## Lipa from page 1A

temporary office in Farmington Training Center. never even had thought I'd be

doing this."

In February of 1093, Lipa appeared before the Farmington Hills City Council not knowing how he and his local Special Olympics program would be received.

Olympics program would be received.

To his surprise, the city council
— and especially then-Mayor Nancy Bates — not only put the seal of approval on Team Farmington and its activites, but began to involve Lips and the athletes he coached in many city projects.
They took part and helped at the Family Day in the Park, Family Night in January and other city events.

"I walked in there (city council chambers) not knowing what to espect," he said, recalling his first nervous moments before the council.

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The special Olympians were trying to publicize a bowling fund raiser. That got much more. And Lipa, who is married to

And Lipa, who is married to Kathy Lipa, became a resource for the city in organizing events and ways to help the city's youth. In late 1993 Lipa was named to head the city's new Commission of Children, Youth and Families proposed by Bates and approved by the city council.

by the city council.

Lipa will continue his activities with Team Farmington, but will work at the \$35,000 a year position to oversee a program that will include recreation and other activities for the city's teens at three or more centers around the city.

The program was made possible, thanks to a federal grant of \$337,000 administered through the state Department of Social Services, with \$200,000 in match-

"We'd like to get businesses involved and give kids a chance to do something not just recreational that would give them a taste of the real world.'

Todd Lipa new director

ing money from the city's parks and recreation millage budget. Assistand City Manager Steve Brock said the program will likely include activities at the YMCA on Farmington Road north of 12 Mille, the Farmington Hills Activites Center on 11 Mile east of Middlebelt and another location in the southeast part of the city. Teens will be transported from the middle achools and the programs will run from about 3-6 p.m. to start.

"We had 10 applicants for the job," Bruck said. "Todd stood out as easily the best candidate."

Lipa, who was the Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year in 1994, also helped organinize and publicise the first annual Cornucpia Ball in November that raised about \$60,000 for the foundation that will continue to fund the youth program." Brock said.

Lipa had worked for the Detroit News and then the Detroit Free Press for 19 years before taking the position. He attended Oakland Community College and the Wayne State University Labor School.

Thanks to some surveys com-pleted in connection with the grant application, Lipa said the city has a lot of ideas about recre-ation programs for the teens. And he has some additional ideas for

he has some additional ideas for programs.
We dilke to get businesses in we do with a control of the control of

what the kids want to do," he said.

In all of this, the main focus will be giving the city's youth a safe enjoyable environment after school. Encouragement and self-eateem will definitely be part of any program he oversees, Lipa said.
"I remember when I was seventh-grader at Power Middle School," Lipa said. "I was 125 pounds, trying to run around the track when John Urquhart (a teacher and coach) came up to me, put his arm around my shoulder and said that maybe I should play football. It was just one comment, but it was important to me at the time."

And yes, Lina went on to play

And yes, Lips went on to play football at Farmington High, And yes, he hopes be's offered the same encouragement to young people in Special Olympics and anywhere else. "Sometimes all it takes is a little encouragement," he said.

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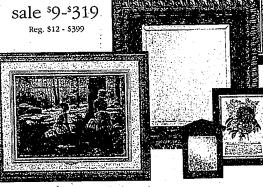
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