# Community Center piano fund gets big lift

By Noreen Flack
staff writer

Weightlifters pumped up to raise money for a new piano for the Community Center during a bench-press competition July 27 at Peter Nielsen's "Eye of the Tiger" Fitness Center.

Twenty-two lifters competed at Peter's Piano Pump-off, 23311 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington, to buy a six-foot grand piano for the Community Center of Farmington-Farmington Hills.

The event raised $300 for the piano fund. Each contestant paid a $5 registration fee and lined up pledges to produce a certain amount of money for each pound lifted.

"We were looking for ways to combine sports and the arts together," said Clara Lawrence, program coordinator for the Community Center. "Peter seemed like the natural one to ask."

The Community Center hopes to replace the 1926 Weber piano with a $12,000 grand piano, Lawrence said.

"Of course, a Steinway would be nice," she said.

The Community Center has raised $3,000 for the piano through community fund-raisers, which began in June. The piano will be used for concerts and events at the Community Center.

WEIGHTLIFTERS WERE grouped in four categories: males older than 18, males younger than 18, females older than 18, females younger than 18.

The contest was based on three one-time lifts. The bar had to touch the lifter's chest and be lifted with arms fully extended. The contestant who lifted the most weight in that category won.

First place winners were:

- Lynn Ingram of Farmington Hills, lifting 405 pounds to win males older than 18, with 12 contestants.
- Kym Valentine of Farmington Hills, lifting 135 pounds to win females older than 18, with four contestants.
- Antar Salim, 14, of Farmington Hills, lifting 125 pounds to win males younger than 18, with three contestants.
- Jaime Mijares, 13, of Detroit, lifting 70 pounds to win females younger than 18, with two contestants.

Each first place winner received a six-month, $188 membership to the "Eye of the Tiger" Fitness Center.

OTHER PRIZES distributed at random included weightlifting belts, wrist rollers, ankle weights, "Eye of the Tiger" sweatshirts, guest passes to the center and tanning visits to the center.

Ingram gave his six-month membership to Kumbi Salim of Farmington Hills, who lifted 345 pounds. Ingram said Salim was stronger "pound for pound" than he was.

"I never tried to max out before," Valentine said. "I am more into repetition. But I lifted 135; that's more than my weight."

Nielsen hosted the weightlifting event with WJBK-TV Channel 2 sportscaster Eli Zaret and newscaster Bruce Kirk. Nielsen, Channel 2's fitness expert, appears at 5:25 p.m. every Friday for the station's health and fitness commentary.

Nielsen demonstrated proper lifting techniques and offered nutritional and training tips.

Kirk Vickers, an employee at "Eye of the Tiger" and a Detroit Red Wings trainer for the 1989-90 season, assisted in guiding contestants with proper techniques.

NIELSEN HAS held seminars on nutrition, drug prevention and peer pressure at the Community Center.

"This is something I can give back to the community," Nielsen said. "I love people. I love Farmington. If there is anything I can do in the community, I want to help."

As a teenager, Nielsen was diagnosed as having Crohn's disease, an inflammation of the intestines, which has no known cause or cure.

Nielsen, 1984 Mr. International Universe, is a representative for the National Foundation of Ileitis and Colitis, helping others with Crohn's disease accept and live with their illness.

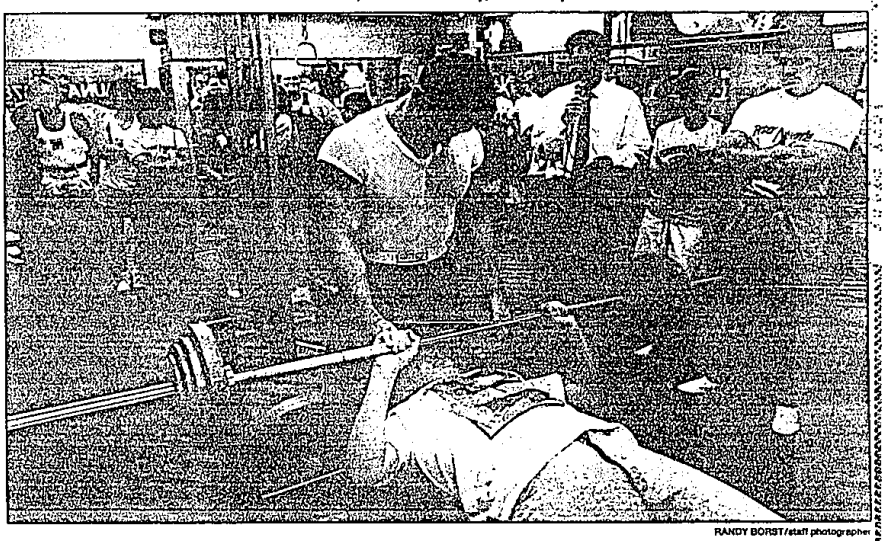
He spends much of his time traveling to schools and hospitals talking, mostly with children, about the importance of physical fitness and good nutrition.

Nielsen may schedule another event for the piano fund in early winter.

In another piano fund-raiser, Bess Bonier, a blind Detroit pianist, will perform in concert Sept. 24 at the Community Center. She has performed at the Detroit Institute of Arts and the Crystal Gallery in Detroit.

RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Stephanie Wellner of Farmington waits for her turn to lift. Her daughter, Vanessa, 5, looks on.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Marty Jean, 15, of Farmington Hills, succeeded in lifting 155 pounds under the watchful eye of Peter Nielsen.

# Downtown streetscape draws good reviews

By Noreen Flack
staff writer

Downtown Farmington business owners are pleased with the second round of streetscape improvements, bringing the Downtown Development Authority another step toward completion of the five-phased, $1.4-million project.

The $140,000 phase two included pedestrian lighting, lamppost painting and tree planting as part of the revitalization of downtown Farmington.

"Everything looks so much cleaner and brighter," said Edna Malotke, manager at Wooden Heart in the Village Mall at Grand River and Farmington Road.

"We had friends in town and they just loved the lights and the old-fashioned look."

"It was looking pretty bad before the improvements," said Alice McCoy, co-owner of Books Abound, 33332 Grand River. "Everything looks very nice now. Everything looks very good."

The second phase began in early June and was completed the last week in July, "except for lights and meters to be powered by Detroit Edison this week," said Wendy Strip Sittsamer, DDA executive director.

"Aside from water leaks and flood damage from a terrible storm, everything went smoothly," she said.

ALTHOUGH THE second phase did not meet the targeted completion date of July 1, the project was smaller and did not run into the difficulties experienced in phase one.

The $640,000 first phase included new pedestrian lighting, patterned sidewalks, new trees and new curbs on Grand River, between Oakland and School, and on Farmington Road, betwen Oakland and State. The city lots at city hall and north of Grand River were redesigned, repaved, lighted and landscaped. A lighted crosswalk was added on Grand River and sidewalks, lighting and ladscaping were added along Thomas.

The DDA board of director has withheld $23,200 for repair or replacement of cracked sidewalks in a dispute with Farmington Hills-based Concord Cement, general contractor for the first phase. The dispute is yet to be settled.

The entire five-phased project is expected to be completed by 1992.

The second phase ran along Farmington Road from State south to Alta Loma on the west and to Orchard on the east.

A strip with grass and trees was planted near the A & P parking area off Farmington Road.

"The strip of lights and grass has softened that harsh concrete area and made a big improvement," said Frank Giappison, DDA board member. "Why that was not done before, I do not know."

KAREN LINGENFELSER, also a manager at the Wooden Heart, said she hopes her hometown, Canton Township, designs a similar improvement project.

"I think the gazebo looks really good," Lingenfelser said. "That will be especially nice for the older residents."

The gazebo-pergola (seating area), a $40,000 project funded by businesses, individuals and organizations and spearheaded by downtown businessman Walkt Sundquist, was not part of the streetscape project but has added to the rejuvenation of downtown Farmington. The gazebo is on the north side of Grand River, a half mile east of Farmington Road.

"The appearance is very inviting," Peggy Donovan, owner of Donovan's Country Store, 33335 Grand River, said about the evolving new downtown look.

"I've been noticing the new building across the street and how it is

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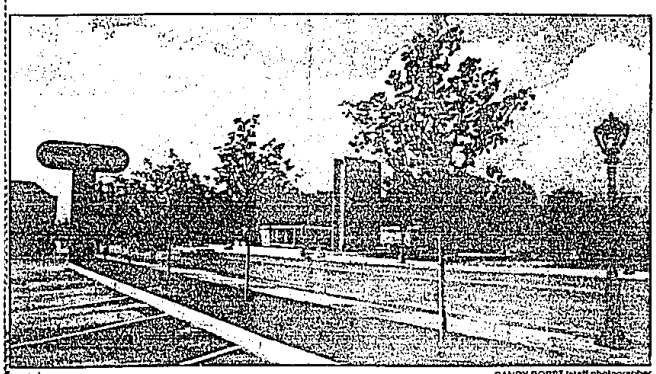

RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Maple trees and new sidewalks put the finishing touches on Phase Two of the Downtown Development Authority street scape improvement project. This area is on the west side of the Downtown Farmington Center.

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