

Cities take inclusion seriously, speaker says

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The Farmington and Farmington Hills community has been held up as an example for its respect and celebration of racial, religious, cultural and ethnic diversity.

"This is one of the few communities which takes diversity and inclusion seriously," said Daniel Krichbaum, executive director, of The National Conference for Community and Justice.

Krichbaum was the keynote speaker Thursday at "Progress Report to the Community," sponsored by the Farmington/Farmington Hills Multicultural/Multiracial Community Council. The event was held at the William Costick Center in Farmington Hills.

Located on East Jefferson in Detroit, NCCJ is a nationwide organization dedicated to fighting bias, bigotry, and racism through education, advocacy, and conflict resolution. It works with local businesses, schools, police departments, religious congregations, community agencies, and government offices to help people learn how to live and

'I feel like I can take any of you to any community we work in and show them Farmington.'

Daniel Krichbaum
NCCJ executive director

work in a diverse society. Krichbaum pointed out that the United States census indicates the country continues to be segregated.

There's a difference between diversity, which is the first step in getting to know one another, and inclusion, he said.

"Inclusion goes a step further," Krichbaum said. "You can have a diverse community, but are they represented in a business, corporation, or institution at every level? Do the vendors represent African-Americans, Arab Americans, Jewish Americans, and women?"

Although those present at the MC/MR meeting are willing to speak to the issues, their neighbors may not want to address these subjects as willingly, he said.

Krichbaum facilitated discussion among the school and city officials, residents and representatives of community groups who attended.

Participants, through their group leaders, expressed a need to reach out further into the community while emphasizing strengths already put in place.

Schools have played a vital role in celebrating diversity, they said.

Farmington Public Schools Superintendent Bob Maxfield said economic divisions as well as racial and cultural divisions are prevalent in society. He sees value in consciousness-raising discussions.

The term economic pluralism can be seen in a city like Warren, Mich., Krichbaum said. He offered Warren as a "stark example."

"The daytime community in Warren is probably the most pluralistic communities across the metro-area because of the Tech Plant," Krichbaum said. "You have thousands of people coming from every religious, ethnic, and racial background in the world working at the Tech Center. The

Please see MCMR, A7

Eight Mile event



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL HANSEN



Meeting of the minds: The "Big Four" - Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer, Wayne County Executive Ed McNamara, Macomb County Board of Commissioners Vice Chairman Ralph Liberato and Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson - were panelists at the Eight Mile Boulevard Association luncheon, held at Vladimir's in Farmington Hills last week. A sold-out crowd of 500 attended the second annual leadership luncheon. They fielded questions on issues ranging from the widening of I-275 to development at Detroit Metro Airport. Among the civic leaders who attended were officials from Farmington and Farmington Hills. Pictured at left are Hills City Manager Steve Brock and councilmembers Jon Grant and Chris McRae.

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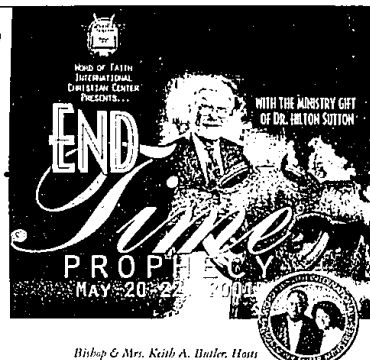
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