2015 Update

Columbia Department of Parks and Recreation

Report on

Prevention Programs and Opportunities

For

At-Risk Youth

Introduction: This document has been prepared as a 3rd update of a Department of Parks and Recreation Department Report which was prepared in late 2007 and early 2008 and then again in 2010 in response to a City Council request for information on what programs were available and what actions were being taken to address the many challenges facing the community's at-risk youth. The 2015 update has been revised to include programs and opportunities added since the original report was prepared. Programs no longer being offered have been deleted.

Background Information: At the December 17, 2007 City Council meeting, a staff report was provided which detailed the efforts of various City Departments in several key areas of prevention activities. Included in that report was data submitted by the Columbia Parks and Recreation Department, a long time provider of recreational opportunities designed to provide positive alternatives for youth. Department offerings include a mix of programs some of which actively target high risk populations while others are designed to appeal to a broader audience. At the December 17th meeting, the City Council requested additional information regarding the programs including where and when they are offered and the attendance at these programs. In addition to this request, Department staff also prepared responses to questions posed by Council Person Nauser during a December 21st meeting at the C.A.R.E. office.

A revised report addressing the above questions was presented to the Council in February of 2008 and again in April 2010.

QUESTION 1: What proactive measures and/or programs do we currently have in place to proactively prevent children from getting involved in crime such as mentoring?

The Department offers a number of different programs and activities. The following is a summary of the programs offered at different levels.

City Douglass Park Programs

Program	Description	Attendance
Sport Leagues		
Douglass Youth Baseball League	A youth low-cost baseball league for kids 5-10 years old. Cost is only $27 for the season, and the children each receive a hat, shirt and a medal at the end of the year picnic. The Douglass Athletics Association runs the program, but a paid P&R staff serves as the coordinator. There are 3 separate leagues: Tee ball, Coach Pitch & Kid Pitch. First practices are in May, league play begins in early June for 6 weeks with 10 games per team.	Tee Ball averages 4 teams w/ 12 kids, Coach Pitch averages 4 teams w/ 10 kids, Kid pitch 2 w/ 10 kids
Moonlight Hoops Basketball League	A teen (13-16) outdoor basketball league that begins soon after school ends in June through early August. Youth teams are sponsored by local businesses making it a free program. All players receive game shirts with sponsor logos on the shirt.	Averaging 8 teams of 10 teens per summer

Special Events		
Egg Hunt EGGstravaganza	This is a holiday event that takes place the Saturday before the Easter. Several games, face painting, as well as egg hunts take place. This is targeted to youth 12 & under, and 3 different egg hunts take place. For safety and fairness there are hunts for 0-4 year olds, 5-8 year olds and 9-12 year olds. Eggs are filled with candy and holiday themed prizes. Jefferson Middle School allows us to use their football practice field for one of the hunts. This event tends to bring in people from all across town as well as Central Columbia.	Event averages around 350-400 participants based on weather and park activity
Kite Flying Day	A great chance to get out as a family to do something you don't see as much anymore… Kite Flying. P&R buys around 70-90 cheap kites, and provides them to the children that do not have one to fly. People are encouraged to bring their own for a better chance to win one of the contests. This usually takes place on a Saturday in early to mid April.	Averages around 80-100 participants
Heritage Weekend	This event serves two purposes. First it has historically served as the official "opening" of the park for the Summer. It also is a celebration and acknowledgement of J.W. "Blind" Boone, the great Missourian Ragtime music artist who died in the late 1920's. There is music and games. This is a free event that takes place within the first 2 weekends of May.	350
Juneteenth Days	A celebration of the Emancipation Proclamation. Music from bands & DJs, board games, card games, exhibits about local and national African-American history are often brought out as well. Usually takes place on the "tenth" weekend in June. This is a free event	350
Coolin' Down with the Blues	The final official event of the summer. Some of the better known local blues bands are brought in such as the KC Street Band and Chump Change. The stage is set on the east side of the park in the grassy area near 5th St. Board games, card games, dominoes & Horse shoes are brought out to enjoy while the music is playing as well. Free event that takes place on the 2nd or 3rd weekend of August.	350
Black & White Ball	This once every 3 year reunion of the Douglass High School graduates involves a Gala, Parade as well as a picnic. P&R staff helps with the organization of the parade and also staffs the picnic which takes place in	2100

	Douglass Park	
Other Park Programs		
DJ in the Park	P&R Staff contracts different DJ's to come to the park on certain Sundays during the Summer. A variety of music is played based on the DJ. R&B, Soul, Hip Hop, Gospel, Blues & Jazz are examples.	100
DJ USA	Curtis Boogieman "Soul" comes out to the park to play uplifting music on Saturdays in the park to keep a positive vibe. He also serves as eyes and ears in the park to keep us in tune with things. Curtis serves as a positive presence by spreading positive words while DJing. He keeps the patrons informed about upcoming events as well. This year a church volunteered time to help on Saturdays and also provided a VBS during the summer.	150-170
Lunch in the Park (Health Dept)	Lunch is served to kids from 11:30am-1pm at the shelter in Douglass Park from early June until early August. Several day cares & youth summer programs take advantage of this program.	Avg. 100 Children/day
Bookmobile (Boone Library)	The Bookmobile appears once a week during the Lunch in the Park program in hopes to have children check out books and read during the summer months. P&R helps coordinate by blocking off a certain amount of parking spaces so the vehicle can park.	20-40 day
Encouragement to Community	Not an official event, but P&R staff contacts several of the key Community entities and encourages them to host their events in the park. This includes churches, organizations, agencies, neighborhood associations. They are guided to the P&R office to pick up and turn in Park Special Use Permits to begin the process.	

Community Recreation Programs not held in Douglass Park

Program	Description	Attendance
Douglass High School Gym	Gym is rented in the evenings from October-May to provide a supervised place for children and teens to recreate. This program is free for youth ages 10-17.	6:30-9:30 pm M-F, October - April Douglass H.S. 65-80 nightly
After-School Drop-In	The Armory is open to youth ages 8 and up from 2:30 – 7 p.m. during the week. There is a gym, free-use of the computer lab, shuffleboard, arts & crafts, ping pong, xbox360, billiard table, foosball table, air hockey table, cards, safety dart board and more. The Armory is also	2:30-7:00 pm M-F, School months Armory 20-50 daily

	a registered nutrition center with the food bank. This enables youth to eat snacks in the evenings for free.	
S.T.A.R.S. (Seeking Traditions Art & Rights of Passage) Summer Program	This is a Summer Camp that is available at a reduced cost. Each week focuses on a specific guiding principle and how it can help them to live a positive life within their family and community. The price is $65 for the first 4 week session, and $70 for the second 5 week session. For youth ages 6-14.	M-F, June – August Armory 25-40 per day
"Late Night" Summer Teen Recreation	The Armory is open late for youth ages 12-17 during the summer months. They may play basketball, use the computer lab, air hockey, foosball, shuffleboard, pool, ping pong, arts & crafts, xbox360, safe darts and more.	7 – 11 pm Fri & Sat, June – August Armory 20-30 youth
K.E.Y. Lock Ins (Keep Embracing Youth)	This overnight program includes game tournaments, group challenges, video games, sports, board games and more. They will also have important discussions that involve the teens present and future lives. Leadership, character, responsibility, smarter choices and such will be discussed. Ages 12-17. One weekend for boys, one weekend for girls.	Jan, Apr, Jul, Oct 3rd & 4th Fridays. 8:30pm-8:30am
Mini-Workout Program	Not necessarily for the youth for risk purposes. However, it provides access for young individuals in the age range of 18-22. This weight room has free weights, machines & cardio equipment. Membership is only $20 for two months.	8 am – 7 pm Armory M-F, Year-round 10 daily
New City Hoops After School Basketball Skills	This class allows youth to get better at the game they love. Staff works with them on the basics and will also give tips to get an edge on the competition. This is for all school aged youth. Free program.	4:30-6pm Tuesdays at Armory
Free After-School Homework Help & Mentoring	Youth come to receive help with homework, and also find a new adult buddy to hang out with and talk to if needed. Volunteers from MU's office of service learning are encouraged to engage in activity and conversation with the youth that attend. For school age youth.	School months M-F 3-6P
Shorin-Ryu Karate Scholarships are available.	This martial arts form teaches discipline and self-control. A free introductory adult class is offered which lasts 8 weeks. After this, they can sign up for a low cost continuation of the program. The price is $55 for youth class and $68 for adult class. A few times a year, free youth sessions are offered.	6:30 - 7 pm Thursdays, Year-round Armory 15-25 youth
Columbia Cup Karate Tournament	This tournament takes place at the Armory and involves forms, sparing, weapons and light	8 am – 5 pm September Armory

	competition. All ages are welcome to participate. Pre-registration price is $35, and $40 at the door.	80 – 100 yearly
Armory Science Klub (ASK)	This 10 week class is designed to show children how science affects our lives everyday. They participate in fun experiments every week at a relatively low cost ($20).	6 – 7 pm Thursdays, Year-round sessions Armory 10-15 youth per class
"Sew What"?	This beginner's class teaches youth between the ages of 8-14 how to sew. Each week will offer different projects. Sessions are available year-round for $30. Children take home projects.	10:30 – 12 pm Saturdays, year-round Armory 10 maximum
Piano / Keyboarding for Kids	Kids learn the basics of piano in this class.	Different sessions throughout he year
Clay for Play & Dirty Hands	These are both clay works and ceramics classes that allow youth and adults to be creative with their hands.	Different sessions throughout year.
"Reflections" Poetry Society	This program is free for youth ages 13 to adult. Participants meet twice a month to write, critique and hold discussion groups; then read/perform their poetry during the "Poetry Jam" session.	6 – 7 pm 1st & 3rd Wednesdays year round 5 per night
Saturday Game Room Drop-In	The downstairs game room is made available to school aged youth on Saturday mornings. They are allowed to play shuffleboard, billiards, ping pong, foosball, safe darts, air hockey and more. Free entry.	9 – 1 pm Saturdays year round
Movie Nights	This bi-monthly movie program is offered at the Armory. Movies are always G or PG. There is no entry fee and popcorn/juice are provided at no cost. This offers a free alternative for a family that may not have the means to go to the theatre.	6 – 8 pm 1st & 3rd Saturdays, Year Round Armory 20-50 youth per night
Lil' Lady Bulldogs Dance & Cheer Group	This group serves young ladies from ages 6-11. They practice twice a week and perform at events. Membership is $35 for 3 months.	6-7 pm on Wed. 10-11 am on Sat. year round Armory 10-20 girls
Sho-Me Sho-Stoppers Hip-Hop Dance Team	This group includes males and females from ages 8 - 18 who practice weekly and give public performances. This program is free.	Year Round, Days & times vary Armory 8-15 youth
Drum & Woodwinds Music Lessons	This is a free program to the youth. Children sign up and come in on a weekly or bi-weekly basis to learn to	3:30-7:00 pm Daily, and year round

	play the instrument of their choice. If they reach a certain level, they can earn their way into the City-Wide Drum line.	Armory 10-20 youth
City-Wide Drum line	This is a group of young men and women ages 10 - 18 who perform around town and also out of town. This program is free to participants and meets at the Armory.	4:00-5:00 pm Fridays -Year Round Armory 10-20 youth
City-Wide Flag Line	This group accompanies the drum line during their performances. This is an all girls group. No fee.	6 - 7:30 pm Tues & Thursdays Year-round Armory 4-8 girls
Speak up, Be Heard Teen Online Newspaper	This group meets weekly at the Armory to tell their story through print, audio, video and photography on Columbia's newest website. This is a free program.	4:30 – 6 pm thursdays Armory 6-10 young authors
MLB Pitch, Hit & Run Competition	This is a free special event that allows youth to showcase their baseball skills with opportunities to move on to higher levels of competition. Recently a young man from the area made it to the national competition held during the All-Star MLB game	9 am Saturday Every May - annually Oakland Park Field 10-15 youth
Hershey Track & Field Local Meet	This is a free national program that encourages fitness at the grassroots level. The winners at the local meet move on to the state competition and if they qualify, the national meet held in Hershey, PA. Free Program.	9 am Saturday Every May - annually HHS or RBHS track 40-70 youth
NFL Punt, Pass & Kick	This national program allows youth to compete in basic football skills. Winners at the local meet move on the team championships and then nationals.	9 am Saturday Every August Cosmo Park 20-50 youth
Blue Thunder Track Club	Youth 6-18 compete in competitive and recreational track meets and cross country meets from April – November. The group meets at parks & high school tracks. Meets are in town and out of town. Serious runners have the opportunity to advance to regional championships and national championships. Track Season = $95 (April-July), Cross Country = $25 (August-November).	6pm Tues/Thurs & Sat 10am
Tai Chi	Thought of as a moving form of yoga and meditation	MWF 8:30-9:30am

	combined. Movements are derived from the martial arts. They are slow and graceful with smooth transitions. Free program for ages 18 & up	Sat 9-10am
Qigong	Participants learn forms, postures and movements that promote longevity and offers a healthy lifestyle balance. Uses practices of Tai Chi. Ages 18 & up.	Tues/Thurs 8:30-9:30am
Holiday Toys for Columbia's Youth	Donated toys are distributed to low-income families around Columbia. Gifts and monetary donations are accepted.	Days & times vary December Armory 300 served yearly
Homeless Youth Awareness Month Dodge Ball Tournament	Partnering with Rainbow House, this tournament creates awareness of the homeless youth problem in Columbia. 16 teams for $50 each. Ages 14 & up.	2nd or 3rd weekend of November

Community-Wide Programs Available to High Risk Youth

Youth Sports – The Department has a number of youth sports options for the community youth as a whole. These co-sponsored activities provide constructive use of one's leisure time while learning a sport in an adult-supervised setting. The coaches many times serve as mentors and good role models to the youth and teach them life-long skills regarding athletics and fair competition. All of the co-sponsored organizations (football, basketball, soccer and baseball/softball) have their own financial assistance program designed to accommodate the youth who may not be able to pay the participation fee.

Aquatics – The Department offers a Learn to Swim program at a variety of pools throughout the City. A number of volunteer opportunities are available for the youth to participate in. The Department also hires nearly 200 lifeguards, primarily teens, during the course of the year. Financial assistance has been provided to a number of youth to learn how to swim and also to take the life guarding courses.

Classes and Programs - The Department offers a number of classes and programs for youth and teens. Classes provide instruction for the skill but also support making good choices for healthy living, discipline, exercise, and creativity. Classes include: martial arts, dance, theater, art, study skills, self-improvement courses, bicycling, etc.

Special Events – The Department offers a number of special events throughout the year, many of which are collaborative efforts with other organizations, which target youth:

- **Aquatic Division Teen Nights** – During the summer, Teen Nights are held at the Oakland Family Aquatic Center, as drug and alcohol free activity for 11 – 15 year olds.
- **Shredfest** – This event is held at the Cosmo Park skate park and focuses on youth and teens. A number of co-sponsors make this event possible. This event is held the 3rd weekend of June and attracts 75 – 300 youth. Free

- **Columbia Eve Fest** – Teen music students perform as part of the alcohol free celebration of New Year's Eve.

Some of the Family-oriented Special Events include: Outdoor Movies at Flat Branch Park, Family Fun Fests, Heritage Festival and the July 4 Celebration.

QUESTION 2: Are there any collaborative efforts between city departments and the school district to reduce dropout rates, truancy and joint after school programs?

The City of Columbia's C.A.R.E. Program is a collaborative effort to help reduce dropout rates and truancy, along with many other negative behaviors, among Columbia's at-risk youth population.

What is C.A.R.E.?

The City of Columbia's Career Awareness Related Experience (C.A.R.E.) Program, which began in 1982, is a comprehensive program for Columbia's at-risk youth that provides:

- paid real-world hands-on work experience,
- career exploration,
- mentoring, and
- life skills training

The C.A.R.E. Program works with at-risk 14- to 19-year-olds who live in the City of Columbia, MO and/or attend a Columbia school.

C.A.R.E.'s Goal

High-risk teenagers face many barriers to joining the labor force. C.A.R.E.'s goal is for *"Columbia's youth to be ready to enter the workforce and become productive, self-sufficient citizens."* Communities benefit greatly when their teens are prepared to become productive adults.

C.A.R.E.'s History

A particularly stressful summer of youth violence and unrest in Columbia's central city, a high level of youth unemployment, and the untimely reduction in Federal youth employment programs compelled a group of community leaders to meet during the summer of 1981 to form a steering committee. Their goal was to learn about the violence and employment challenges facing the youth of Columbia and to make recommendations regarding what to do about it.

In 1982, this steering committee established a pilot program to provide meaningful employment for 150 low-income Columbia youth, ages 14 to 20. This program was initially funded by an appropriation from the City Council and a grant received from the Columbia Board of Education. The Columbia Parks and Recreation Department provided the facilities and staff to administer the program, which was named C.A.R.E., an acronym for Career Awareness Related Experience.

The C.A.R.E. Program was created because of the vision and efforts of this steering committee, which included several longtime Columbia Parks and Recreation employees. C.A.R.E. began over 30 years ago for the same reason it is still needed today, which is for *"Columbia's youth to be ready to enter the workforce and become productive, self-sufficient citizens."*

Why Is C.A.R.E. Needed?

Lack of employment experience, career exposure, positive adult role models, and life skills training can lead to adolescents being unemployed and/or underemployed, which can lead to increased:

- truancy and high school dropout rates,
- emotional problems,
- crime,
- teen pregnancy,
- alcoholism/drug addiction, and
- dependence upon government assistance

In addition, unemployed individuals are unable to contribute to public tax rolls, which lowers the community tax base. Taxpayers then must cover the costs of the resulting government assistance.

In the U.S., youth employment rates have decreased dramatically over the past decade as the economy has faltered and the youth population has grown. Unemployment rates among youth are especially acute during the summer, as more teens temporarily enter the labor force.

In addition to providing work experience and an immediate income transfer to low-income youth, current research illustrates that youth employment programs can improve educational outcomes and social and emotional development, as well as decrease negative behaviors and reduce criminal involvement. Recent study results indicate that, compared to a comparison group of eligible youth from a youth employment program waiting list, program participants were significantly more likely to reduce risky and violent behaviors, including the use of drugs and alcohol, physical fighting, damaging property, and threatening someone with a weapon.

C.A.R.E.'s Recent Success

One hundred and eighty-five at-risk youth were hired for the C.A.R.E. 2014 Summer Program. Three different measurements were conducted throughout the summer. They were Trainee pre- and post-testing, Trainee post-program surveys, and Work Site Partner post-program surveys. Here are the very encouraging results from this past summer's evaluations:

Objectives **At the end of the eight-week 2014 summer program…**	**Method of Evaluation**

63% of Trainees showed an improvement in feeling prepared to enter the "real world of work" (keeping a longer-term job)	Trainee program pre- and post-tests
55.6% of Trainees showed an improvement in feeling comfortable finding a longer-term job outside of C.A.R.E. on his/her own	„
51.9% of Trainees showed an improvement in feeling confident in his/her ability to communicate with others in a job setting	„
49.4% of Trainees showed an improvement in feeling sure of his/her work ability (ability to be a valuable employee)	„
44.4% of Trainees showed an improvement in feeling s/he can get along well with others and to work as a team at a work site	„
39.5% of Trainees showed an improvement in feeling confident that s/he knows what it is to be professional in the work place	„
37% of Trainees showed an improvement in feeling confident in his/her ability to listen carefully and to follow directions in a work setting	„
Objectives **At the end of the eight-week 2014 summer program…**	**Method of Evaluation**
98.3% of Trainees indicated that being a C.A.R.E. Trainee allowed him/her to gain work real-world hands-on work experience and job skills	Trainee post-program surveys
98.3% of Trainees indicated that being a C.A.R.E. Trainee allowed him/her to be able to learn from my mistakes without the fear of being fired	„
96.7% of Trainees indicated that his/her family was proud of him/her and supportive of him/her for participating in the C.A.R.E. Program	„
95.9% of Trainees indicated that being a C.A.R.E. Trainee allowed him/her to be around positive role models	„
89.3% of Trainees indicated that participating in the C.A.R.E. Program kept him/her away from bad influences and helped keep him/her out of trouble	„
74.4% of Trainees indicated that participating in the C.A.R.E. Program lowered the level of stress in his/her family/household	„
28.1% of Trainees were offered a paid position from the Work Site's own budget	„
Objectives **At the end of the eight-week 2014 summer program…**	**Method of Evaluation**
97.6% of Trainees showed an improvement in dressing appropriately for this workplace	Work Site Partner post-program surveys
95.1% of Trainees showed an improvement in the ability to follow verbal directions	„
90.2% of Trainees showed an improvement in being an effective worker/completing work that was of an acceptable quality	„
89% of Trainees showed an improvement in speaking in a way so others heard and understood him/her	„
89% of Trainees showed an improvement in asking questions when s/he did not understand directions	„

89% of Trainees showed an improvement in being on time and ready for work at his/her scheduled time	„
86.6% of Trainees showed an improvement in attending when s/he was supposed to be there or calling ahead if s/he would not be there	„
84.1% of Trainees showed an improvement in being able to stay focused on a task and complete it	„
79.3% of Trainees showed an improvement in demonstrating motivation to become a better employee	„
78.1% of Trainees showed an improvement in taking initiative/being a self-starter	„
75% of Trainees showed an improvement in working efficiently/not wasting time	„

C.A.R.E.'s Summer Program

C.A.R.E.'s Summer Program is its original and largest program. C.A.R.E. offers an eight-week summer program in which approximately 185 14- to 19-year-old trainees are hired at minimum wage to work up to 20 hours per week at a variety of local work sites.

The C.A.R.E. Gallery (Summer)

The C.A.R.E. Gallery serves as a visual arts work site for the C.A.R.E. summer program. The Gallery Coordinator functions as the Job Coach as well as the Work Site Mentor.

Creative youth are given the opportunity to work as artists. Gallery trainees work with and learn from professional artists during this summer program. They participate in art activities designed to enhance their existing skills and knowledge. Gallery trainees learn about artistic techniques, a variety of media, and create their own artwork.

Missouri Option Program Partnership

The C.A.R.E. program collaborates with Columbia Public Schools to provide the real-world hands-on experience, mentoring, and life skills training components for students who are enrolled in the Missouri Option Program. Missouri Option is designed to target students who have the capabilities to complete Missouri high school graduation requirements, but for a variety of reasons lack the credits needed to graduate with their class and are at risk of leaving school without a high school diploma.

The C.A.R.E./Missouri Option partnership increases Columbia's graduation rate and reduces its truancy rate. Local Missouri Option Program students must be referred to the C.A.R.E. program by their cooperating Missouri Option Program teacher, and may work up to 20 hours per week and earn minimum wage until they graduate.

C.A.R.E.'s Winter Program

C.A.R.E.'s Winter Program is its newest program that is modeled after its successful summer program. C.A.R.E. offers a four-month winter program in which approximately 50 14- to 19-year-old trainees are hired at minimum wage to work up to 15 hours per week at a variety of local work sites.

Boone County Family Resources Year-Round Collaboration

C.A.R.E. partners with Boone County Family Resources (BCFR) to provide paid real-world hands-on work experience, career exploration, mentoring, life skills training, and resources for educational pursuits, resume building assistance, and individualized goal setting guidance for clients who have developmental disabilities and are at risk for unemployment and underemployment. Participants in this program also receive specialized support at the work site.

Trainees may work up to 15 hours per week and earn minimum wage. Clients must be referred to the C.A.R.E. Program by BCFR, which provides most of the funding for the program.

QUESTION 3: What proactive and collaborative efforts are in place between city departments and other community organizations such as faith-based organizations, community youth-based organizations, charitable organizations, etc.?

Community organizations who partner with the Department in the provision of programs throughout the year include:

- Big Brothers & Big Sisters (support volunteers with programs)
- Boys & Girls Club
- Columbia Housing Authority (through promotion of programs)
- Centro Latino
- Voluntary Action Center – Lunch in the Park, Coat Drive
- Columbia Public Library - Bookmobile
- Optimist Club
- Sam's Club
- Douglass Athletic Association – Bulldog Baseball
- Youth Community Coalition – teen events
- Imani Center
- Black and White Ball Committee
- Blue Thunder Track Club
- Friends of Rock Bridge State Park
- Approved site for Juvenile Community Service
- Stop the Violence Committee

Local churches – many partnerships and dissemination of information, to include the MLK Celebration

The Department has a long standing tradition of working with outside agencies to address the problems experienced by youth. Some examples include:

Shredfest – Collaborative event with the following sponsors: Parkside Skateshop, Tiger Pilot Club, Columbia / Boone County Health Department, Missouri Department of Transportation, Safe Kids Coalition and the Youth Community Coalition. All event staff (including Park Ranger) enforces and advocate helmet safety and ordinances. Event included a skate team demo, music, best trick contest, give-aways, and refreshments. 300 + youth attended.

ARC Program Efforts - The ARC and the programs/facilities offered through this venue offer a constructive alternative for youth. In addition to the drop-in nature of the facility, the ARC offers:

General Questions - Several questions have been posed regarding the programming efforts of the Parks & Recreation Department:

1. **Bus Routes** – Nearly every single program offered by the Department is on a bus route. All of the major facilities addressed in this report are on or near a route.

2. **Annual Budgets – Major Prevention Programs** - The two major areas of the department which focus on at-risk youth include the following:
   - **a.** Community Recreation – This program is housed in the Armory Sports Center and utilizes the Armory, Douglass High School and Douglass Park in the effort to serve the central Columbia area as well as the rest of the community. Over 50,000 participations were recorded in Community Recreation's programs for FY14. The FY 10 budget is $347,619 and includes three full-time programming staff members.

   - **b.** C.A.R.E. Program – The C.A.R.E. offices are located on the 2nd floor of the Armory Sports Center. The personnel budget for FY15 is $401,670, which includes two full-time permanent and numerous part-time temporary employees.

   - **c.** Financial Assistance Programs – The City Council presently budgets $35,000 in youth financial assistance monies and $5,000 in assistance for adults each year for a total of $40,000. These funds assist low-income individuals who meet the USDA Free/Reduced Lunch program guidelines (based upon household income and size) participate in the Department's program offerings. In addition to this, the City receives additional financial assistance through the utility check-off program.

3. **Tutoring Programs** – A tutoring program is offered after-school at the Armory. Office of Service Learning students from MU are available to help with homework. There is a computer lab at the Armory that is staffed in the afternoons. Staff is available to assist youth with homework.

4. **Agency Collaboration –** The Department has active discussions with the Columbia Police Department, social services, Juvenile Justice Center, Columbia Public Schools, etc. The

programs and services of the Department have been discussed with numerous individuals within these agencies. An additional effort to educate the larger organization will be examined.

Concluding Comments – The City offers the Youth Enrichment Services (YES) and the Adult Financial Assistance (AFA) program which provides access to recreational programs and facilities offered by the Department (see item 2.c above). This is funded annually by the City Council and in FY 10, the amount of assistance is $60,000. Eligible youth, families and adults who meet the household income and household size guidelines for the Free/Reduced lunch program (as established by the USDA), can receive 50% or 75% financial assistance to the various Parks & Recreation programs, aquatic facilities, or the ARC. A family who meets the guidelines for the Free Lunch program can get a family membership to the ARC for as little as $10 per month.

Over the years, the Parks & Recreation Department has offered numerous programs for at-risk youth. This report reflects many of the programs the Department is presently offering. There have been many other programs that have come and gone over the years in an attempt to address these concerns. There have been numerous collaborations as well over the years, some directly with other organizations and some with loosely knit consortiums of youth service providers. These collaborations have all served a need and have improved communication between the Parks & Recreation Department and these other organizations. One of the biggest challenges faced is to get the youth who could benefit from these programs, into the programs. This same challenge is faced by other agencies.

Staff in the Department's recreation services division are heavily involved in programming for and supporting teens. The Community Recreation staff, Camren Cross, Bill Thompson & Mary Dewey provide numerous programs & events, sports, after-school activities, summer camp, lock-in's and classes for teens. The CARE program, supervised by Ron Schmidt, is focused on paid real-world hands-on work experience, career exploration, mentoring, and life skills training for Columbia's at-risk youth. In addition, many teenaged Trainees are hired each year as temporary staff by the Department, working in programming areas such as aquatics, STARS summer camp, and ARC fitness. The ARC is a common place for teens to gather after school and many use the facility's gyms and other recreation resources. Recreation programs combat the growing number of youth at-risk and provide valuable services for prevention to avoid intervention.