

Kid's Day

Traditional favorite gets festival under way for families



Beating the heat: Alyssa Costyk enjoys a frosty raspberry snow cone at Kid's Day in the Park Tuesday.

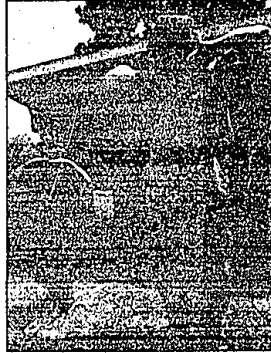
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What Kid's Day in the Park lacked in animals, it made up in magnetism.

Moms toting children by hand, strollers and red wagons were drawn to the annual event in Shinawasee Park. Despite 90-degree temperatures and high humidity, a constant gaggle of families descended down the park's green slopes to attend Tuesday's event.

"Ever since he could walk, we've been coming here," said Farmington Hills resident Steph Shelley, referring to son Max, 6-1/2. "It's just a great way to get the kids out."

While many attractions remain staples of what



On beat: Mike Shrum danced with the best of them. "Giggles" is known as Stan Barnes to his fellow firefighters at Station 3.

is considered the start of Founders Festival week, goers lamented the loss of a few traditions.

One noticeable event - the pet contest sponsored by Farmington veterinarian Dr. John Richardson - wasn't on the card this year. Richardson discontinued the crowd favorite due to a lack of pet owner interest.

Instead of animals performing tricks, this year's Kid's Day featured human acts of dexterity - and decomposition - with contests for most rotten sneakers, hula hoop balancing and bubble gum blowing.

For the 19th year, "Bloono the Clown" served as emcee and dazzled kids with his balloon artistry.

And though there was no pet show or petting zoo, children could still ride the ponies. A line stretched 30 yards with eager kids and their moms trying to keep a rein on them.

Farmington resident Sue Hanley said her son Brian, 3, was thrilled with the pony ride and twirl



Mom's turn: Kayla Halladay tries to paint her mom's face after mom, Tracy Smith, did hers.

on the parachute ride. He was joined by his 10-month-old brother Nick.

"My son is having a really good time," Hanley said. "Of course, the fire engines are really cool."

Public safety is a major theme at Kid's Day. Farmington and Farmington Hills police and fire all set up shop to give crime prevention tips, provide finger printing and fire safety exercises.

Alyssa Schwartz, 7, was raving to her mother about a tour inside an EMS unit.

"They really like the fire engines and ambulances," said her mother Kim Schwartz of Farmington Hills. "They really got a kick out of that."

Farmington Hills police had its new Mobile Command Unit out with officers dispensing information on how to properly make 911 calls. Hills firefighter used Novi and Plymouth's fire safety house to demonstrate ways to get out of a burning building.

While the messages are serious, firefighters aren't above a little levity. Hills firefighting clown "Zippy" gave healthy doses of H₂O from a squirt gun to more than willing recipients.

"Hey is that someone waving at you?" asked Zippy, unleashing a rapid water blast as the person turned.

A girl laughed and said "thank you. Then she added, "Do it again."



Up and away: David Carter, Julie Carter and Ryan Moonka take a spin on the parachute ride.

Look no further. Find it at the bottom of a Caribou Souler. The best of coffee. Smooth as virgin snow. Aah. Much better.

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