



Source

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Parks and Recreation

TO: City Council
FROM: City Manager and Staff 
DATE: February 11, 2008
RE: Follow-up Information On At Risk Youth Prevention Activities

Summary: At the December 17, 2007 City Council meeting, a report was provided which detailed the efforts of various City Departments in several key areas of prevention activities. The Columbia Parks & Recreation Department has been a long time provider of recreational opportunities which are designed to provide positive alternatives for youth. The Department provides a mix of programs which actively target high risk populations while other activities catch a broader audience.

Fiscal Impact

YES

NO x

At the December 17 meeting, the City Council requested additional information regarding the parks and recreation programs discussed in the prevention report including where and when the programs are offered and the attendance at these programs. In addition, staff has prepared responses to questions posed by Councilwoman Nausser during a December 21st meeting at the C.A.R.E. office. The requested additional information is presented in Attachment A to this report.

Other Info.

Suggested Council Action: This report is provided for Council information. No action is required.

Columbia Department of Parks and Recreation

**At Risk Youth Prevention Activities
Follow-up Report**

Background Information: At the December 17, 2007 City Council meeting, a report was provided which detailed the efforts of various City Departments, including Parks and Recreation, in several key areas of prevention activities. At the meeting, the City Council requested some additional information regarding the programs including where and when they are offered and the attendance at these programs. In addition, staff has also prepared responses to questions posed by Council Person Nausier during a December 21st meeting at the C.A.R.E. office. The requested information has been added to the data originally included in the December 17 Council report and is presented below:

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

Programs Targeting High-Risk Youth

Douglass High School Gym Program - Gym is rented in the evenings from October-May to provide a supervised place for children and teens to recreate.	6:30-9:00 pm M-F, October - May Douglass H.S. 65-80 nightly
Cooking Classes - Bi-monthly class held at the Armory is intended for parents to bring children and learn easy dishes to make at home.	6-7 pm Wednesdays, School months, Armory 7-20 per class
Homework Assistance - Volunteers and staff are provided 3 days a week at the Armory during after school hours to help school aged youth with homework. Computers are accessible for students' use.	3:30-6:30 pm M-F, School months Armory 3-10 per day
After-School Drop-In - The Armory is open to youth 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 a registered nutrition center with the food bank. This enables youth to eat snacks in the evenings for free.	2:30-7:00 pm M-F, School months Armory 20-50 daily
STARS Camp - 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.	10 am-4 pm M-F, June – August Armory 20-30 per day

<p>Sunset Camp - This takes place in 3 city parks that are in areas of need during the summer months. Two staff members are provided at each site in the evenings (4 – 8 p.m.) and provide supervision in the parks, encourage good behavior and provide organized activity such as sports, art, games and others.</p>	<p>4 – 8 pm Worley, Optimist & Indian Hills Parks M-F, June - August 20-30 per day</p>
<p>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 \$15 for two months.</p>	<p>9 am – 7 pm Armory M-F, Year-round 10 daily</p>
<p>3 on 3 Basketball Tournament – The first tournament will be held in February 2008 as part of the Black History Month activities. There are divisions for men and women.</p>	<p>Sun, Feb 3 – Thurs Feb 7 Youth 1st year–numbers N/A</p>
<p>Moonlight Hoops - This outdoor basketball league is held in Douglass Park during the summer months. The adult league is the largest group and serves roughly 160 adults. The youth program is for males and females ages 13-16. Businesses sponsor teams for \$100 dollars which provides for the team shirts for games. The Columbia Police Officers' Association and Police Department are co-sponsors of this event. The youth are provided with the best and most positive influence coaches possible.</p>	<p>7:30-10:30 pm Tues and Wed June - August Douglass Park 100-160 in league</p>
<p>Douglass Baseball League - This growing baseball league is held in Douglass Park at a minimal cost (\$20 per player). The program is offered during the Summer months and serves boys and girls ages 5-10. Teams are co-rec and the league serves as a developmental program. The primary focus is to get more children from the low-income families involved in baseball.</p>	<p>5:30 – 8:30 p.m. Mon – Sat June – August Douglass Park 160 – 200 in league</p>
<p>Blue Thunder Track Club - This program is for youth ages 6-16. Membership in the club at the basic level is free. It operates from April - August in the regular season, but there is off-season training year round. Children participate in AAU meets out of town and some meets in town.</p>	<p>Off Season: Oct- March @ Various Parks & facilities Saturdays 1-2:30 pm Regular Season: April-Sept Tues & Thurs, Hickman Track 6 - 7:15 pm 30 – 70 youth</p>

<p>Shorin-Ryu Karate – This martial arts form teaches discipline and self-control. A free introductory class is offered which lasts 8 weeks. After this, they can sign up for a low cost continuation of the program. This is a very popular program.</p>	<p>6 – 7:30 pm Thursdays, Year-round Armory 15-25 youth</p>
<p>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 (\$25).</p>	<p>6 – 7 pm Thursdays, Year-round sessions Armory 10-15 youth per class</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>6-8pm 1st & 3rd Saturdays, Year Round Armory 10-30 youth per night</p>
<p>Youth Council - This is a group of teens who meet weekly to discuss issues they face in their daily lives at home, school, and in the community. They are encouraged to be leaders and spokes-persons for their peers. They are also expected to take a lead role in planning activities for themselves and peers.</p>	<p>6pm Thursdays, Year-Round Armory 5-20 teens</p>
<p>Lil' Lady Bulldogs Dance & Cheer Group – This group serves young ladies from ages 6-14. They practice twice a week and perform at events. Membership is free, although they must pay for their uniforms.</p>	<p>10-11 am Saturdays, Sept-June Armory 10-18 girls</p>
<p>Sho-Me Sho-Stoppers Hip-Hop Dance Team – This group includes males and females from ages 10 - 17 who practice weekly and give public performances.</p>	<p>Year Round, Days & times vary Armory 8-20 youth</p>
<p>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 play the instrument of their choice. If they reach a certain level, they can earn their way into the City-Wide Drum line.</p>	<p>3:30-7:00 pm Daily, and year round Armory 10-20 youth</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>4:00-5:00 pm Fridays -Year Round Armory 10-20 youth</p>
<p>Community Flag Line: This is a fairly new program. This group accompanies the drum line during their performances. This is an all girls group. No fee.</p>	<p>6 - 7:30 pm Tues & Thursdays Year-round Armory 4-8 girls</p>
<p>Young Men of Determination – This newly formed group is led by city staff that meets weekly at the Armory. The purpose of the group is to show young men correct and wiser choices in school, situations in the community, treating young ladies in a proper manner, how to go about getting a job, etc. Discussions also include parenting issues since some of them do have babies of their own. The goal is to teach them gentlemanly ways.</p>	<p>5 – 6 pm Tuesdays, Year-round 8 young men Armory</p>

<p>Mid-Mo Youth Mirror Newspaper - This group meets weekly at the Armory to put together their own paper with assistance from staff. They write articles, create cartoons, solicit funds for ads, edit, and more. This is a free program. The paper is distributed for free at various locations.</p>	<p>4 – 5 pm Usually Tuesdays Armory 6-10 young authors</p>
<p>Pitch, Hit & Run – 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 in San Francisco, CA.</p>	<p>9 am Saturday Every May - annually Oakland Park Field 10-15 youth</p>
<p>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. In 2007, Columbia had 2 youth qualify for the National Meet in Hershey, Pennsylvania.</p>	<p>9 am Saturday Every May - annually HHS or RBHS track 40-70 youth</p>
<p>USA Jr. Olympics Skills Competition – This national program provides youth the opportunity to demonstrate skills in basketball, soccer, track & tennis. Winners at local competition move on to sectionals, regionals and nationals. Two years ago a young Columbia girl made it to the Nationals in Colorado Springs.</p>	<p>9 am Saturday Every April Armory & HHS track 10-25 youth/session</p>
<p>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. This year a young Columbia girl made it to the Team Championships at the Edward Jones Dome in St. Louis.</p>	<p>9 am Saturday Every August Cosmo Park 20-50 youth</p>
<p>Egg Hunt EGGstravaganza – This free special event is held in Douglass Park as part of the holiday season. There are numerous activities for the youth such as arts & crafts, bunny sack races, face painting, sidewalk-chalk art and an egg hunt.</p>	<p>12 – 2 pm Saturday March or April Douglass Park 80-250 youth</p>
<p>Kite Flying Day – This is a free special event to children and is held in Douglass Park. Free kites are provided to children who do not already have one.</p>	<p>12 – 2 pm Saturday April Douglass Park 20-60 youth</p>
<p>Halo Multi-Player Nights – This is a newer program which meets bi-monthly at the Armory. The youth ages 17 and up meet to play this popular game on a huge projected screen.</p>	<p>7-9pm 2nd & 4th Saturdays Year-round Armory 10-15 teens</p>
<p>Teen Nights – During the summer, there are drug and alcohol free Teen Nights at the Oakland Family Aquatic Center. The target age is 11 – 15 year olds.</p>	<p>8:30 – 10:30 pm Fridays July (1) and Aug (1) Oakland Pool 50 – 100 teens</p>

Community-Wide Programs Available to High Risk Youth

Youth Sports – The Department has a number of youth sports options which include 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 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. The Department has increased the number of minority youth employed as life guards and as other aquatic staff over the years through an active recruitment program.

Classes and Programs - The Department offers a number of classes and programs for youth and teens that introduce the participants to a healthy way to live, learn and celebrate. Classes include: Tae Kwon-do, 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:

- Garage Band Bash – This activity targets teenagers and is held during the summer on top of one of the City parking garages. This is held the first week of August each year and attracts 75 – 200 youth.
- Skate Jam – 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.
- First Night Columbia – A specific Teen Venue is hosted at the Armory Sports Center. The entire event is an alcohol free celebration of New Year's Eve and has numerous sponsors throughout the City.

Some of the Family-oriented Special Events include: First Night (alcohol-free) New Year's Celebration, Outdoor Movies at Flat Branch Park, Twilight Festival activities at Flat Branch Park in the months of June and September.

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

Reduce Dropout Rates

C.A.R.E. Program - The Columbia Parks & Recreation Department operates the C.A.R.E. Program. The major component of the program is a summer youth employment program designed to provide youth (14 – 18) with a good quality introductory work experience. The City

provides job-related skill training to the youth and places them in a work setting where close supervision and a helping hand is provided. The City does pay the wages of the youth. Many of the youth are referred to the program through the guidance programs at the junior and senior high schools. Staff closely interacts with the school counselors and other school staff to make the youth aware of the program and to encourage the youth who need it most to apply to the program.

Population Served - At-Risk Youth (social, physical, mental, financial, or other). The majority of youth hired are 15 years of age, are African American or come from single-parent homes. Up to 350 Students ages 14-19 (super senior) apply for a summer job. There are up to 175 youth hired and placed with local employers for an 8 week work experience. The City pays the CARE Trainees wages.

C.A.R.E. Program Objectives:

- To provide students incentive to pass all core classes during the school year
- To provide youth with an opportunity to earn money
- To provide youth with an opportunity to build social skills
- To provide exposure to different cultures, values, ethnicities, races
- To improve communication skills
- To learn tolerance and develop a stronger sense of self
- To provide youth with an opportunity to have a positive 1st work experience
- To provide local employers with an opportunity to invest in youth
- To provide participants with an opportunity to explore an interest
- To help participants learn the power of changing their life by working towards goals: academic, personal, financial

C.A.R.E./Missouri Option Program Collaboration – This is a collaboration between the C.A.R.E./ Parks & Recreation Department and the Columbia Public Schools. The C.A.R.E. staff hires up to 30 young adult students identified by CPS as at-risk for dropping out of high school. The students must be 17 and academically trail behind cohort peers by one year. Students work to complete the GED study program at Hickman or Douglass school for 3 hours per day, 5 days per week. In order to be in compliance with the program, students must also be employed at least 15 hours per week or be enrolled and attending a vocational-tech program for 15 hours per week. Students must retain employment for school year. If the student passes the GED exam and maintains steady employment, he/she will earn a high school diploma and walk with their class at graduation.

Population Served - At-risk Teens 17-21. These include: Young adult parents, academic under-achievers, students with significant school attendance issues, young adults with physical/emotional disabilities, students who may have had or have issues with drugs/alcohol, disproportionate number of youth from low-income, single-parent, African-American Families.

Program Objectives:

- To increase number of students who graduate from high school

- To increase number of youth who need job training and social support access to entry level jobs in their field of interest
- To provide an option to engaging in illegal activities for income
- To decrease the number of offenders
- To provide youth with access to adults who will provide information about post-secondary education and provide social service referrals for a variety of needs (food, clothing, health, etc.)
- To provide youth positive, consistent, candid, adult mentors who encourage youth to develop interests, recognize opportunities and steer away from negative influences.
- To build strong relationship with CPS so that youth who need CARE services are identified before they are in crisis.

C.A.R.E. After School Tutoring/Columbia Public Schools and Burrell Health

Collaboration - CARE staff provides professional, one-to-one tutoring in all core subjects including math, physics and chemistry. Students are referred by Guidance Counselors from Oakland and Jefferson Jr. High Schools. Students attend tutoring two days per week. Burrell Health, formerly University Behavior Health, also refers youth to the tutoring program and the case managers provide the transportation to the CARE office. The CARE Coordinator meets with the parent/guardian of the youth at intake and reports student progress or lack of progress. The CARE Coordinator also attends parent/teacher meetings at CPS as requested by the school or parent.

Population served - Many of the current students include those who have experienced bullying, failure, and violence; some have parents who are incarcerated; some are in foster care. Presently youth from 8 – 17 attend the tutoring.

Tutoring Objectives:

- To provide support to CPS students from the age of 8-17
- To improve basic skills and attitude about learning
- To improve school attendance
- To provide an outlet for student frustration
- To provide parents with an affordable (free) service to address students deficits and improve family dynamics
- To provide a safe, nurturing environment
- To encourage youth to develop academic strengths and encourage success in school by offering a summer employment incentive (if the students do not have to attend summer school, they can interview for a CARE job)

C.A.R.E. Program -School Year Employment - CARE employs a small number of youth under the age of 17 during the school year if they or their family is living in extreme poverty. These youth must have school work permits and cannot work past the hour of 7 p.m.

C.A.R.E. School-Year ART Gallery Program - Kids who develop their talents have a more defined sense of self and are less prone to engage in negative behaviors. Many youth lack access to interesting, affordable activities. An Animation Workshop is offered to the youth with the following objectives:

- To encourage students who are interested in visual arts to develop their skills
- To encourage youth to think about transferring skills to educational/employment opportunities
- To provide technical, hands-on instruction in animation software, computers, and photo/sound equipment
- To provide a FREE educational “tech” classes (8 weeks) to youth who may not have access to classes or the financial resources to enroll in classes
- To provide an experience that provides opportunities for youth to broaden their social milieu by meeting local artists and business people while displaying their talents and skills

Reduce Truancy

The Department presently does not have any programs or collaborations designed to reduce the truancy rates.

Joint After School Programs

At this point, the primary after-school programming efforts are those performed by the various CPS schools in conjunction with the Adventure Club program affiliated with the MU School of Education. They are the group most recognized by the Columbia School District.

The Parks & Recreation Department does offer the Active Kids Club which meets at a number of elementary schools on a rotating basis throughout the school year and then in various parks during the summer months. Staff has also worked with the Columbia/Boone County Health Department and the Adventure Club to train the Club’s staff on programs which provide healthy and fun activity for the youth served during the after school 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.?

Many programs that are offered through the Community Recreation section of the Department are partnered with the Columbia Police Department in some way.

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

- Frederick Douglass Coalition
- Big Brothers & Big Sisters
- Boys & Girls Club
- Columbia Housing Authority
- P.R.I.D.E.
- Youth Empowerment Zone
- Centro Latino
- Successful Neighborhood Resource Center

- Voluntary Action Center
- Columbia Public Library
- Boys Scouts of America
- Optimist Club
- Sam's
- Douglass Athletic Association

Local churches – many partnerships and dissemination of information

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

Youth Community Coalition (YC²) – Parks & Recreation works with YC² to promote and produce the Garage Band Bash, Skate Jam and First Night Teen Venue at the Armory. Staff attends monthly planning meetings and is also involved in their Youth Committee meetings that are held at our facility. The youth committee's purpose is to plan events for teens and to develop leadership skills. The vision of YC² is to have a safe, healthy and drug-free community.

Go Skateboarding Day – Collaborative event with the following sponsors: Small Time Skates, 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) enforce and advocate helmet safety and ordinances. The event included a skate team demo, music, best trick contest, give-aways, and refreshments and had 1,200 youth in attendance.

3rd Annual Teen Garage Band Bash - Featured four local teen bands jamming on the roof of the parking garage at 6th and Cherry. This event was co-sponsored by Public Works and Youth Community Coalition. The event is growing each year and the summer of 2007 doubled the previous year's attendance.

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:

Hot Topic Nights – This collaborative effort with the Columbia/Boone County Health Department is held at the ARC on a regular basis. Each night may have a particular focus but topics can include issues ranging from peer pressure, sexuality, teen pregnancy, alcohol and drugs, healthy choices etc..

After School Tutoring – This collaborative effort, along with the University YMCA Academic Enrichment Center, pairs university students with youth in the 6th – 9th grades. One on one assistance is provided in a variety of subjects and also provides access to computers. Awards are given for attendance and improved grades. There are three tutoring sites (ARC, Armory, C.A.R.E.) available to those who need it facilitated by the Department.

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. The FY 08 budget is \$349,218 and includes two full-time employees.
 - b. **C.A.R.E. Program** – This program is presently located at 800 N. Providence Road, Suite 210. The budget for FY 08 is \$374,960 and includes one full-time person.
 - 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. **Impact of Minimum Wage on the C.A.R.E. Program** – Presently the minimum wage (as set by the State of Missouri) is \$6.65 per hour. This increase from \$6.50 in 2007 was budgeted for as part of the FY 08 budget preparations. This indexed rate established by the state will increase again on January 1, 2009 according to the consumer prices indices. However, the federal rate will rise to \$7.25 per hour on July 24, 2009 and will exceed the state rate. As part of the FY 09 budget process, staff will prepare the financial impact of the federal minimum wage increase for all programs including C.A.R.E.
4. **Tutoring Programs** - Presently the Department offers tutoring at the ARC (8 computers), Armory (seven computers) and the C.A.R.E. program (two computers). All of the computers are nearing the end of their useful life and staff is looking for grants which would fund the replacement. The Armory could use four more computers and the C.A.R.E. Program could use an additional two more. The programs at each facility are different from each other and serve different needs. There are a number of other tutoring programs which exist as well. The success of tutoring centers is dependent upon many factors including volunteers, computer equipment, location and the facility. Each center has their own advantage and serves a need.
5. **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 also 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. This is funded annually by the City Council and in FY 08, the amount of assistance is \$40,000. 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 list represents some 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.