

A Proposal for the Development Of a recreational facility

PURPOSE:

1. To provide facilities and staff for an extensive activity and fitness program including counseling and teaching for teenagers, families and individuals.
2. To teach skills and principles that will enable families and individuals to experience and enjoy lifetime sports and activities.
3. To focus efforts on those particular problems that face teenagers, their families and other significant adults in their life in order to not only deal with the typical crises that occur in a teen's life but also to try to prevent them.
4. To provide a facility for community based programs.

A PROBLEM - YOUTH ARE AT RISK:

According to recent research and very common experience and knowledge, a significant number of youth in our society are vulnerable and at risk. The vulnerable youth is the youth that has not learned to see himself or herself as a capable person. A capable person is one who:

- Is an important, contributing part of a series of meaningful relationships including family, parents and other significant adults.
- Has the power to affect things in their life through their own resources and their own efforts.
- Is in the process of learning and growing and in need of support and training in: Self-discipline; Communication Skills; Responsibility and Judgement.

A youth missing these concepts is vulnerable and is the youth most likely to become involved in negative behavior such as alcoholism, suicide, truancy, drug abuse, delinquent and sexual deviance. It is not that youth seek out these behaviors so much as it is that they do not find themselves moving in a positive direction and fall into these behaviors simply because they present themselves to them. These youth report having a feeling of being trapped in places they don't want to be, for reasons they don't understand, with people who don't appreciate them or take them seriously as a person. They perceive themselves as having

no significant purpose in their life. They see themselves as having no significant contributing role to play in the world around them.

These are the general conditions, which can lead to problems. Young people are vulnerable when they feel unable to meet the expectations of the world around them and the people with whom they live. They feel that people do not take them seriously, do not really care about them and they feel that their life has no meaning or purpose.

A SOLUTION – YOUTH ACTIVITIES/FITNESS/WORK/STUDY:

Many worthwhile values have been perceived to be inherent in sports, fitness and physical activity, yet these values are not *accessible* automatically to everyone who participates. Many do not even attempt to participate because of their fear of their own probable failure to perform well. There are, however, values that are not only worthwhile to pursue in physical activity, but need to be made available and accessible to more of our youth. It is not a matter of saturating a community with organized sports leagues, recreational programs or merely upgrading physical education programs in the schools (although much of that might help). Many youngsters, including many who actively participate in such programs do not really benefit for a variety of reasons. They fail to benefit partly because of the “win-at-all-costs” concepts prevalent today and the general attitudes and lack of sensitivity of the adults who organize and run these programs. Of course another major problem is the lack of support and understanding on the part of parents.

Participation in sports, recreation and physical activity of all kind should be a vehicle for all-around personal growth and the development of a positive self-image. **The only justification for any program is that it exists for the benefit of the youth and not for the glorification of parents or an organization or for the ego of the coach.** Any program must also serve the interests and needs of ALL youth, not just the highly skilled and/or gifted.

The process must include two key elements:

- Putting winning in its proper perspective. There are winners and there are “winners.” The concept of “winning” needs to be broadened to include progress on many levels. Each individual needs to set their own personal goals and define “winning” in their own personal way.
- Providing essential experiences which not only make participation more accessible, but provide motivation to participate; learn the necessary skills; and develop the self-esteem necessary to approach life with confidence.

The way the program is organized and the type of leadership that is provided should create an environment in which:

- Youth feel they are there because they want to be there.
- Youth feel they are appreciated for themselves and are taken seriously as a person. They are listened to.
- Youth are not asked for more than they are prepared to deliver.
- Youth are perceived as having a significant role to play in the decision making process and are given opportunities to participate in the process.
- Everyone (youth, leaders, and parents) support one another.

Activity programs that have been used to help create positive growth and development in youth and adults

Swimming
 Water Aerobics
 Aquatic Cross Training
 USS Age Group Swim Team
 American Youth Soccer
 Springboard Diving
 SCUBA
 Lap Swimming
 Handicapped Aquatics and Sports Programs
 Therapeutic Exercise Programs
 Open Aquatic Activities
 Weight training
 Fitness Evaluations
 Triathlon and Marathon Training and participation
 Family Sports and Activity Programs
 Recreational Sports Programs
 Wrestling
 Gymnastics
 Racket Sports
 Martial Arts

Work, Study and Community Identification Programs:

Youth need programs that teach them how to work and give them opportunities for meaningful activities. They need experiences where they can work with trained adult leaders to accomplish tasks needed by the community.

One report in 1988 suggested that “we must either engage in a major prevention effort among our youth or face social chaos in the decades ahead.” This same report suggested that emotional and personal bonding to home, school and community tends to prevent misbehavior, lack of this bonding causes misbehavior. When strong emotional bonds are not present with home, school and community, peers (gangs) are there to fill the void. Youth are in need of skills and knowledge, which will enable them to engage in constructive activities.

Programs and Activities:

- Work Force Programs. Teens from a variety of backgrounds work together on community projects.
- Work/study experiences for brief to extended periods of time away from home in structured and well-organized environments.
- Services in the community and support to community organizations and agencies to provide:
 1. Counseling
 2. Social Services
 3. Medical Evaluations and referral
 4. Health and Nutrition Information
 5. Structured Peer Group Interactions
 6. Introduction to Community Agencies and Significant Individuals
 7. Classes to Support and Encourage Interests and Hobbies

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