

## **AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS IN VENTURA COUNTY**

### **Background**

This report was initiated by the Health, Education and Welfare Committee of the 2002-2003 Ventura County Grand Jury to determine if after school programs are available to the school-age children in Ventura County and to what degree. In this time of rampant crime and gang activity, what are the schools and parents doing to combat the escalation of negative activities?

### **Methodology**

To secure the information needed to determine if schools are offering alternative activities after school, we contacted the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools to request information on what is being offered, to whom and how many are participating. Information was also solicited from other programs that would be offered after school such as Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCAs and any other after school programs available.

### **Findings**

- F-1. All Ventura County schools offer some form of after school programs. All students can participate in on-site programs that offer enrichment or improvement for no fee. There are other after school programs put together by private groups in which, for a fee, school children can participate. Transportation is available to some of the off-campus programs.
- F-2. The Ventura County programs may be categorized according to numbers of children served, teacher involvement, hours of operation, type of enrollment, fee or no fee and other sources of funding. The hours are set up around the school day. Programs take place before or after school. The program can have formal enrollment or drop-ins. An example of the drop-in type is Haydock Expanding Horizons after school program. This program offers Drama, Performing Arts or Shakespeare and fun. You must follow the rules and do all of your homework. The schools run some programs, and the teachers or aides organize and run other programs. These programs are usually no fee programs. If the community runs the program, a fee will be charged to cover the facility, employees and supplies needed to run the program. It appears that every day offers an opportunity to be involved in an after school program. There are a variety of programs in which a student may take part. Programs such as sports, music, tutoring, advanced studies, arts and crafts, cheerleading and childcare are just some of those offered after school. There is excellent security at each program.
- F-3. The after school programs include both boys and girls of various school ages. The programs are age specific, meaning the grade and age determine the program design and participation. Teachers involved are volunteers. Some programs are ongoing and others are for limited dates. Some programs are funded by grants and others by various organizations. Some programs continue into the summer months. Specifically, programs run by the Boys and Girls Clubs and the YMCAs

continue during the summer months. A fee may be charged for some programs, such as chess, but not other programs. Scholarships and special arrangements are made for needy children.

- F-4. Language classes are offered to migrant students and their parents. This is an after school program that is offered in one of the schools that has a large migrant population. The program is federally funded specifically for this purpose. The program is considered for “at risk” children and their families. The focus of the program is English language and reading. There are other schools that need language programs for similar populations.
- F-5. Another contributor to after school programs is the Ventura County Parks and Recreation Department. Boys and Girls Clubs, Kindercare and Kids Connection are all off-campus organizations that offer programs. These programs are offered on a sliding scale based on finances/need. All school children are made aware of after school programs at the beginning of the school year.
- F-6. There is a Police Activities League (PAL) program offered by the Ventura County Sheriff. Some PAL programs have been cancelled.
- F-7. The Boys and Girls Clubs and the YMCAs are located in most of the communities and offer a daily program for a fee for children of all ages. They offer computer classes, homework help, arts and crafts, theater, swimming and a plethora of other activities.
- F-8. As of November 6, 2002, according to the information received from the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Office, there are 128 schools offering some type of after school program with an estimated 10,660 participants.

## **Conclusions**

- C-1. There is a plethora of after school programs offered to the school children of Ventura County. Some communities have more programs available than other communities.
- C-2. Transportation is being offered for some programs that are offered off school campus.
- C-3. Programs are offered for students who need tutoring as well as for those participating in advanced studies.
- C-4. There are additional schools in Ventura County that would benefit from the availability of after school language programs for students who are learning English.
- C-5. Sports programs are offered for students who wish to participate in football, basketball, hockey, swimming and other sports activities.

- C-6. Programs offer scholarships, flexible payments and waived payments based on need. No child is denied admittance to after school participation due to the parent's ability to pay.

### **Recommendations**

- R-1. Continue the programs that are in place.
- R-2. Periodically reevaluate programs to insure they continue to meet the needs of the students and to anticipate the foreseeable needs of the future.
- R-3. Have parents and schools work together to enhance after school programs. School officials and parents must make sure that no student is left out of any programs because of their inability to pay.
- R-4. Recommend PAL programs be reinstated where they have been cancelled.

### **Commendations**

The 2002-2003 Ventura County Grand Jury commends the Ventura County Parks and Recreation Department and the Schools of Ventura County on the many enhancement and enrichment programs offered to the students after school.

The 2002-2003 Ventura County Grand Jury commends the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Office for facilitating conducting a survey of after school programs throughout the county schools.

The 2002-2003 Ventura County Grand Jury commends the Boys and Girls Clubs and the YMCAs of Camarillo, Port Hueneme, Simi Valley and Oxnard.

### **Response Required**

Ventura County Sheriff (R-4)