

Fingerprinting is newest move to protect kids

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

The children's fingerprinting program offered in May by Farmington Police turned out to be a pretty good idea, according to law enforcement officials.

Farmington Police are again offering the free fingerprinting for children under 16 years of age from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, June 18 and 25, in the Farmington City Hall lobby.

During the first two fingerprinting sessions in May, approximately 300 children, with accompanying parents, turned out to have their prints taken, said Farmington Public Safety Deputy Director Frank Lauboff.

"We've been printing people since," Lauboff said. People who missed the two earlier sessions have stopped in the lobby asking to have their children's prints taken.

"So far, the program has been a success," said Officer Vince Ziegler, who runs the fingerprinting program in Farmington.

Ziegler said that at first he was unsure how parents would react to having their children's prints taken. Ziegler said, most parents have asked why such a program wasn't developed years ago.

"I try to make it as pleasant as possible for the children," Ziegler said.

THE MISSING Children Act of 1982, in part, along with growing publicity on missing children, prompted the child identification program, Lauboff said. The new act is designed to assist state, federal and local officials in locating missing children and for all agencies to share information about missing children.

Although dental X-rays are the most accurate method of permanent identification for both children and adults, there is no way to identify a child who has not visited the dentist.

"If you have a child under 4, the only identification is the footprint from the hospital which is usually inaccurate," Lauboff said. "The dentist is the first chance of permanent record. Up until then there is virtually no way to identify them."

Parents who are required to accompany their children to the fingerprinting program must sign a waiver form

which makes them responsible for any future use of the prints.

A child's fingerprints will be given to the parents and not kept on file at the police department for current or future use, Lauboff said.

Parents will be given their child's fingerprints along with a "Child Identification" envelope which parents can use to store their child's most recent photograph, fingerprints, identification card detailing physical marks and characteristics, and names and phone numbers of doctors and dentists.

Younger children, Ziegler said, should have their photographs updated every six months. Their palmprints also will be included on the fingerprint card given to parents, he said, because sometimes it is difficult to clearly print each finger on a young child's hand.

When a child or adult is missing, Lauboff said, relatives should call police immediately. Although most people believe they should wait for 24 hours before filing a missing persons report, the police should be called immediately, particularly with children.



Public safety officer Vince Ziegler shows Denise Lauboff how easy it is to have her fingerprints taken. Parents can have their children fingerprinted at Farmington City Hall June 18 and 25.

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Red Cross honors local volunteers

Four Farmington-area women were honored for 30 years of volunteer service at recent American Red Cross, Southeastern Michigan Chapter, volunteer recognition ceremonies in Detroit and Birmingham.

They are:

SYLVIA DUNITZ, who began her volunteer career with Red Cross as organizer and later chairwoman of the Sinal Hospital Motor Corps. She currently continues her work at the hospital, where she delivers mail and spends time with hospital patients. Dunitz also spends time with other civic activities such as the National Council of Jewish Women. She is a member of the Founders Society of the Detroit Institute of Arts and for 20 years has been a tour

guide as well. Dunitz holds a bachelor of arts degree from Wayne State University.

RUTH HURSH has worked on many Red Cross bloodmobiles as a registrar. In addition to her activities with the Red Cross, Hursh also has given many years of service to B'nai B'rith. For 17 years she worked as a receptionist for the Jewish Family Service.

ANN MARGARET MILLER is a registered nurse and has volunteered her time teaching a home nursing course through the Nursing and Health Service program. She also has been active in the Red Cross blood pressure screening program.

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