

# Party sends crime packing

By BILL COUTANT  
Staff Writer

They call it a "going away party" for drugs and crime.

Although Farmington Hills will be throwing its first such shindig as part of the National Night Out next week, efforts by neighborhood groups to prevent crime have been in place for a long time.

The National Association of Town Watch is celebrating the 10th anniversary of the National Night Out. The Farmington Hills Police Department and Re/Max Foremost Inc. Really are sponsoring the local party, which will be at the Alexander Hamilton Life Insurance building off 12 Mile east of Farmington 6-10 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 3.

"It has taken a lot of time and planning," said Chris Cogar, crime prevention technician for the Hills police. "But we're preparing for at least 500 people."

The city approved a special license for the event and made a proclamation supporting the event to make citizens "aware of the importance of crime prevention programs and the positive impact that their participation can have on reducing crime in our neighborhoods."

The family affair will begin at 6 p.m. and include a visit from the "McGruff" hot air balloon, a traveling calliope, a display of police and fire department vehicles and the antics of the fire department's clown troupe.

The event will be celebrated by 8,600 communities throughout the United States, Canada and U.S. military bases worldwide. In those communities, lights will be turned on at residences and businesses to emphasize crime prevention as a community undertaking.

"Block parties are the number one activity," Cogar said. "There are ice cream socials as well. The idea is to get people involved in their neighborhoods with preventing crime and to avoid apathy."

Hills police Lt. Dick Murphy said too often suburbanites think they are in a crime-free area.

"We're trying to get people involved," Murphy said. "We're trying to make people aware that even in the suburbs there is



Not just a lot of hot air: The McGruff the crime dog hot air balloon will be at the National Night Out celebration in Farmington Hills Aug. 3. The event begins at 6 p.m. at the Alexander Hamilton Insurance Co. in Farmington Hills.

crime. When they start watching out for one another, it really helps."

Although the Neighborhood Watch program and the National Night Out are not directly affiliated, they both work on the same premise, to aid communication and prevent crime.

"Our problems have been very limited, but we've been able to make people aware and solve them," said Jan Rose, who has been active in the Springland-LaMuera subdivision. "We're kind of a spread-out subdivision where people tend to keep to themselves, but we've been suc-

cessful at making sure people keep in touch."

Patricia Rose, no relation to Jan, said her Meadowhills Estate subdivision uses a newsletter and block captains to keep everyone informed and aware of potential crime problems.

"We had a suspicious person in the neighborhood bothering kids about two years ago," she said. "Within about 20 minutes everyone in the neighborhood knew about it."

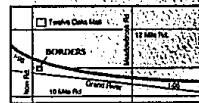
For additional information on the National Night Out and crime prevention, call the Hills police at 473-9640.

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