

Agenda Report

DATE: DECEMBER 13, 1999
TO: CITY COUNCIL
FROM: YOUTH CENTER COLLABORATIVE
SUBJECT: BACKGROUND: ROLES OF THE CITY AND
OF THE YOUTH CENTER COLLABORATIVE

The concept of a "teen center" in Pasadena to provide a safe, supervised location for teenagers offering various recreation, education, job training, arts and other opportunities has been under discussion in this community since the early 1990's. In 1996, at a Youth Summit convened by the Coalition for a Non-Violent City, various individuals and youth organizations came together and outlined the need for a teen center in Pasadena, the benefits, and the types of programs and opportunities they believed would be key in such a center to promote positive alternatives for youth during non-school hours. In response to this youth request, a group of adults, youth, and representatives of several youth-serving organizations (including the City of Pasadena) committed to work together to establish what is now referred to as the Pasadena Youth Center. One such youth organization was the Pasadena Youth Council, an advisory body to the City, who came to the City's Human Services Commission in 1997 and sought the Commission's assistance in developing such a project. The Commission added their annual work plan support for the development of a Youth Center, and shortly thereafter appointed a liaison from the Commission to assist with the Youth Center project.

A first required step to develop a Youth Center was development of a basic plan and outline for the proposed project, creating a document that could be submitted to request funding and other support for the project. In 1997, the Human Services Commission recommended, and City Council approved, allocation of \$10,000 from the Human Services Endowment Fund to hire a consultant who would facilitate workshops with youth and adults, identify priorities for the Center, and develop a plan and written proposal document. The Coalition for a Non-Violent City (CNVC) agreed to serve as lead agency for the Youth Center, and built upon the work of the consultant to submit a funding application to the City for Community Block Grant and Human Service Endowment funding. That application was approved for funding for the two-year cycle of 7/1/98-6/30/00 (\$55,000 in 1998-1999, and \$50,000 in 1999-2000), but CNVC experienced some organizational changes and decided not to continue as lead agency on the project. Efforts to identify an alternative "lead agency" among local non-profit

organizations serving youth were unsuccessful, and so the City (Human Services, Recreation and Neighborhoods Department) agreed to serve as “interim lead agency.”

Since 1998, a group of interested adults and youth known as the Youth Center Collaborative have taken leadership responsibilities for the project. As “interim lead agency,” the City has provided space for the Youth Center Collaborative to work on this project, managed the approximately \$50,000 of funds per year, provided some technical assistance, and contracted with the Youth Center Collaborative selected Project Manager to provide program development, site search, youth facilitation, program delivery and related services. In 1998-1999, the Collaborative continued efforts to identify a qualified, youth-serving organization to serve as lead agency for the Youth Center project. Following an unsuccessful Request for Qualification selection process, the Collaborative made the decision to continue to provide ongoing leadership and to incorporate as an independent 501c3 non-profit corporation. The filing process has proceeded over the past six months, and the Youth Center Collaborative expects to complete the filing process and received provisional non-profit organizational status in January, 2000. Immediately upon receiving notification of that status, the Youth Center Collaborative will assume the responsibilities for the project and will formally take over responsibilities as lead agency for the Youth Center project, thus relieving the City of its “interim lead agency” role.

Goals

The Pasadena Youth Center will address issues confronting today’s youth and young adults in Greater Pasadena including academic achievement, job and vocational opportunities, substance abuse and health. The philosophy of the Youth Center Collaborative is to help youth have access to the services and activities they need to accomplish their personal goals. The YCC will work in collaboration with existing agencies and programs to provide referrals to existing organizations and services whenever possible.

To accomplish its mission, the Pasadena Youth Center is focusing on the following:

1. Collaboration with existing community resources. The Pasadena Youth Center is establishing partnerships with community-based organizations that serve youth. The YCC envisions itself as a partner with existing programs. It will seek to find ways to collaborate and stretch existing resources and work to fill gaps in the current structure.
2. Linkages with employers to promote career information, on-the-job-training, internships and employment of youth. This activity is already underway and has resulted in hiring.
3. A Youth written and produced newsletter. Youth will research and write articles on topics of interest to them. Two issues have already been produced.

4. Employment preparation seminars, individual mock interviews, resume preparation, job referral and follow-up with both the employee and the employer. Several seminars have been held and followed by one-on-one resume preparation sessions.
5. Development of academic skills. Qualified peers, college students and adult volunteers will provide academic tutoring, SAT preparation and computer training.

UPDATE – PRIMARY ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Hired half-time Project Manager (Taylor Morton) and 5 student interns.
- Delivered services/programs
- Site search and results
- Youth newsletters . . .
- Youth Month activities
- New Project Manager, effective 11/99 = Shari Stratton
- Etc.

FUNDING TO DATE

Program Services and Planning:

7/1/97 – 6/30/98: \$10,000 for consultant to conduct community workshops, Identify priorities for Youth Center and develop plan and proposal

Status: Workshops and proposal development; funds spent; proposal used as Basis for CNVC application for funding submitted in early 1998

7/1/98 – 6/30/99: Awarded \$55,000 in CDBG and HSEF funds to do project planning, program, secure site and develop site plan, etc.

Status: Spent \$24,423 (carryover \$30,577 to next year)

7/1/99 – 6/30/00: Awarded \$50,000 in CDBG and HSEF funds to continue project planning, finalize site and site plan, offer programs, involve youth, etc.

Status: In process

Capital:

5/99: Awarded \$165,000 in CDBG capital funds to create Pasadena Youth Center via rehab of 610 North Lake Avenue property, in partnership with OBA

Status: NOT YET SPENT – project site no longer feasible for Youth Center use; request in process to reallocate to alternate site

MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS-- & ANSWERS

- 1) Why does the Pasadena Area need a “Youth Center?”

ANSWER: Because there are not any substantial programs in the general Pasadena Community addressing the recreational, social, supplementary educational and vocational needs of our adolescent youth. Youth centers have been linked to crime reduction in many areas.

2) Why can't the Pasadena Youth Center (PYC) be based or housed on the appropriate PUSD campus(es)?

ANSWER: Initial and on-going focus groups and surveys on PUSD middle and high school campuses continue to overwhelmingly indicate that PUSD students do not want to remain on campus after hours for "personal time." For many of them, school is not their primary or secondary choice for preferred personal space environments. Many of them have disciplinary issues with their own campus or, because of grades or other factors, view prolonged school duration as negative—or at least not pleasurable. In addition, other campuses may and often pose problematic neutrality issues.

3) Why can't it be located more towards the center of Pasadena or where most of the youths live who are anticipated to attend the center?

ANSWER: First, the proposed site has access to unique recreational opportunities (e.g., horseback riding instruction, nearby golf course) that are not available in the central core areas of the city. Second, the initial surveys and questionnaires of which several hundred were analyzed, made it very clear the majority of youth prefer a site outside the inner corridors of the city that offers virtually total neutrality.

4) How will the youth get there?

ANSWER: The same way they get to the movies, dances, raves, concerts, sporting events, parties and skateboard parks—by any means necessary. Several collaborative ventures and preliminary agreements with community partners such as Dayton-Hudson (Target), PCC and PUSD have favorably addressed the issue of vanpools and shuttles for future PYC use. Further, city bus routes near and at PHS and at Altadena Drive and New York Drive also allow for convenient access.

5) Will the PYC be available to other community youth groups?

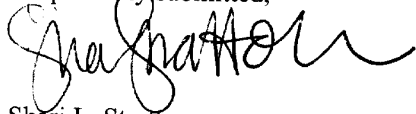
ANSWER: Yes, subject to certain terms and conditions relative to, size of the group, times and dates of desired use, type of use (e.g., facility) etc.

6) How will the PYC get funding?

ANSWER: The PYC is in the process of becoming a 501© 3 non-profit corporation. That process is expected to be legally complete for compliance purposes by or before February 1, 2000. The City of Pasadena in the interim is funding operational necessities until the PYC becomes a non-profit and can then fundraise on its own.

On Monday night, December 13, 1999, the youth intern front the Pasadena Youth Center Collaborative will be on hand to address any further questions or concerns

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shari L. Stratton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Shari" being the most prominent part.

Shari L. Stratton
Project Manager
Pasadena Youth Center Collaborative