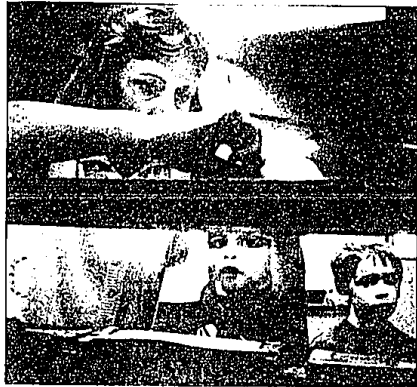


Tug of war highlights police open house



Records clerk Kathy Hintz (left) fingerprinting Natalie Mokris, 2 1/2, of Farmington Hills, while her brother, Drew, 6, waits his turn at sampling the identification procedure during the Farmington Hills police open house.



Megan Connor, 3, of Livonia, daughter of Farmington Hills police officer Tim Connor, tosses doughnut balls toward the center of a tire in hopes of winning a donated Polaroid camera during the Farmington Hills police open house. At left is her mom, Diane. At right is her brother, Chris, 6.



Farmington Hills officers Dave Lee (foreground) and Alan Patterson pull for their team in tug-of-war competition vs. the Oakland County Sheriff's Department during the Farmington Hills police open house.

'We followed technique. We did everything we were supposed to. All of our legs were locked. But they pulled us through like a horse pulling a plow through a field. Our cleats dug furrows into the sod. We were just overpowered.'

— Chuck Hubbard
Farmington Hills

Pull!

Hills team ends 1-1 in 2 tugs

By Bob Sklar
Staff writer

*Man the rope.
Take the strain.
Steady. Pull!*

THAT COMMAND, from Farmington Hills police Inspector Richard Niemisto, kicked off the highlight event of the Farmington Hills Police Department open house June 3.

Eight-man teams from the Farmington Hills Police Department, Livonia Police Department and Oakland County Sheriff's Department dug in on a grassy knoll behind the police department next to the city hall.

Under sunny skies, spectators rooted for their favorite team and the coaches coaxed their crews to tug away in the round-robin competition, which the sheriff's department dominated.

A five-minute rest break separated the three pulls.

When Farmington Hills police officers and the sheriff's department deputies gathered for the first pull, the coaches, detective Chuck Hubbard and Sgt. Ted Herkowitz respectively, asked their teams, "Are you ready?"

Each team shouted back, "Yes, Sir!"

With Farmington Hills Police Chief Bill Dwyer manning the stake, the sheriff's department Sweatshops

pulled the 135-foot-long, 165-pound rope to victory by outmuscling the Farmington Hills team.

FARMINGTON HILLS police bounced back in the second round against Livonia police Sgt. Dick Cramb's team. Oakland County Sheriff John Nichols, formerly the Farmington Hills police chief, manned the stake.

In the third round, the sheriff's department, drawing on their weight and brawn, quickly dispatched the Livonia police. For this tug, Dwyer was back at the stake.

All three teams displayed good technique.

Hubbard called the Sweatshops a "very professional, well-prepared team that obviously takes competition very seriously."

He attributed his team's first competitive loss to the Sweatshops' size. "Their average weight was 240 pounds. Ours was 190 pounds with Livonia's somewhere in between. With training being equal, weight makes a difference."

Hubbard said he was "very proud" of his team.

"We followed technique. We did everything we were supposed to. All of our legs were locked. But they pulled us through like a horse pulling a plow through a field. Our cleats dug furrows into the sod.

"We were just overpowered."

Though a bit demoralized, "we'll

bounce back," Hubbard vowed.

THE ANNUAL tug of war competition, which was preceded by a dozen training sessions, not only promotes physical fitness, but also camaraderie among law enforcement agencies.

"Hopefully, we'll work together a lot better because we know each other," Hubbard said.

Next year, the competition will feature two team weight categories: 1,600 pounds and up, and 1,600 pounds and down.

"We hope to draw some big city departments. Then we'll see how the sheriff's department fares against teams of equal weight," Hubbard said.

The tug of war was part of an afternoon of open house activities. They included blood pressure testing, sample fingerprinting, bike registration, anti-drug videos, and karate and firearms demonstrations.

Open house displays spotlighted an antique police car, police and fire equipment, crime prevention literature, utility company services and the sheriff's marine patrol and mounted division.

The North Farmington High School Jazz Band provided entertainment.

Sparky the Fire Dog, McGruff the Crime Dog and Ronald McDonald made cameo appearances.

About 700 people attended the open house.

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