs. From 8-10 p.m. residents locked their doors, turned on outside porch lights and spent the evening outside with their neighbors on front porches.

"All the neighbors were just mingling," Pitt said. "It was a way to get to know who your neighbors are."

■ On a recent Tuesday people in Farmington-area neighborhoods joined with those in thousands of communities across the nation for 'National Night Out,' sponsored by National Association of Town Watch, and the two police departments.

This event was designed to "send a strong message to the bad guys that our neighborhoods are alert to suspicious activity and that they will call the police to report suspicious persons and vehicles," said Chuck Lee, a commander with Farmington Public Safety.

Developed in 1983 by the National Association of Town Watch, National Night Out evolved from the traditional nighttime porchlight vigils to special events that allow police departments an avenue to strengthen neighborhood spirit and police-community relations.

"Double income people don't

always know a lot of their neighbors," said Ken Kendall, treasurer of the Westbrook Manor Homeowners Association. This group handed out ice cream sandwiches to 470 homes in three different locations, Kendall said.

As part of the program, the Farmington Hills Police Department also planned a National Night Out kick-off rally at Alexander Hamilton Life complex in Farmington Hills.

The Hills police's Crime Prevention section and RE/MAX Foremost Realty helped organize the vigil. McGruff the Crime Dog and the McGruff hot air balloon, Farmington Bank's traveling musical callopo, police and fire vehicles displays, entertainment by the Farmington Hills Fire Department's Fire Clowns, a classic car review, free crime prevention educational materials, helium balloons and give-aways to adults and children were all part of the Hills event.

"People filtered in regularly throughout the event," said Crime Prevention Technician Chris Cogar, an event organizer from the Hills police department. She estimates that 250 balloons were handed out to kids.

"That's what Neighborhood Watch is all about," Cogar said. "Neighbors looking out for neighbors."



Clowning around: Four-year-old Geoffrey Cormier of Farmington Hills plays with a fire hose as Marie Schroeder, a Hills firefighter turned clown, looks on.



Pawshake: McGruff the anti-Crime Dog (Hills officer Mike Meister) shakes hands with Andrew Heidacker, a Farmington Hills 3-year-old. Holding Andrew's other hand is his mom, Karen Heidacker.



Clowning around: The clowns put on a show for the people who participated in the National Night Out program.

POLICE/FIRE CALLS

Listed below are some of the Farmington area police incidents, fire calls and court cases reported during the past week.

■ MOTORCYCLE INJURY

A 27-year-old Whitmore Lake motorcyclist lost control of his motorcycle Aug. 5 after driving more than 100 miles per hour east on I-696, according to Officer Ed Fitzpatrick. The cyclist was taken to Southfield's Providence Hospital with a concussion.

■ VANDALISM

A window was shattered causing \$400 damage at Venus Control on Eight Mile in Farmington Aug. 5.

The driver's side rear window was broken on a 1987 Pontiac 6000 parked on Farmington Road in Farmington, causing \$150 in damages Aug. 4.

A door window was broken, causing \$300 in damages at First Federal Savings in Farmington

■ A \$5,000 Tri-Star computer was stolen from Siegler and Siegler Co. in Farmington Hills Aug. 5.

Aug. 4. No entry was made. Police believe the window may have been shot out with a pellet gun.

■ LARCENY

Four hubcaps valued at \$200 were stolen off a 1993 Dodge Shadow parked near The Hair Gym on Grand River in Farmington Aug. 4.

A hammock and trampoline springs valued at \$184 were stolen from the back yard of a residence on Oakland Street in Farmington Aug. 3. The hammock was found in a trash can in a nearby alley.

A CD player and cash valued at

\$500 was stolen from a 1986 Ford parked at Muirwood apartments Thursday.

■ BURGLARY

A Pinewood Condominium resident reported personal documents missing after someone broke into the residence sometime between July 30 and Aug. 2. A certificate of deposit was among the documents taken. Marks were found near the front door and on a file cabinet.

■ BREAKING AND ENTERING

A \$5,000 Tri-Star computer was stolen from Siegler and Siegler Co. in Farmington Hills Aug. 5. Some \$1,700 in cigarettes and \$85 in cash were stolen from Wine Tasters Party Shoppe on Nine Mile in Farmington Hills Aug. 6.

■ STOLEN AUTO

A 1993 Nissan valued at \$22,000 was parked in the lot of Nissan Corp. in Farmington Hills Thursday.

NM

*With These Contenders,
You'll Never Be Down
For The Count.*

Don't miss the Neiman Marcus Watch Extravaganza today through Saturday, August 9-14. We're presenting the most innovative and exquisite styles from internationally renowned makers of men's and women's timepieces: Piaget, Concord, Movado, Corum, Bertolucci, Baume & Mercier, and Audemars Piguet. And during these six days only, earn double InCircle® points on your purchase of any of these fine watches. From jewel-sparked bracelets to stainless steel chronographs, you'll discover a myriad of ways to make the most of your time. Precious Jewels Salon.

Neiman Marcus
How to look™

The Somerset Collection 2705 W. Big Beaver Road 313-643-3300
Store open Monday, Thursday, Friday 10-9; Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday 10-6; Sunday noon-5.