

Lifeline

Foundation gives generous check for afterschool programs

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER
loconnor@oe.homedomain.net

With an oversized check for \$125,000, a Farmington Hills institution extended a lifeline to a burgeoning program that is an afterschool home to 1,200 kids.

The Farmington Hills/Farmington Community Foundation formed to raise money - mainly through the annual Cornucopia Ball - to keep the afterschool programs running after money from a juvenile justice grant ran out.

The program receives \$100,000 from the Farmington Hills parks and recreation millage. The city of Farmington also contributes money.

An immediate influx of \$125,000

should go a long way to fortify enrichment programs for kids, organizers say. Foundation volunteers see Monday's check passing ceremony at the historic Botsford Inn as not the end but the start of something new. Co-chair Dennis Fitzgerald said people shouldn't consider the grant as merely one good deed.

"I hope it's the beginning of many good intentions that mushroom beyond our wildest dreams," Fitzgerald said.

Aside from youth programs, the foundation money backs drug awareness and prevention programs, summer camp scholarships and youth leadership training.

Such growth mirrors that of the afterschool youth centers for kids ages 11-15, which has expanded from one to five sites in three years.

The first youth center opened at the William Costick Activities Center in March 1996. The afterschool program has grown to include sites at the Farmington YMCA and Farmington Hills Ice Arena. A fifth site will open in the fall.

Farmington Public Schools provide bus transportation.

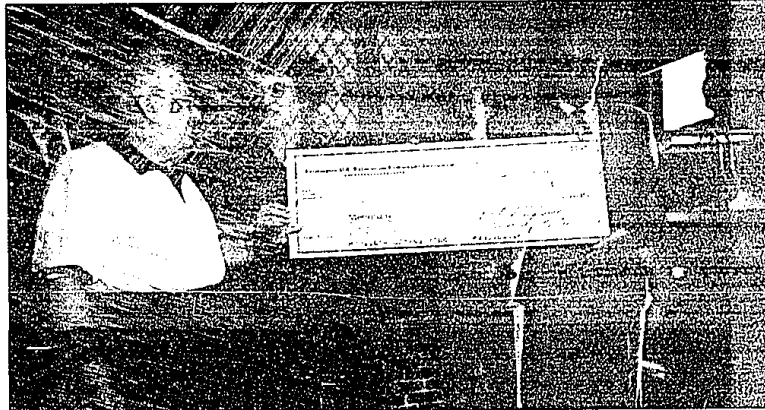
Centers offer children structure and a safe haven opposed to going to an empty home, organizers say.

In a five-minute video, smiling children spoke glowingly on what the program means to them.

A boy said if it weren't for the center he'd probably be at home playing video games. Another girl in the video mentioned there would be nothing to do but "watch Jerry Springer."

"I think we touch a lot of kids in a lot of different ways," said Todd Lipa, Hills youth program coordinator.

Lipa introduced Harrison High stu-



Contribution: Accepting a check from the foundation is Farmington Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi, as well as Farmington Mayor Mary Bush, Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff, Farmington Hills City Manager Steve Brock. Immediate foundation president Richard Daguanno and Nancy Bates, Hills council woman are at right.

dent Dave Kinchen as a prime example of a teen helped through foundation ongoing efforts. Kinchen, who has attended leadership sessions, hosts a cable TV program focusing on teen issues.

Kinchen is a positive role model for other teens, Lipa said.

"David is the future of our community. He's the one who is going to make a difference," Lipa said.

Foundation contributors have made a big impact on children's lives, said trustee Nancy Bates. The Farmington Hills mayor pro-tem profusely thanked those contributors who attended Monday's luncheon.

"You are the heroes of the our community's young, many of whom have been kept out of harm's way, because you provided the money for them to have a safe, wholesome place to go after school," Bates said.

At Monday's event, foundation trustees took time to thank some of its own, including first-ever president Richard Daguanno. Ty Tartt succeeds Daguanno.

"Ty is the right

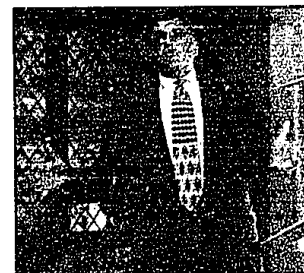
man for the job," said Daguanno, who was honored for his volunteer efforts. "The foundation is ready for a change."

"I say that because we're moving to the next level."

Daguanno, who termed his three-year tenure a "labor of love," invited those in attendance to continue to support enrichment programs for children.

Botsford Inn owner and foundation trustee John Anhut also received a proclamation for his efforts on the behalf of children. Anhut graciously received the accolade with a family toast.

Said Anhut whose inn closes July 30: "May the happiest days of yesterday be the saddest days of tomorrow."

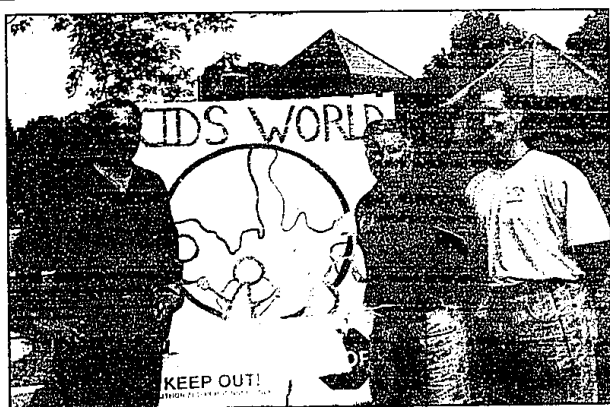


Looking forward: Dennis Fitzgerald says this is the beginning of good things.



STAFF PHOTO BY ELIZABETH CAMPBELL

Thanked: Richard Daguanno, the foundation's first-ever president is thanked by Ty Tartt who is the new president.



Big Three: Dave Sinacola (at left), Bill Willson and Jeff Dompierre are quickly becoming known as the Big Three because of the contributions they have made to the Kids World PlayScape.

Generosity goes a long way

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER
tsmith@oe.homedomain.net

Kids World is rapidly taking shape, thanks to the new "Big Three" and their companies.

Seemingly always at work down at the soon-to-be-completed community playscape at Shawassee Park are three philanthropic businessmen with strong ties to Farmington - Jeff Dompierre, Dave Sinacola and Bill Willson.

"It's great, even since day one it's been absolutely phenomenal all the people down here," said Jeff Dompierre, who co-owns A.J. Dompierre and Sons Construction of Farmington with his dad, Al and brother, Joe.

"There's kind of a general feeling," Jeff said, "(that) people love the area and they want to stay and this is going to be a part of their life for God knows how many years to come. It's one of the biggest reasons we got involved."

The Dompierre family business donated more than \$20,000 worth of building materials, including a to-be-completed pavilion and 1,600 personalized cedar pickets for the Kids World outer fence. Some of those pickets were up dur-



ing an interview with Dompierre, Sinacola and Willson Wednesday evening.

Among names on the first section of pickets were: the Farmington High School Class of 2002, Jody and Rusty Soronen; The Parsons Family; Kids From Sunny Day Care; and Borders Books and Music.

Where's my picket?

"I can see people walking around, looking at the pickets and seeing where theirs is," Sinacola said. "They have a piece in this, too."

Mesaui, Farmington city councilman Arnie Campbell said the pickets would be installed in the order they were purchased, although an effort would be made to cluster multi-picket orders for families.

Following fundraising and recruiting efforts that netted more than \$220,000 in dollars and donated in-kind materials, Sinacola really got

Please see **PLAYSCAPE, A4**

**Come to the
COCA-COLA and Buick LeSabre**

Family Golf Experience

**Tuesday,
August 3rd**

12:00 - 1:30 pm

LeSabre Buick
PEACE OF MIND

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL
1-800-875-OPEN

CLINIC HOSTED
BY A PGA TOUR
PROFESSIONAL

Warwick Hills Golf & Country Club.
Grand Blanc, MI
AT THE DRIVING RANGE

BUICK
OPEN
TO ALL