



**CITY OF SANTA BARBARA**  
**PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT**

**AGENDA DATE:** June 25, 2008

**TO:** Park and Recreation Commission

**FROM:** Recreation Division, Parks and Recreation

**SUBJECT:** Youth Employment Coordination

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Commission hear a report on the work that the Department is doing to support the efforts of the Strategic Planning Committee on Youth Violence related to Youth Employment.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Parks and Recreation Department has been actively involved in the work of the community-based Strategic Planning Committee on Youth Violence. This group has been meeting since January 2008 to develop both short and long-term strategies to reduce youth violence in the community. The committee includes representatives from the City, city and county schools, probation, law enforcement, youth serving non-profits, and foundations.

One of the sub-committees, Community/School Resource Team, has been focused on the development of a short-term strategy to identify and provide support to youth who are directly involved in gang activity over the summer. Specific youth are in the process of being identified, and representatives from various agencies working as a team will assist in evaluating needs and connecting the youth with social and other support services. Support could entail school/academic, drug and alcohol counseling, family services, employment, etc.

**Youth Employment**

The Strategy Planning Committee on Youth Violence identified as a priority the need to provide increased opportunities for "at risk" youth to be successfully employed. Placing as many youth as possible into job opportunities over the summer months will help deter involvement with negative behaviors which may lead to youth violence.

Various youth job training programs exist in the community, offered through public schools, as well as public, private, and non-profit organizations. Within the business community, there is increased awareness of the need and support for providing opportunities for youth to gain employment locally as part of the solution to reducing

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gang violence. The City of Santa Barbara Parks and Recreation Department, through its Community Centers and Community Services programs, has been providing youth job training and placement services for over 30 years.

### **Youth Jobs: Connecting Youth with Opportunities**

To insure the greatest success with connecting youth with job training programs over the next several months, Parks and Recreation will take a lead role in coordinating between agencies with job training programs, youth service providers and potential employers. The proposed scope of work includes:

1. Develop an inventory of local agencies offering youth job training and placement programs, identifying unique components of each program, and contacts.
2. Establish a communication network with appropriate staff within each participating agency.
3. Identify and outreach to the community, programs and agencies working or interacting with "at risk" youth. Provide information on local youth job training programs, and assist with referring youth to appropriate job programs.
4. Work with local businesses, companies, and agencies to cultivate job and internship opportunities which can be referred to the various youth job training and placement programs.
5. Link youth to job opportunities and services by making appropriate referrals to job providers or services.
6. Create an identity for the Youth Jobs service, and promote public awareness.
7. Develop a web-based resource which agencies and the community can access for information on programs and referrals.

### **Program Coordination and Evaluation**

The program will be coordinated through Community Services, under Antonio Velasquez. The newly hired Lower Westside Center Community Services Coordinator (.80FTE), Peter Leyva, will head the effort. To insure that programs and services at the Lower Westside Center continue, the City Administrator has provided up to \$10,000 in additional hourly salaries for that location in FY 09. Mr. Leyva brings a strong background in related experience including youth job training and employment programs, work with County Probation, and in building community collaborations.

The program will be evaluated mid-year to determine its effectiveness and whether this is a role that the City will continue to provide or whether it is more appropriate to hand off to another community entity.

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