



Redwood City's Youth Agenda

Educate, Empower, Enrich

Second Quarter 2011



Who are we and what is the Redwood City Youth Agenda?

We are a collaboration of the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department (PRCS), the Library, the Police Department, and the City Manager's Office. We provide extensive programs and services that educate, empower and enrich the youth of our community. It is our Purpose to "Build a Great Community Together", and we believe that providing quality education, recreation, health and safety services that help kids to succeed, are the building blocks necessary to meet our *Purpose*.

The Youth Agenda team focuses on collaborative strategic planning to maximize effectiveness and share each department's expertise and resources. Several collaborative programs have been implemented and many more are planned. And more importantly, new programs and services are not planned and implemented in isolation. Examples of this collaborative approach include: "Bookstock"; after school tutoring and active learning programs; teen activities; truancy training by the Police Department; and inter-departmental community communication of our services and programs.

The City Council has developed Strategic Initiatives which represent areas of focus for the entire City. Strategic Initiatives are high-level policy areas, and are generally reviewed every five years. They serve as a guide to help focus the efforts of the City Council, the City's Boards, Committees, and Commissions, and City Staff, and offer guidance to effectively align resources and priorities.

The current Strategic Initiatives are: Effective and Efficient Service Delivery; Community Building and Communications; Economic Development; Public Safety; Transportation; and Youth.

Why Youth?

Bringing our community's youth issues into the forefront through programs and policies that support youth development, education, after school care, family support, and enrichment; and creating partnerships with our youth, recognizing youth as an asset that enhance the quality of life for all members of our community.

"Children are the world's most valuable resource and its best hope for the future" – John F. Kennedy



What are we doing to support Redwood City Youth?

Every day, the Library; the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department; the Police Department; and the City Manager's Office support youth in Redwood City. We intentionally focus on five main supports and opportunities that young people need to experience in a youth development program in order to move towards positive long-term outcomes. They are:

Safety, so young people feel:

- Physically and emotionally secure.

Supportive Relationships, so young people can experience:

- Guidance, emotional and practical support
- Adults and peers knowing who they are and what's important to them

Meaningful Youth Involvement, so that young people can:

- Be involved in meaningful roles with responsibility,
- Have input into decision-making,
- Have opportunities for leadership, and
- Feel a sense of belonging.



Skill Building, so that young people can have:

- Challenging and interesting learning experiences which help them build a wide array of skills, and
- Experience a sense of growth and progress.

Community Involvement, so that young people gain:

- An understanding of the greater community, and
- A sense of being able to make an impact in their community.

LEADING THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS



SCHABERG AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Earlier this year, the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department (PRCS) and the Library **partnered** to enhance the **Homework Center at Schaberg Branch Library** from a drop-in program to a structured after school program that ran Monday through Thursday from the end of school bell to 5pm. The Library and the PRCS Department each provided staffing support to supervise over 40 children in the program. The program provided homework support, computer activities, arts and crafts, games, and supervised time for students to check out books, DVD's, or participate in story time and music. Having access to the computers was an added bonus allowing students' from Roosevelt to visit the "Math Jiji" site which is a computer math program they are using twice a week in school.

FAMILY AUTHOR NIGHTS IN THE SCHOOLS

Family Author Nights, a terrific **collaboration** between the library and schools, reached a new high of seven schools this year. Family Author Nights bring a real live writer or illustrator on campus for a bilingual talk about their books, and about the benefits – and fun -- of reading. The presentations are bilingual, and are held at night so the entire school community, parents as well as children, can enjoy them. Close to a thousand people attended a Family Author Night this year, and, thanks to the support of the Friends of the Library, 2,800 copies of the speaker's book were given away.

PROVIDING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

In a successful **collaboration** with the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department and the Library hosted over 150 students from five different after school programs. PRCS arranged transportation, and the Library provided library cards, "book talks", stories, a tour, lots of manic fun, and an excellent reminder of everything the library has to offer.



POLICE ACTIVITIES LEAGUE (PAL)

Along with the **after school sports programs** PAL in **partnership** with PRCS provides, the Police Activities League has implemented a number of new programs and has continued to expand the use of the PAL Community Center located on the Taft School site in the Friendly Acres neighborhood. A new basic karate program was started for youth between Kindergarten and 5th, a hip hop dance program has been begun, and PAL is partnering with RRCS to pilot a new running training program. This is a 12 week program for boys and girls between 8-13 years old.

PAPERS MOVIE

In a **collaborative** effort between Redwood City 2020, Redwood City Library, the **Immigrant Youth Action Team and Sequoia High School Dream Club**, a screening of the moving “Papers: Stories of Undocumented Youth” was shown at the Downtown Library on April 27th. Members from both the Immigrant Youth Action Team as well as the Sequoia High School Dream club were available to discuss the issue of undocumented youth in our community following the film. Roughly 85 community members attended this great event.

TEENS IN ACTION SHOWCASE

This fun and informative FREE event celebrated the positive and change-making efforts of young people in our immediate community. Held on the Courthouse Square in Downtown Redwood City, the entire community was invited to a special wonderful evening, dedicated to showcasing, learning from, and supporting our young people.

The Library, the PRCS Department, PAL, PD, RWC2020, and a multitude of partner organizations hosted tables and displays by local youth leadership groups, hip hop and break dance demonstrations, theater performance, live DJs and spoken word – all by local teens.

Participating groups included Redwood City/North Fair Oaks Prevention Partnership • Redwood Environmental Academy of Leadership (REAL) • San Mateo County Youth Commission • Sequoia Teen Wellness Center Youth Advisory Board • Sequoia High School Teen Resource Center Youth Advisory Board • Cañada College Upward Bound • Center for Youth Peer Educators • Citizen Schools at Kennedy Middle School • Community Street Jam • Immigrant Youth Action Team • Youth Voices Action Team • Gay Straight Alliance • Grupo MAAC • Redwood City Boys and Girls Club • Redwood City Library Teen Center • Redwood City Parks, Recreation and Community Services Teen Advisory Board • Redwood City Parks, Recreation and Community Services Youth Advisory Board • Sequoia Union High School District Migrant Education Program/Migrant Youth • Main Event DJ Club • The Dream Club • Verde Youth Volunteer Corps • Youth Leadership Institute: YO! Mateo.



EFFECTIVE PROGRAMMING

KINDERCARD CAMPGAIN

The Library's **KinderCard Campaign** provides each kindergarten class in the district with a visit from a librarian, and each kindergartner with an essential tool for beginning school – their library card. They also receive an invitation to a SuperSaturday, a special open house at the Downtown branch. This year over 1,200 kindergartners and their families attended the event. Children were entertained by puppet shows, story times, and games, but most importantly, they got to use their new library cards to check out books. For many families, this invitation to a special day breaks the barrier to making that first visit to a public library

The Library's **Traveling Storytime** is now in its eleventh year. Over that time volunteers have presented over 9,600 storytimes in the city's preschools and daycares, which add up to more than 160,000 child contacts.

LIBRARY TEEN CENTER

Over one thousand different teens visited the Library Teen Center during this past school year! Additionally, 100 regular teens volunteer hundreds of hours, keeping the place decorated, planning programs, or helping with library tasks. Teens learned how to interact with one another and become friends with people of different ages and from different schools. They repeatedly tell us that they make friends at the center and how important it is to be in a place that is safe, away from gang influence. The Teen Center staff created a welcoming and safe atmosphere, using the CYDI principles that Library and PRCS have been working with, and teens feel they can rely on staff to not only help them with homework but to also help them with confidential problems. The trusting environment allowed one young man to express the stress he feels at home because of his abusive father.

S.A.F.E. AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM



PRCS, in partnership with Sequoia High School, provided a variety of after school activities on campus for students in the S.A.F. E. (Sequoia Afterschool Focused Enrichment) program throughout the year . Over 100 students participated in open gym time, a supervised drop in recreation center on campus, a learn-to-row program at the Bair Island Aquatic Center, a horsemanship program at Glen Oaks Equestrian Center, and a mobile application class from another partner called “Playing Mondo”.



DARE

During the 2010-11 school year the Redwood City Police Department continued its commitment to reducing the use of illegal drugs by the City’s youth. Towards this goal, two officers from the department taught a total of thirteen Drug Abuse Resistance Educate (D.A.R.E.) classes at five different schools. Each class included ten hours of instruction and a total of 525 fourth and fifth grade students received instruction. The students were taught the dangers of illegal drugs, how to resist peer pressure and to keep drugs out of their lives.

A recent graduate from Redwood High School was delighted when staff helped her plan out the classes she would need to take at San Mateo College in order to obtain an AA degree. Our teens help us plan services--when they asked for a course on learning how to budget their expenses, we designed one to fit their needs. The Teen Center, along with Project READ’s KIP program (with over 2,500 teen volunteer hours tutoring younger kids!) and other family services, has made a difference in our youth’s lives and futures.



TRUANCY

At the start of the 2010-11 year, the Redwood City Juvenile Office revised and expanded the truancy program so as to include collaboration with neighboring schools outside of the jurisdiction of Redwood City, as well as continuing to work with the schools within our jurisdiction to address the problem of truancy. The revised program included training of school administrators and teachers and on-going close coordination with the school district to target the worst cases of chronic truancy. New documentation and procedures were put into place that take advantage of the Police Department's RIMS record management system and ensure proper documentation and tracking of truants. Additionally, each of the Police Department's five School Resource Officers (SROs) and a dedicated part-time Truancy Officer increased their efforts to identify chronic truants and work with the schools and their parents to get them in the classroom. Over the last school year the Police Department has made 309 truancy related juvenile contacts, issued 64 truancy citations and conducted 81 home visits.

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS

The Police Department provides one full-time and four part-time School Resource Officers to Sequoia High School (full-time) and Hoover and Kennedy Middle Schools (two part-time officers each). These officers provide both an enforcement presence on campus and help ensure the safety of the students and staff. Additionally, the officers provide intervention for "at risk" students and counseling for students and parents.

The SROs are involved in all of the various activities discussed above, such as truancy abatement, student mentoring, and raising drug and gang awareness, as well as providing traditional law enforcement services to the schools they serve. In an effort to reduce school violence and foster a better learning environment, SROs conducted gang awareness classes at Kennedy and Hoover Middle Schools, as well as Sequoia High School. A total of 7 gang awareness classes were taught amongst the three schools, in both English and Spanish, with different classes geared towards students, staff and parents. Additionally, the SROs periodically attended school staff meetings and other events as requested by the individual schools. The SROs also conducted 75 home visits, held 62 parent meetings, either in person or by telephone, and conducted hundreds of student contacts related to discipline issues. Finally, the Police Department and Fire Department presented one of the more effective awareness programs at Sequoia High School just before the Senior Prom. This program targeted 11th and 12th grade students and included a live demonstration of a simulated DUI crash, police investigation, and rendering of emergency medical assistance, all with the goal of discouraging young people from making the reckless and dangerous choice to drink and drive.

"I never knew how pretty the bay was in Redwood City. It was an experience I know I would never have been able to participate in if not for BIAC and SAFE. Rowing is one of the hardest and most rewarding activities I have ever done. I hope we can do this program next year because I want to race another team! Thank you everyone who has made this possible." Harley, Sequoia High School Freshman

JUNVENILE SERVICES

Through the Police Department's Juvenile Services Office we have implemented a comprehensive plan to reduce the impact of street gangs on the youth of our community. One of the primary tools used to combat the influence of street gangs is through education. The Police Department puts on periodic gang presentations aimed at students, teachers, and parents so that they have a better understanding of the dangers posed by street gangs, recognize gang or gang related activity, and provide tools to steer students away from gang involvement. These presentations are put on by members of the Juvenile Services Office, the SROs, and members of the Street Crimes Suppression Team (SCST), a unit that focuses on the suppression of gang violence. The Juvenile Services Office facilitated five gang prevention classes in the middle and high schools, Cal State East Bay University and a local church. The SCST facilitated three gang prevention classes to the Kiwanis Club, the Redwood City Chamber's Leadership Program, and the San Mateo Gang Intelligence Unit. Together, the Juvenile Specialist and the SCST team reached out to over 420 participants.

In addition to education, the Police Department provides services for individuals who want to separate from their gang past and have their gang related tattoos removed. Gang tattoos can be a serious impediment to individuals who are trying to move from gang involvement towards becoming a more productive member of society. The program helps these former gang members set an example for young people, showing them alternatives to gang involvement as well as the long term consequences of decisions made earlier in life. Since the first of the year we have signed up 25 new tattoo removal participants, 15 juveniles and 10 adults.





Want To Get Involved?

The City of Redwood City is committed to Our Youth. Through our collaborative approach of the Library; the Parks, Recreation and Community Services; the Police Department; and the City Manager's Office, we are able to deliver many programs and serve many youth. However, there's a lot more that we can do...and with your help, we can help make Redwood City a Great place for youth to thrive.

Will you consider joining our efforts? If you're interested, please contact us and we'll let you know how to get involved. From tutoring, mentoring, coaching, and more, we could use your help. Here's who to call:

- Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department: (650) 780-7311
- Library: (650) 780-7018
- Police Department: (650) 780-7100
- City Manager's Office: (650) 780-7300

And visit us at www.redwoodcity.org for more information. Thank you!