

Hills police open house features arresting exhibits

BY AILEEN WINGLAD
STAFF WRITER

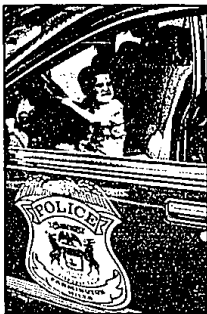
Folks watched a Ninja Turtle character go to jail, saw a magician produce a dove from an inflated balloon, and were dazzled by police and fire vehicles and weapons displays.

It was an afternoon of smiling faces and bright sunshine at last Sunday's Farmington Hills Police Department Open House as hundreds of residents turned out for the annual community event.

"This is great here — really neat," said Linda Cook of Farmington Hills, who was enjoying her first police open house with her children Joshua, 6, and Triana, 3. "The kids are just fascinated by the fire trucks and police cars and all the games. And of course the Ninja Turtle entertainment is a big hit," she said. Two mutant turtle-type characters, Mikey the Party Turtle and Be-Bop, were on hand to perform an anti-crime skit for the crowd and talked with youngsters throughout the day.

Other major attractions, particularly geared to the younger set, were the police dunk tank, a remote-controlled miniature police car, the Burger King megaclean, and Herbie the talking fire hydrant — courtesy of the Ferndale Police. New this year was a blood drive organized by the American Red Cross. There was also a greatly expanded home security display area.

Bicycle registration and child fingerprinting were pretty active stations, as well as the cell block



Young wheeler: Zachery Zatsick, 2, of Farmington gets to sit in a police car at Sunday's Farmington Hills Police open house.

area where visitors were able to actually go inside the Farmington Hills jail, always a popular stop during open house.

In fact, 8-year old David Fleish of Farmington Hills "couldn't wait" to get downstairs to see the jail again — he said he has been to the police open houses before. His grandmother, Bloomfield Hills resident Judy Miller, agreed the idea of an open house is definitely a good one, and that the

event is great for the community. "They make it very inviting to come here. It is not a forbidding type of thing at all. That is important," she said.

Farmington Hills Police Chief Bill Dwyer said "concern about the reputation of police officers" by the public as well as the department's interest in keeping in touch with the people are behind the open houses.

"Police officers have very difficult jobs, writing tickets and citing violations . . . but we want people to know we offer a lot more and we like to highlight all our different programs. This helps us to continue our good rapport with residents," said Dwyer.

"And besides," he added, "the kids love it."

Many parents in the crowd echoed Dwyer's sentiments, pledging their support for the Farmington Hills police and the department's programs, noting that with all the demonstrations and displays there was something of interest for just about everyone.

Said Sue Kattan of Farmington Hills, who brought her two children and two of their friends to the open house: "We came out to show our support, not only for the Farmington Hills police but also to show we care about having kids grow up right with no drugs and all that. It's important to bring people and the police together in this way. It gives everybody the chance to see what is going on and what is available."



By a nose: Gary Bartle, 7, of Farmington Hills pets a police horse at Sunday's police open house.

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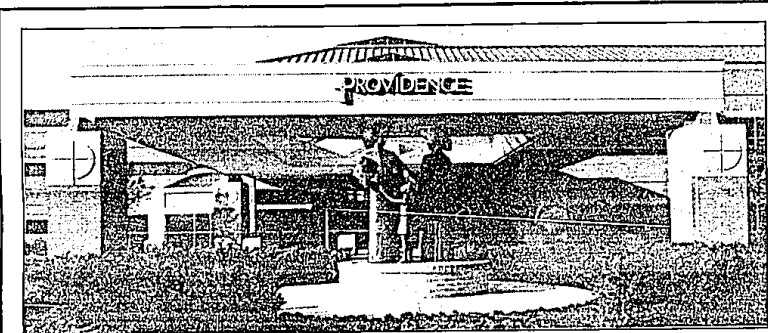
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