



PRESS RELEASE

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NEW TEEN INITIATIVE KEEPS PROVIDENCE YOUTH SAFE COLLABORATION BETWEEN LOCAL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS OFFERS TEENS A SAFE HAVEN FROM THE STREETS

Providence, RI – Providence teens now have an alternative to the streets, with a teen program up and running in two of Providence's public housing developments.

The program, called "The Club," is a unique collaboration between the Boys & Girls Clubs of Providence, the Providence Housing Authority, the Providence Parks & Recreation Department and the Providence Police Department.

The four organizations have joined forces to provide Providence teenagers with activities and events that appeal to them, in a fun yet safe environment. The Club programming will be rooted in current Boys & Girls Clubs events and activities, and maintain the same goal of inspiring youth to reach their full potential.

The Program is modeled after a national strategy launched by the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, and is geared towards youth during their teenage years, some of the most volatile times of their life. Nationally, The Club is designed to retain the more than 1.2 million teenagers who attend Clubs nationwide, and attract even more teens who could benefit from the guidance and programs offered by Clubs. Locally, the strategy aims to attract 200 teens.

"We saw a real need for a way to re-engage teenagers who, as they get older, get lured from the Club into the streets," said Nicole Dufresne, executive director of The Boys & Girls Clubs of Providence. "While the Boys & Girls Clubs have always had programming available for teenagers, such as athletics, leadership development and community service, interest from this age demographic has been low. The Club will help attract teenagers by bolstering current programming and offering them a voice in the activities they want to be involved in."

The Club will run in Hartford Park and Manton Heights in Olneyville, two neighborhoods with significant teen populations.

"The Providence Housing Authority's partnership with the Boys & Girls Club of Providence, the Providence Police Department and the city's Parks and Recreation Department is a great collaborative that will allow teens to find a productive outlet for their energy," said Stephen

O'Rourke, Executive Director of the Providence Housing Authority. "Learning teamwork and good sportsmanship contributes to the development of positive, forward looking communities."

"The Boys & Girls Clubs plays a valuable role in the life of kids, especially kids from more challenging neighborhoods," said Lieutenant Dean Isabella of the Providence Police Department. "This program, strategically focused on teenagers, is one of the only of its kind in the state, and will not only benefit the teenagers in the program, but the community in general."

Lieutenant Isabella continued "Similar programs that the Providence Police and the Housing Authority have partnered on over the last two years have reduced juvenile crime in the housing developments nearly 70 percent. Overall violent crime in Olneyville was down for the year of 2010. We hope that this program can further reduce the incidents of violence amongst teens in the areas we are targeting."

The Club will be open on weekdays from 6:30 pm – 9:00 pm. Teens can register at either of the two Clubhouse sites in Hartford Park or Manton Heights, or visit www.bgcprov.org for more information.

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About the Boys & Girls Clubs of Providence

Boys & Girls Clubs of Providence, founded in 1868, is the oldest operating Boys & Girls Club in the nation and the largest in Rhode Island. Through traditional clubhouses, school - based and public housing sites, the Boys & Girls Club provides youth with a safe place to go before and after school. Programs and activities include homework assistance, hot evening meal, swim team and swim lessons, sports leagues, transportation to and from school and more. To learn more visit www.bgcprov.org.

About the Providence Police Department

The Providence Police Department is one of the oldest police departments in the United States, with its origins dating back to the Revolutionary War in 1775. The city's police force was formally chartered in 1864 and is currently the second largest law enforcement entity in New England. The Providence Police Department has evolved into a highly regarded police agency that utilizes the best in technological and human resources to service the second largest populated area in New England.

About the Providence Housing Authority

Established in 1939, the Providence Housing Authority owns and manages 2,606 units of public housing and is contract administrator for approximately 2,500 units of Section 8 housing. Approximately 58% of its housing stock is designated for families, with the remainder reserved for elderly and disabled. To learn more about the PHA and its programs go to www.pha-providence.com