

Many local teens don't believe gangs all here

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

If there are packs of teenagers roaming the Farmington-area's streets and causing a ruckus, it's news to some local teenagers.

Many said they don't believe there are gangs here, despite graffiti saying otherwise.

They would know. They attend Farmington schools, they're aware of the area's hangouts and they would seemingly have a firsthand view of any gang activity.

They don't seem too alarmed amid the bells at the local arcades, enjoying spring break at Putt Putt Golf & Games in Farmington Hills and Magic Planet in Farmington.

Most are aware of recent incidents where gang graffiti has been spray painted on buildings.

"I don't know. It could be a couple of people having some fun," said Sean Sutton, 16, a Farmington High sophomore. "It could be gangs, but I doubt it though."

Added another Farmington High student, Adam Tancilian, "I know some people who might be doing it . . . people who want to be in a gang or think it's cool to be in a gang."

Cheryl Faber works the afternoon shift in the arcade at Putt Putt Golf & Games. She hasn't seen anything resembling gang activity.

"Not at all," Faber said. "I

■ If they come in here, you can tell by the way they wear their hat. Five of them will start trouble on one person for no reason . . .

Matt Mikkola

used to work (as a clerk) at the court in Westland. I'd pretty much know what to look for."

Matt Mikkola agrees. He works at the Magic Planet in the Uptown Plaza. He said there are a lot of "wannabe" gangs here.

They see gangs depicted on TV or in films such as "Boyz N the Hood" and "Menace II Society," and become infatuated with the street hood image, Mikkola said.

They look the part, but don't fully act the part.

"They don't cause any violence," said Mikkola, a sophomore at Farmington High.

"If they come in here, you can tell by the way they wear their hat. Five of them will start trouble on one person for no reason. If that person comes back at them, they throw up a gang sign and they're out of here."

The teens said some kids might be in gangs, but in other cities.

"In Southfield, they're real gangs there," said Mikkola, a former Southfield resident.



Gang signs? A wall near a Farmington Hills business is spray painted with graffiti.

Graffiti from page 1A

who has met with police officials from Livonia on gang-related issues.

"The experience in Livonia and other departments is . . . if you have authentic gang activity, they don't hide it so much," Dwyer said.

Dwyer said there is no need for alarm in Farmington Hills, but what is clearly gang graffiti has been spray painted on buildings along Grand River, in the Nine Mile and Middlebelt area

and even north of 10 Mile.

"These gangs include all racial, ethnic and economic groups, and both sexes," Dwyer said.

Police in Southfield, Livonia and West Bloomfield have all investigated gang graffiti. But beyond the vandalism of the graffiti itself, is the threat of more serious crime.

Gang members can range in age from 10 to their 20s. The graffiti is a way gangs claim territory and warn other gangs

to stay away.

The next gang activity in a new area is recruiting. Then, to prove themselves or to gain power within the gang, crimes, which can include anything up to murder, are committed by the gangs.

"We're talking about serious crimes," Dwyer said.

Farmington schools has been in touch with districts in Livonia and Wayne-Westland, which are discussing the issue.

"The district is educating it-

self so we know what to look for," Cowan said.

Dwyer said businesses should paint over the graffiti after police have seen it.

Dwyer said each gang uses distinctive symbols in its graffiti and wears certain colors. Parents, who may both work, aren't always aware that their children are gang members.

"Parents are the key," Dwyer said. "If they notice that their kids have a change in behavior,

are wearing a certain color scheme, have new friends, have bad grades or have written symbols in books, they should get in touch with police."

Dwyer said gangs offer young people an identity and camaraderie. And gangs offer sex, drugs and alcohol as incentives to join.

Dwyer said Hills police are receiving training in how to recognize gang activity and how to react.

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Chief Bill Dwyer
Farmington Hills police

Opportunity '94 to give exhibitors the business

By TOM BAER

STAFF WRITER

Opportunity '94 knocks . . . and local chamber of commerce officials hope lots of people open the door.

About 2,000 people are expected to attend Opportunity '94, a two-day trade show this week at the Novi Expo Center. The show is presented by the chambers of commerce of Novi and Farmington and sponsored by several local businesses.

Some 80 exhibitors have entered this year's show, said Jon Grant, a Farmington Chamber official and owner of The Reliance Group, a Farmington Hills printing business. That's from 65 last year.

"The purpose of the show is to network businesses in the community and neighboring communities," Grant said, and to encourage businesses to look first to their local services to buy goods and services.

Exhibitors move into the Novi Expo, 1-90, Novi Road, Tuesday, April 12. A preview party is planned for 5-8 p.m. that night. Exhibit hours are 11



Jon Grant

WNIC, is to speak.

This is the fourth-annual show and the first to be held in the Novi Expo Center. The first three took place in the Mercy Center in Farmington Hills.

"It's been a successful show," Grand said. "Most of the exhibitors have expressed satisfaction with the quality of people who attend and the leads they get out of it for future business."

"I know, myself, I've been an exhibitor in it every year, and I have found it very beneficial for the cost. I've generated a good deal of business from the contacts I've made at the show."

Most of the exhibitors are from the Farmington area, but a few are from Southfield. "It's not limited to chamber members," Grant said.

MetroVision, Metrobank, Kelly Services, Nissan Research and Development, and Alexander Hamilton Life Insurance sponsor the show.

A few spots are left for exhibitors, Grant said. Anyone interested should call the Farmington Chamber at 474-3440.



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774-5400

Several leading citizens of the Farmington area will turn themselves in from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, April 15, to the American Heart Association at the Farmington Community Center.

As part of the AHA fund-raising event, the prisoners will be held behind bars until they do not have a sufficient "bail" to win release.

These "criminals" include: Rosemary Fitzpatrick, Robert Allen, Arnold Campbell, Richard Gundlach, William Burke, Linda Lynch, Ken Chiara, Dennis Phoney, Dan Rochon, Michelle Jakacki, Frank Clappison, Jim

Mitchell, Tim Zajaro, Jim Pogue, Frank Lauhoff, Nurten Ural, Sharon Main, Jim Stark, Joanne Smith, Cheryl Oliverio, Glen Fleischhacker, Bev Ellis, Ben Marks, Terry Sever, Mike Paulson, Paul Blizman, Chief Rich Marinucci, Daryl Rollins, Suzy Alberts, Mark Reina, Jeff Levine, Ed Rich, Gary Schlaff, Mike Finnegan, Allie McKay, Diane Amendt, Barbara Scrivener, Dennis Green, Adele Emmer, Sandra Bauman, Steve Henning, Ted Picano, John Hopkins, Lois Smith, Judge Harris, Kevin Bush, Tom Bjorklund, Richard Daguanno, Steve Brock, Dorothy

Gullon, Mary DiManzo and Kristi McCredie.

The above jailbirds will be pleading for mercy to "judges" Bill Hartscock, Deborah Grant, Bob McCann, Kim Evola, David Ramirez, Donna DeGennaro and Ben Marks.

The event is open to the public, and all are invited to attend. If you would like to participate as a jailbird, drop by the Community Center and bring your phone book.

Contributing sponsors include: Cellular One, The Community Center, Uptown Dell and Grapevine Party Shoppe.