

Neighborhood House befriends cities' help to hire coordinator

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Neighborhood House needs a helping hand. Organizers of the non-profit group are asking the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills to extend theirs.

The scope of being a clearing house for assistance has expanded in the last 10 years, said Phyllis Howard, who spoke to Farmington City Council Monday. A similar presentation is planned for Farmington Hills City Council.

Neighborhood House is a volunteer non-profit organization that helps Farmington area residents in need.

Neighborhood House organizers say they need to add a person to coordinate referrals and other charitable works, which have ballooned in recent years.

"We need someone to focus continually on these new needs," said Howard, who was joined by the Rev. Budge Gero at Monday's meeting.

Neighborhood House organizers project such a coordinator will run \$11,031. They anticipate receiving a grant to cover the costs in two years.

In the interim, though, they're asking both cities to help.

Farmington and Farmington Hills jointly fund 47th District Court and the Farmington Community Library. A joint budget planning session will take place in May.

Farmington council members said they'll discuss the request then.

"I think this agency you have is the one closest to the people," Farmington Mayor Jo Anne McShane said.

Neighborhood House was incorporated in 1988, but was helping the area's needy prior to that.

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Initially, volunteers would see mostly single women with children. They would help buy a pair of glasses or help with an unpaid electric bill for \$35.

Homeless men, senior citizens, families with teenage children are coming to Neighborhood House, Howard said. Their needs range from needing transportation and prescriptions to substance abuse and mental health counseling.

"Now that unpaid electric bill is \$435," Howard said. Recently, a man showed up at Neighborhood House's office at Farmington Community School and said he was released from Botsford Hospital after being treated for a gunshot wound, Howard said. He needed a place to stay.

"I'm sure you'll agree, these have been very complex and time consuming problems," Howard said.

Neighborhood House has helped fire victims with home repairs, provided food and clothing to children in the Head Start program, and coordinated holiday donations for needy families.

When it's not able to help directly, the organization points people to the proper agency.

"I like to use the model of an air traffic controller," Gero said. "We want to get people on the ground and where they need to be."



SHARON LEMIEUX/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Bowling's a ball: Matt Cairns throws a ball for the Huntington Bank team of Farmington Hills during the recent Team Farmington Bowl-a-Thon.

Response bowls over Team Farmington

By BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

What bowlers at the fourth annual Team Farmington Special Olympics Bowl-a-Thon lacked in skill they made up for in enthusiasm.

And the 140 or so bowlers didn't do bad in the money department either, raising more than \$14,000 for Team Farmington at the Drakeshire Lanes Saturday morning.

Farmington Hills City Councilman Jon Grant was trying to keep politics — and his ball — out of the gutter, and mostly succeeding.

"I'm sort of getting into a groove," Grant said.

City officials from Farmington and the Hills, the schools, Hills firefighters and several

businesses fielded teams that pledged money for the cause. And they had some fun in the process.

"I'm playing it right down the middle," said Chris Clayson, 14, a Warner Middle School student who was pitching in for his friend on a Power Middle School team. "Hey, I got an 811!"

And although there were several bowlers who hit the lanes on a regular basis, many were at the event just for fun and to help Special Olympics, which provides year-round sports training and educational programs to all mentally-impaired athletes.

"Actually, I'm more of a golfer," said Jackie Hurst of Ann Arbor, a member of the Metro-bank team. "But this is great."

Bowlers were helped by the nine-pin top rule that counts nine pins as a strike, to move the game along. Teams played three games. Pizza and pop were provided and the Drakeshire Lanes donated its facilities for the event.

"This is our major fund-raiser for the year," said event organizer Russ Reynolds, the father of two Team Farmington members. "We raise about \$20,000 a year to buy uniforms, equipment, rent space and pay for trips for the athletes."

In fact, Team Farmington raises its own money and does not receive funding from the county or national Special Olympics agencies.

The bowl-a-thon raised \$14,213, Reynolds said. The

event raised about \$11,500 in 1994 and \$10,000 last year.

"This is the best we've done in the four years," Reynolds said. "We have expenses of about \$1,000, but that is still over \$13,000."

Team Farmington offers 18 different sports including Alpine skiing, basketball, bowling, cross country skiing, golf, gymnastics, polo hockey, soccer softball, swimming and volleyball. Team Farmington is affiliated with Oakland County Special Olympics. Special Olympics was created by the Joseph P. Kennedy Foundation in 1968.

Team Farmington currently has more than 240 athletes and 50 volunteer coaches from the Farmington area.

Filing deadline set May 14 for Hills council candidates

Candidates interested in running for the Farmington Hills City Council special election must file petitions at the city clerk's office by 4 p.m. May 14.

The election is being held as part of the August primary. The seat was vacated when Council Member Aldo Vagnozzi became the city's first elected mayor.

The winning candidate will fill the unexpired term of Vagnozzi to Nov. 4, 1997. Councilwoman Masak Kurejca has been appointed to the council until August.

Candidates must be a legally registered elector of Farmington Hills. City employees can not run for the seat.

- In order to file, a candidate:
 - Must clearly state the office for which the candidate is filing.
 - Must file a nominating petition

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In the form approved and designated by the Secretary of State for the nomination of non-partisan offices. The forms are available at the city clerk's office.

- Must obtain at least 151 and not more than 303 qualified signatures.

People signing the petitions

must be registered to vote in the City of Farmington Hills. No one signing the petition can sign for more than one candidate to the office.

An affidavit of identity declaring that the candidate is properly qualified to seek the office and will serve if elected must be submitted along with each set of petitions as required by the Farmington Hills City Charter.

Nominated petitions shall be open to the public for inspection at the city clerk's office.

A candidate may withdraw by filing a request no later than 4 p.m. May 17. There is no filing fee. Campaign finance information is under the jurisdiction of the county clerk.

For further information, call the city clerk's office at 473-9558.

McDonald's manager charged in connection with armed robbery

A Detroit woman has been charged in the March 22 armed robbery of the McDonald's restaurant at Orchard Lake and 10 Mile.

Eyvette Nicole Hansberry, 18, was arraigned in 47th District Court in Farmington Tuesday on a charge of assault with intent to rob while armed, which carries up to a life sentence if convicted.

The robbery took place near closing time, at 11:06 p.m. Two men in their early 20s entered the restaurant and demanded money. One carried a machete and the other had his hand in his pocket as if he had a gun.

Farmington Hills police said Hansberry was working as a man-

Police discovered that money typically "dropped" in the safe during the course of the evening was not, despite the procedure being the restaurant's policy. The robbers got away with about \$1,300, police said.

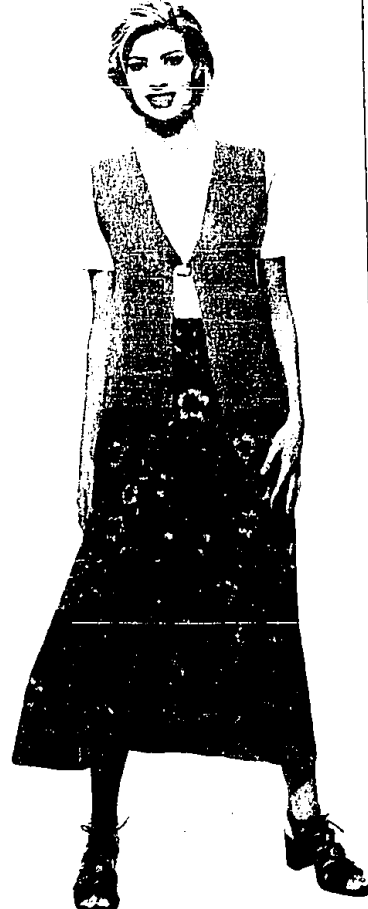
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Hansberry is free on \$10,000 personal bond and faces a preliminary examination at 8:30 a.m. April 15.

Police are still looking for other suspects. One of the robbers is described as black, in his early 20s, 6-foot-1 and 180 pounds. He wore a black hooded jacket and a black ski mask and carried the machete. The other man was black, in his early 20s, 6-foot-8 and 160 pounds and wore black pants, a hooded sweat shirt and a head band over his face during the robbery.



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