

Schools spotlight cultural diversity

It's called "We Are the World." It's a celebration of the cultural diversity within Farmington Public Schools. And it drew a packed house to the East Middle School gym.

"Our intent is to bring people together. It's more than all for one and one for all. We don't have prejudice, we don't even give it a thought," said Haroun Alameddine, Farmington Public Schools bilingual education director.

"It gives us a chance to show we teach our children songs and dances from back home," said Farmington Hills resident Nick Juncaj, who immigrated from Albania 13 years. "It helps make them understand they're not left behind."

Juncaj had two daughters, two nieces and a brother take part in the entertainment part of the May 24 program.

Farmington Public Schools and the Multicultural Community Council, made up of representatives from government, business and religious groups, co-hosted the program.

Musical entertainment featured

Japanese, Albanian, Brazilian, Russian and Arabic students, under the direction of Jenni Metti, bilingual teacher. A display of international artifacts and ethnic foods followed in the school cafeteria.

Superintendent Michael Flanagan sees the celebration's value as an awareness of the wonderful makeup of our community. District students speak at least 20 major languages.

Flanagan, who grew up in culturally rich New York City, says "We Are the World" is just the "beginning of some understanding" of why it's "good for kids to be part of a diverse world."

Flanagan called Alameddine the district's "Mr. Ambassador. He's a unique personality. He gets people from diverse backgrounds — now immigrants — and makes them feel at home."

"My perception of Farmington's schools is that they work hard to be on the side of justice," said Miguel Ruiz, Michigan's bilingual and migrant education director, who delivered closing remarks for the 3-hour program.



SHARON LEMIEUX/staff photographer

Harrison High 11th grader Violeta Vulaj (left) leads a troupe of Albanian teenagers, including schoolmates Vera Stanaj and Fatmira Sulejman, in a traditional dance.



Bessis Pappas, mother of a Farmington High student, spent all day Thursday preparing Greek foods to be served. Pappas dishes spanakopita (spinach pie) over the American and Greek flags.



SHARON LEMIEUX/staff photographer

Bilingual students Mariko Ishikawa (left) and her sister, Yuka, Kazuyasa Ataka and Shinya Koto prepare for a Japanese performance.

Cops sponsor race to aid muscular dystrophy victims

As a prelude to its open house Sunday, the Farmington Hills Police Department will host a 10K run open to law enforcement officers, civilian police employees and local government VIPs.

All proceeds will go to the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

Up to 200 runners, including teams representing police departments in Farmington Hills, Waterford, Monroe, Sterling Heights, Pontiac, Ann Arbor, Novi, Detroit, Dearborn, Windsor and even Toronto are expected.

The sign-up sheet also shows entrants from the FBI, the Michigan State Police and the U.S. Immigration & Naturalization Service.

The run will begin at 11 a.m. at the Oakland County Sheriff's Office-Orchard Ridge Campus.

The route will loop toward the police department at 11 Mile and Orchard Lake Road. It also includes residential areas. The run will finish at OCC, where refreshments will be served.

The \$12 entry fee (\$14 the day of the race) includes a T-shirt.

SWORN OFFICERS will compete in team competition. Others will compete in individual competition. Trophies and plaques will be awarded in both team and individual categories.

All proceeds will go to the Muscu-

lar Dystrophy Association.

"Our hope is to promote camaraderie among different police departments while promoting a sporting event we all can participate in," said Farmington Hills officer Michael Farley, race director.

"At the same time, we hope to raise some money for a charity. There's not a lot of fund-raising activity that police do out there off-duty that promotes charity."

"We'd like to show we do more for the community than just put in eight hours of work."

Farley expects the run to become a part of the annual Farmington Hills Police Department open house.

Farmington Hills police slate open house Sunday

There's a lot in store for participants of the third annual Farmington Hills Police Department open house noon to 4 p.m. Sunday, June 3.

"We do this to get the community and the police together. We want to help the public understand what we do and how we do it," said Lt. Richard Murphy of the Farmington Hills Police Department, 11 Mile and Orchard Lake Road.

The four-hour event will feature the Oakland County Sheriff's Mounted and Marine divisions and a U.S. Coast Guard helicopter. Participants will get a peek into real-life fire equipment and an antique police car.

Tours of the police facility will be available, as will free child fingerprinting, bicycle registration, a live firearm demonstration, an electrical safety magic show and blood pressure testing.

The North Farmington High School Jazz Band will perform 2-3 p.m., followed by the annual Tug-of-War at 3-4 p.m.

Unlike past years, the Farmington Hills Fire Department will not be participating. Hills police will test their muscles against the finest in the Livonia Police Department and Oakland County Sheriff's Department.

Kids will be entertained by Ronald McDonald and their chance at the traditional Donut Hole game. Admission is free.



Louie the Lightning Bug, Detroit Edison's safety mascot, teaches youngsters about electrical safety with the help of magician Doug Scheer (right). The safety magic show will be featured at 1 p.m. Sunday at the Farmington Hills Police Department.



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