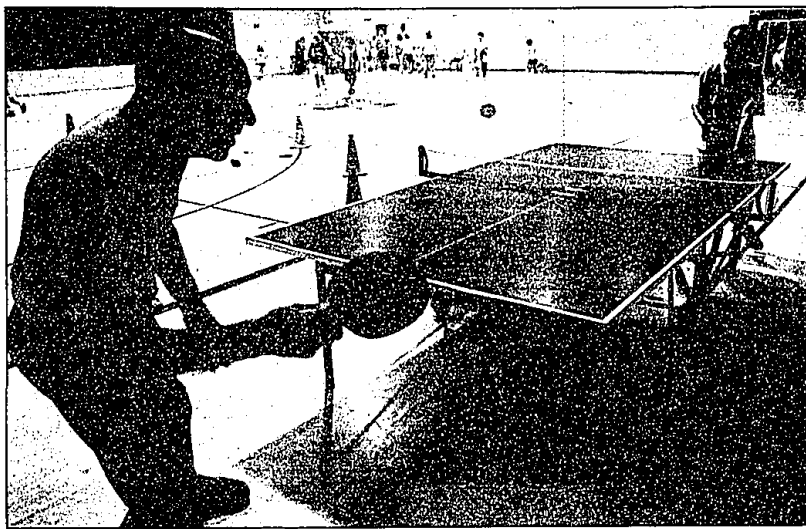


## Generations together



Picnic fun: Grandparents joined their grandchildren for a special picnic at the Farmington Hills Senior Center Tuesday. Bill Shortt of Farmington Hills, above left, takes time to play Ping-Pong with grandson Jeff Shortt, 12. At right, Kristyn Neill, 7, of Farmington Hills, gets her face painted by Farmington High cheerleader and sophomore Jamie Millitello. Along with games, there was storytelling and, of course, plenty of food.

STAFF PHOTOS BY  
BRYAN MITCHELL



## Officials wait to see impact of new fines

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER

It likely won't be until the end of the year before officials at 47th District Court and the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills have a clearer grasp about the success of recently implemented increases to speeding ticket and motor violation fees.

Extra time is needed before it can be determined whether more citizens are contesting tickets and whether police officers who issued citations are spending too much time in court.

"In the long run, how we're going to see this is in OT in court," said Farmington Public Safety Deputy Director Michael Wiggins. "As of right now, we haven't sat down to evaluate if more tickets are being taken to court."

"We'll have to let that go awhile to see if that's occurring or not."

According to Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer, the increase in penalties is "out of our arena. We're just going to continue to do our jobs. I'm not going to say if we like it or we don't like it."

Dwyer said the higher fees is not impacting how the department does its job. "We have a responsibility to keep the streets safe."

He agreed with Wiggins, however, that "It's pretty early" to determine if the increases are causing a backlash.

On June 2, the court implemented the new fee schedule, put together following an extensive cost analysis by 47th District Court Administrator Dave Walsh. Someone ticketed for driving up to 10 miles-per-hour above the posted speed limit now could pay \$110 — up from \$76, the previous fee for that infraction.

"We're monitoring statistics," Walsh said recently. "How has this effected the number of informal hearings we have? Are peo-

ple more likely to ask for court appearances than (who) just pay the ticket? We haven't been with this long enough to know."

Walsh said there have been "isolated incidents" of people upset with the fee schedule. "But we did before, too."

The increased fees — which Walsh explained include three components, violation fines, local costs and state assessment costs — were being lauded by Farmington Mayor JoAnne McShane and City Council member Mary Bush as potentially effective deterrents to speeding among young people.

McShane and Bush, at a recent council meeting, discussed doing more to publicize the increased fees — the first since 1993 — with the school district.

According to Walsh, efforts are already being made to promote awareness among teenagers about the heavy penalties they face for speeding.

"Judge (Marla) Parker goes to each of the high schools and holds a full day of court," Walsh said. "There's a full docket and it's been a great success. There are traffic cases on the docket. So kids get to observe real-life consequences of what takes place. I think it's very powerful."

Judge Parker is scheduled to hold court Oct. 9 at Farmington Harrison High School.

Walsh also emphasized that 47th District Court does not keep ticket money, and relies on the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills for its annual budget.

## Hills youth center gears up for opening day on Aug. 26

BY VIVIAN DEGAN  
STAFF WRITER

Too young to drive, but too old for Power Rangers, Beanie Babies or baby-sitters? Many middle school students who seem to find themselves "in-between" places to go after school will have their own place to hang-out from 2:15 - 5:30 p.m. every school day.

Since school bells start ringing August 26, the Farmington Hills Area Youth and Family Services Centers will also open their doors the same day to offer kids ages 11-15 everything from state-of-the-art computer technology, to swimming, ice-skating, basketball, open gym, or to chess, conversation or even a quiet room to catch-up on homework or get tutoring for the stuff that's tough.

All this is for free, including a snack and a bus ride right from the school parking lot over to the closest Youth Center. Farmington Hills and Farmington students are also provided free bus commuter service to visit other centers with even more offerings.

Students must register for the program, which requires filling out an information sheet with parental permission, and carrying a picture-identification card made at the youth center. Kids can come every day, once-a-week or once-in-a-while.

Todd Lipa, director, said the programs were designed for middle-school kids by the students themselves, so available activities are tailored to fit.

"Kids this age change their minds and their styles often,"

Lipa said. "Students this year may want different activities than last year."

"We want to offer as many different things as possible, so there is variety. They need to be able to develop continuing interests — it's their program."

For instance, a scuba-diving/snorkeling class is one new program in the works this fall and in addition to the organized dances and field trips, one center will offer a television production.

Operational for the second year, three centers will open the first day of school August 26: William Costick Activities Center at 11 Mile and Middlebelt; Farmington Hills Ice Arena on 8 Mile; and the YMCA at 12 Mile and Farmington Rd.

A fourth center will be open later in September at Warner Middle School, Lipa said.

While 800 students registered for the program last year, the director hopes even more will participate this year.

"The best problem we could have is to have too many kids in our centers, instead of going home to watch TV alone or to find themselves at loose ends," Lipa said. "We welcome everyone and want to provide a place for as many kids as we can to hang-out and meet friends."

While the programs are funded through federal and state grants, and a local Parks and Recreation millage, Lipa says among his best assets are the staff and volunteers that make it fly.

The center is seeking staff for the recreational and educational

programs. The 20-hour week jobs typically pay \$6 to \$8 per hour, a great job for college students, senior citizens, and parents who are available from 2-6 p.m., Lipa said.

Youth center volunteers reach into the entire community.

"We have business people who drop in for an hour to play chess, hoops, or just talk to our young people," Lipa said and that his volunteers include teachers, police officers and Mayor JoAnne McShane.

As success stories go, the centers last year offered a special incentive program for students aimed at achievement.

"The students chose the reward, an overnight trip to Cedar Point," Lipa said of the program that called for earned points in five areas, including academic, community service and participating in a prevention class about illegal substances.

Additionally, he said, students who participate in center activities demonstrate responsibility and pride.

"I especially enjoy watching the mutual respect that develops between students and senior citizens that visit the Costick Center. I watch students become sensitive to things like opening doors for seniors, walking a little more quietly in the halls, and making the effort to smile and say hello," he said.

To volunteer, apply for a job, or for further information about registering a middle school student for any of the centers, call the Farmington Hills Area Youth and Family Services at 473-1841.

## Hills council tightens ordinance on solicitors

BY VIVIAN DEGAN  
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills City Council approved changes Monday to the city's ordinance requiring street solicitors to buy a license from the city before knocking on anyone's doors to peddle brooms, brushes, magazines or contracts for mineral rights.

The change requires the solicitor's application to include more information, a social security number or federal employer identification number, and a

State of Michigan sales tax number or basis for a sales-tax exemption.

The ordinance also calls for the solicitor to avoid neighborhoods or subdivisions where residents have posted a no-solicitors sign.

Legally, we can't prevent a solicitor from coming to resident's doors," said Deputy Clerk Pam Sibley.

"When we get complaints from residents about someone knocking on their door, even at 6 or 7

p.m. we tell them that unless the solicitor is doing something illegal, they have the right to be there," she said.

But, neighborhood associations may post a sign and the solicitor must respect the request of the residents, she said.

Otherwise, the city may pull the license and the vendor could be ticketed. But not everyone. Some organizations that solicit donations, such as Green Pence, are legally exempt from license requirements.

# semi-annual storewide clearance

select summer merchandise

## 50% off and more

now take an extra

## 25% off

this already reduced merchandise\*

Also, take an extra 40% off already reduced select Ms. J merchandise.\*

\*as identified by signs.  
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