

## **Kids and Schools Briefing: Answers to Preliminary Briefing Questions**

### **What roles do schools fill in the community?**

In addition to the tradition role of providing education for Kindergarten through High School, the Renton School District fills other community roles:

- Provide facilities by opening the schools and fields to community groups, including Parks & Recreation dept., Girl Scouts, Friendly Kitchen meals etc.
- Provide information to parents in evening meetings on current topics of interest (such as cyber-bullying), often in conjunction with the PTSA's (Parent-Teacher-Student Associations)
- Offer training to private preschools on early childhood topics
- Offer tuition-based preschool for community children
- Collaborate with other agencies to support the community youth- for example, Friday morning breakfast is served at St. Matthews due to the delayed starts at schools

### **How does the school district's Community Assets program apply to the wider community?**

The Community Assets program is based upon research that has shown that kids who are supported and valued in their communities are more likely to grow up to be healthy, caring, and responsible. Community Assets, sometimes called the 40 Developmental Assets, are factors that support healthy development and include: support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity. (You were provided with a handout on this in May). There are many benefits to children and the community:

- Increases the likelihood that family and schools partner with one another
- Builds a trust in the schools from the community
- Encourages positive values and young people staying away from anti-social behaviors- for example the "Powerful to be Me" program at McKnight is directed toward developing responsible young men
- Builds parenting skills so that young children have assets in their lives- for example, the Even Start program at Hillcrest

### **What community education programs are out there?**

There are many opportunities for education in the community:

- Renton Technical College offers a variety of classes and career choice tracts
- Renton Area Youth and Family Services serves youth and families in South King County
- Renton School District provides education for youth and adults
- Valley Medical/Group Health Cooperative provides educational opportunities for youth and adult members
- English as a second language (ESL) classes for adults are taught at the North Highlands Neighborhood Center, at Hillcrest Elementary in

collaboration with Renton Technical College, and several other sites within Renton

- Even Start at Hillcrest is a parent & child education program in collaboration with Renton Technical College
- Renton Technical College students work in local schools as a part of their program internship requirements
- Renton School District assists with placements for special education students enrolled in a life skills program
- A variety of programs are offered for adults age 50 and older through the Renton Senior Center including computer classes, financial workshops and seminars, support groups, driver safety, health education, fraud and identity theft prevention workshops, health insurance benefits education, and legal information

### **What recreational opportunities are there for kids and teens in the immediate community?**

The City of Renton Recreation Division schedules youth and teen programs throughout the year. These programs are varied and are offered free or for a small fee. A limited number of scholarships are available to allow participation in programs by those who might not be able to afford it. A quarterly “What’s Happening” brochure details all programs and events. Brochures are sent to residents, but can be picked up at City facilities such as community centers, libraries, or City Hall, or can be viewed online at [www.rentonwa.gov](http://www.rentonwa.gov).

There are many recreational opportunities for youth and teens within the immediate community:

- The Highlands and North Highlands Neighborhood Centers schedule classes, programs, athletics, special events, and drop in activities throughout the year
- Many parks within Renton such as Philip Arnold, Teasdale, Tiffany, Kiwanis, and Kennydale offer free summer programs spring summer and fall
- A free summer lunch program is offered for those eighteen and under at summer park program sites
- Teen Summer Camp, which takes teens to off site activities daily, is very popular and often sells out well in advance
- Summer Camp programs for preschool and elementary school children are also very popular
- Each year, a summer teen musical is presented each year coordinated as a Renton River Days event; casting is open to all local teens
- Led by a conductor trained in Russia, the Renton Youth Symphony Orchestra is a group of teens play two concerts per season
- Athletic programs are programmed throughout the year by both the City of Renton and the Renton School District
- Specialized Recreation is available for teens and children with special needs including participation in both social and Special Olympic opportunities

- A new program for 2008 is “Guard Start,” which prepares 12 to 15 year-olds to be lifeguards by teaching water safety techniques, first aid, and shadowing qualified lifeguards
- After school programs are offered for youth at many elementary schools located throughout the City of Renton

**What opportunities are there to engage teens positively in the community?**

All of the above recreational activities engage teens positively in the community and build Community Assets, in addition:

- High school requires a community service component
- Middle school offers a young men’s program to build self-esteem and guide youth to healthy choices.
- The City of Renton Recreation Division offers many opportunities for teens as individuals or groups to volunteer for either a single event or on a quarterly basis
- The Renton Youth Council is a group of teens representing Renton area high schools and middle schools that engages in many civic events throughout the school year and advises the City of Renton on teen issues.
- The City of Renton has many employment opportunities for teens especially in the areas of guest services, lifeguards, scorekeepers, referees, etc.

**How can the school district and the City of Renton work together to provide community resources?**

The Renton School District and the City of Renton often work together to provide community resources. There is a joint use agreement that allows the School District and the City use of each others facilities free of charge or a nominal fee depending on the exact use. The City and School District jointly offer community events at the Renton IKEA Performing Arts Center.

One of the more notable and successful programs is Communities In Schools of Renton. This program funded by both the Renton School District and the City of Renton brings resources to at-risk students. The CISR Board of Directors is made up of employees of both entities and other community members. This program could be supported by recruiting more mentors from the community to support at-risk students in schools.

The City of Renton and the Renton School District could be more proactive in providing community resources. A workshop to better understand each others perspective would be a favorable approach.