



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: February 27, 2008
TO: Park and Recreation Commission
FROM: Recreation Division, Parks and Recreation Department
SUBJECT: Twelve35 Teen Center Progress Report

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission hear a presentation on the activities of Twelve35 Teen Center.

DISCUSSION:

On March 17, 2007, an historical event occurred – the opening of the first exclusively teen only recreational facility in Santa Barbara. This memorable event was preceded by the hard work, dedication, and passion of the entire community, led by the teens themselves. Stepping out as the spokespersons for the teens, the Santa Barbara Youth Council spent untold hours working with subcommittees in the design, coordination, and program development for the Twelve35 Teen Center. The Youth Council's input, along with the Teen Center Advisory Committee, led to the variety of fun and safe activities that have been operational since March 2007.

Teen Programs staff continues to work with the Youth Council, Teen Center Advisory Committee, and other youth-service agencies to coordinate and promote entertaining activities at the Teen Center.

In this presentation, staff will provide an update on the programs and activities held at the Teen Center, participation trends, challenges, as well as future considerations for the program based on discussions between staff and the Teen Center Advisory Committee.

Activities/Programs

The Teen Center is largely a drop-in center for teens after school. The teens take full advantage of this opportunity and drop in to play video games, play pool, or to use the computers. Very popular among the teens is the Dance Dance Revolution (DDR) game, which is active most days of the week.

In addition to the drop-in activities, the Teen Center has programmed activities. During this reporting period, several video game tournaments were scheduled which provided an opportunity for the video game enthusiast to compete with others to be the champ. Popular as well among our programmed activities, is the recording studio. Teen Center staff, working with Notes for Notes, a non-profit organization, provides teens an opportunity to learn the proper use and operation of recording studio equipment such as digital recording machines, deejay

equipment and how to record their own personal compact disc. Many of the teens have recorded several songs and have performed them to live audiences. Other activities in the Teen Center include, yoga classes, arts and crafts shows, and dance demonstrations.

Participation Numbers

The Teen Center has had 6,152 individual visits to date, largely from its 336 members. During the summer months, the Teen Center average daily attendance was 30 teens per day. The early fall/winter months average daily attendance is approximately 16 teens per day. The daily participation numbers are consistent with most teen centers throughout the country; however, we are still working to increase the daily attendance. As we are approaching spring, the daily attendance numbers are increasing. Male participation numbers account for 66% of those attending. All schools are represented at the Teen Center, including the continuation school and El Puente. The 13 -14 years age bracket (mostly junior high and high school freshmen) account for 51% of the Teen Center members.

Teen Center Advisory Committee

The Teen Center Advisory Committee has been meeting along with Youth Council members. The current make-up includes strong teen center participants. The Committee is currently working on the Teen Center's anniversary, which will include a small celebration on March 17th, followed by a week-long open house.

Challenges

Teen Program's staff working in conjunction with the Teen Center Advisory Committee and Youth Council members has identified the following challenges for the Teen Center:

Cost/Budget: To date, almost a third of the Teen Center members received scholarships. These teens participate in the varied drop-in activities. However, in order to participate in any of the fee-based activities, most teens either request a scholarship or elect to not participate. Two sited examples were the Yoga Classes, in which no sessions were full and those participating were teens that only came for the yoga; and, the recent Lakers excursions in which 75% of the tickets were partial or full scholarships. The budget of the Teen Center, both operational and scholarship funds, are limited. Staff is working on creative ideas to provide programmed activities as well as the drop-in activities that are inviting yet cost effective for the participants as well as the program.

Location: There have been no major incidents at the Teen Center as a result of youth violence, gang affiliation, or turf identification because of conflict between east and west side teens. However, Teen Programs staff have encountered several youth who have a desire to attend but say they are unable to because the Teen Center is west of State Street. Staff has convinced

several to come and those that have been very pleased, and continue to come. Staff continues to work on targeted outreach to encourage more east side teenagers to come to the center and to have the teens work together as one group to establish the Teen Center as a neutral zone and a place of respect.

Occupancy: There has been no issue as of yet as it relates to the occupancy limit and the daily attendance at the Teen Center. However, the Teen Center Advisory Committee and Youth Council members have identified a concern with the 49-person occupancy limitation when it comes to the ability to host special events, both those hosted by the Teen Center or outside agency. When appropriate, other parks and recreation facilities are being used for these special events.

Part-time Staff: The Teen Center has experienced the same challenges that most recreation programs experience when utilizing part-time staff on a regular basis. The turnover rate can be high, and you are often challenged with the level of experience you are able to hire. With the turnover in staff and the limitation of part-time employees (maximum 999 hours), often the program quality and continuity can be lost and the staff-teen participant relationships are affected.

Future Considerations:

Staff is working with the Advisory Committee in developing some future considerations as it relates to programming at the Teen Center. Some of the things being considered include marketing more effectively and recommendations to address some of the concerns and challenges. Some of these recommendations include:

- Marketing more effectively for the Teen Center
- Better exterior lighting and an assigned area for bicycles
- Consideration of exterior security cameras
- Consideration of change of hours of operation

As it relates to the hours of operation, the following adjustments are being considered:

	<u>Current Hours</u>	<u>Proposed Hours</u>
Mon – Thurs	2:30 pm - 8:30 pm	2:30 pm - 7:00 pm
Fri	2:30 pm - 10:00 pm	2:30 pm - 9:00 pm*
Sat	12:35 pm -10:00 pm	12 noon - 6:00 pm*
Closed Sundays and Holidays		

*Excluding special events

In reviewing other teen centers, this recommendation falls in line with many teen center hours of operation throughout the State.

Conclusion

The Teen Center continues to be a positive addition to the Santa Barbara community. The teens are engaged and enjoying the center very much. It has provided a truly positive alternative for the teens in our community. At least 150 teens have been introduced to Teen Program's events and utilize the center on a regular, if not daily, basis. The Teen Center has also provided an outlet and place for activities for several other youth service agencies such as City at Peace, Shape of Voice, Endowment for Youth Committee, and Notes for Notes.

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