



## CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

### PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** July 24, 2013

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission

**FROM:** Santa Barbara Youth Council

**SUBJECT:** Teen Leadership Conference

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Commission hear a report on the Santa Barbara Youth Council's Teen Leadership Conference and recommendations from Teen Leaders.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

On May 3, 2013, the Santa Barbara Youth Council hosted their first Teen Leadership Conference. Over 100 teens representing youth leaders from all three public high school's Associated Student Body and one private high school, and youth representing eight different youth organizations attended this lively and informative event, along with 13 adult leaders.

The event was held to recognize the amazing work that many teens are doing in the community and to unite teen leaders to network and share their successes and challenges. The Youth Council, recognizing the importance of teen leaders getting to know local government and school officials and vice versa, coordinated an event that included a sit down dinner that allowed an opportunity for teens to hear how the adult leaders have developed leadership qualities and characteristics, followed by break off sessions where the teen leaders addressed and discussed issues that are currently affecting teens. The issues included, Youth Violence, Bullying, Graffiti, and Teen Programming.

#### **Conference Results**

During the breakout sessions, the teen leaders discussed and shared the following:

##### Youth Violence

Problem: Violence committed by or against teens in the community

Solution:

- Group bonding activities – especially among teens that don't know each other
- Invite speakers to make presentations about the effects of youth violence
- Open discussion with teens to learn what problems that are facing
- More teen programming activities and after school programming
- More safe environments such as teen centers and also "Help" centers
- More advertisements on activities and via school counselors

### Bullying

Problem: Teens being bullied at school, at home, via cyber bullying

Solution:

- Create Bully Awareness Days
- More education on bullying via development and production of videos of the effects of bullying
- More teacher awareness and education to teachers and mentors
- Create and coordinate a Help Center and/or Help Telephone Line
- Harsher consequences and strict enforcement to bullying activities

### Graffiti

Problem: Illegal graffiti making the community look unsightly. Sometimes creates youth violence and rivalry

Solution:

- Allow for opportunities for teens to express themselves. Establish contained billboards or other legal walls and places for that expression.
- Acknowledge talent; reach out, offer career path
- Strictly enforce consequences of illegal graffiti
- Provide more education and establish more policies for sellers of spray paint
- Youth Council Art Collaborative

### Teen Programming

Problem: Not enough teen programming in the community

Solution:

- Better outreach – utilizing City television for exclusive programming for youth
- Better utilization of social media such as Facebook and Twitter
- More school presentations from outside agencies about what programs exist
- Teen Fair coordinated by youth
- Establish internships
- More programming for high school teens using local businesses to promote

### **Conclusion**

The event was well-attended with 100% participation from the teens. Those attending stated they personally felt rejuvenated and excited about the possibility of their ideas being used to benefit all community youth in general and providing an opportunity for teens to get better direction and guidance in making better choices and having more positive activities. Several of the teens requested to be a part of any future committee work on these issues.

The Youth Council discussed the possibility of making this one of their annual events. Having attended a youth conference last year in Santa Clara sponsored by the City of Santa Clara, the Youth Council were able to see firsthand the positive effect that can

develop from youth of different agencies coming together. This event, held at the Davis Center, was their first attempt at bringing the City of Santa Barbara's youth leaders together to open up dialogue for teens to address teen issues.

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