
Mayor's Youth Office

Jane Driscoll, Director

Now in its sixth year of existence, the Mayor's Youth Office continues to endeavor to keep pace with the changing needs and wants of Burlington's young population. Through a myriad of programs we try to involve young people in their community by providing opportunities to participate and to develop self-confidence, self-esteem and a sense of belonging. Some of the programs and activities we've sponsored in the past year to accomplish these goals are listed below.

Kid's Day

In a resolution stating that the City "wants to provide an environment which will be a positive, healthy influence on the children" and that "children benefit from recreational, cultural and educational activities which continue to build their talents, and allow them to share these talents with others," the Board of Aldermen joined several other cities throughout the country in establishing an annual Kid's Day.

On Saturday, April 18th, the Church Street Marketplace hosted countless families and young people who joined in the festivities of this first annual day in recognition of the value and importance of children in our community. The crowds were entertained by teen bands, young dancers, gymnasts and karate students, as well as clowns, balloons, and horse and buggy rides provided by the Marketplace Commission. Downtown merchants contributed generously to a raffle, Robbie the robot came down to teach the kids about fire safety, and Dan Higgins volunteered his time and expertise in photography.

Alternative Education

Kids spend more time in school than anywhere else, and it is this basic community that has the most opportunity to impact positively



SHEILAH CROWLEY

on their lives. Unfortunately, not every child's experience in school has been a positive one. The nature of the problems are as varied as the children themselves, and it is sadly clear that our public school system does not meet the challenge of helping every child live up to his or her fullest potential. The most overt symptoms of this failure are the truancy and drop out rates of our school district. Understanding that resources are scarce, and the impetus for real change is rarely strong, we decided to address our efforts to working with school officials to combat this commonly perceived problem. In cooperation with the Principal and the Social Worker at Edmunds Middle School, we developed a proposal for an alternative school experience for a group of twenty four chronically truant students. The focus would be on their individual strengths and

talents rather than their common problems and the students themselves would take an active role in designing this alternative approach. The students would attend regular classes for two to three hours per day and then participate in another setting for the remainder of the day. An individualized educational plan would be designed for each student based on their talents and interests and the staff would work with small groups of students to explore the resources in the community that related to shared areas of interest. Examples of such resources would include using language labs at area colleges, receiving training on computers at the King Street Youth Center, viewing films or videotapes and discussing their implications, and producing videotapes for broadcast. We would also familiarize students with items used in everyday life such as phone books, recipes, instructions, etc. and test for basic competencies in academic areas.

We had hoped to do a pilot project the last quarter of the school year but, to our disappointment, the school administration told us that there were no available funds for the program. We will continue, in the coming year, to encourage the School Department to address this at-risk population as well as other groups of students who may not have the educational opportunities they need available to them, i.e., at-risk and emotionally disturbed children, gifted and talented students, and those in need of more challenge.

Holiday Party

Over 350 people, ranging in age from six weeks to eighty six years, attended the Holiday Party sponsored by Antonio Pomerleau and his family last December. The party was held at the Radisson Hotel Ballroom where those attending were served a sumptuous holiday meal and were visited by Santa Claus who had presents for all the children. Nancy Beaven and Bo Jest entertained a very appreciative audience and Donna Kaplan provided them with memories to treasure in the years to come in the form of family portraits. My thanks to all of them for bringing something so wonderful into the lives of many of our less fortunate neighbors and for sharing the spirit of the season. Families from the Vermont

Children's Aid Society, King Street Area Youth Program, Women Helping Battered Women, Sara Holbrook Center, Old North End Community Association, Chittenden Community Action, City Kids Program and Northgate Apartments were very pleased to be able to share a special day together. Several inmates from the Chittenden Community Correctional Center, who were accompanied by volunteers, were grateful for the opportunity to spend such a wonderful afternoon with their families, while staff members from St. Joseph's Group Home, Elizabeth Lund Home and Baird Children's Center enjoyed bringing a little extra warmth and attention to a number of their young residents through this event. And last, but certainly not least, more than a dozen elderly women from 10 North Champlain Elderly Housing Project expressed their delight at being included. In addition, many other people of all ages who were not affiliated with any of these groups but were feeling a little bit lonely and out of the mainstream enjoyed the change to have a special holiday afternoon.

242 Main

242 MAIN, Burlington's teen center, continues to thrive in Memorial Auditorium. After school students from Edmunds Middle School are our main constituency, ordering burgers and fries and milk shakes, listening to music, playing games and sometimes even doing their homework.

On weekends, the place takes on a completely different flavor. Teenagers take over as the lights dim and the stage comes alive with the sounds of both local and on-tour talent. The crowds come in all ages and styles depending on the shows - which range from poetry readings and acoustic guitars to top-40, new wave and heavy metal music.

242 MAIN is definitely a place "of the kids, for the kids and by the kids". And that's what makes it work.

242 Main Presents

The title is a bit misleading, but it's good for publicity and a tie-in for our new television show on public access. Created by 6th, 7th and 8th graders in Burlington, this program uses



242 MAIN Presents' videotaped the Burlington Middle School Show Chorus for broadcast. Here, the cast shares a light-hearted moment after a wonderful show.

242 MAIN as a home-base, but it's about the community at large. The format for each show calls for five or six short segments on items of interest or concern to kids separated by 30 to 60 second "fillers".

Segments choices are:

ON THE MARKETPLACE - person-on-the-street interviews alternate between silly and serious themes.

BURLINGTON SHOWCASE - focus on local young talent, occasionally interview visiting "celebrities".

SPOTLIGHT ON SCHOOLS - features interesting programs or educational approaches in area middle schools.

ISSUES - interviews and/or discussions on issues of concern, i.e., smoking and lung disease, the nuclear threat.

IMAGE - how kids choose to look, what they like to wear, the images they portray.

WHAT'S HAPPENIN'? - features local activities and opportunities, i.e., Kid's Day, Mural Project in the Mall.

Fillers include:

COMEDY, COMEDY, COMEDY - just what it says, jokes, riddles, skits.

DOUBLE TAKE - magic and sleight of hand

IDEAS - one theme with four or five ideas on the subject interspersed throughout the show.

MOCK COMMERCIALS - parodies of on-air commercials.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS - original PSAs on matters of concern to kids.

242 MAIN Presents strives to provide kids in our community an opportunity to say what they think and feel, be heard and appreciated and have some fun while they're learning new skills.

City Kids

The changing demographics in our community and the resulting changes in the needs of our families prompted the Sanders Administration to work with area agencies on the issue of latch-key children. Responding to a direction from the Mayor to "develop an ideal school-age child care program", a consortium of people in this field designed CityKids.

Through CityKids, the Youth Office provides quality, affordable child care as well as interesting enrichment activities to elementary school age children.

We offer activities such as drama, tennis, French, sports, folk art and field trips as well as homework help, quiet time and reading. Our goal is to provide a fun, stimulating, safe place for children and a little peace of mind for the parent. The program runs from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. during the school year and offers half

and full day care as needed during inservice days or vacations (excluding summer). As CityKids is licensed as a child care center by the State of Vermont, SRS is able to provide financial assistance to working parents who are unable to afford the \$4.25 per day fee. For those who are ineligible for S.R.S. funding but whose children would benefit by participating in the program, the Youth Office has limited scholarship money available.

CityKids has been very successful this year but we are hoping to make it even better in the

future through better coordination with the After-School Fun Program and the establishment of a permanent space in each of the schools.

In conclusion, I'd like to especially thank Kathy Lawrence and Janet Bossange who have spent unlimited amounts of time and energy in their work in this office. Thanks also to all the interns, part-time workers and countless volunteers who have contributed to making Burlington a good place for kids to be.

Board of Voter Registration

Margaret Poirier, Clerk

The Burlington City charter provides for the establishment of the Board for Registration of Voters. It is our function to maintain the City voter checklist and to determine the eligibility of applicants seeking addition to the checklist.

Throughout the year the Board receives applications from prospective voters and approves or denies the application based on: 1. U.S. citizenship; 2. Burlington residency; 3. Freeman's Oath; and 4. attainment of 18 years of age. Once an applicant has been added to our checklist, we are charged by State Statute to monitor continued eligibility. Since three of our criteria seldom change, it is residency which determines continued eligibility.

The State of Vermont mandates that every odd numbered year our checklist is purged of registered voters who no longer meet the residency requirement to remain on the City checklist. We began this cleanup process after the March Town Meeting Day and have mailed 7,562 inquiries to voters in question. The criteria used is a voter's inactivity for a four-year period. A voter is not automatically removed from the checklist due to failure to vote, and need only to return the postpaid reply card to remain on our checklist. It is anticipated that we will complete the clean up process early in September.

1986 marked a very busy election period beginning with the September primary, the November General Election and ending with the March Town Meeting. Our Board and clerk processed over 5,000 additions to the checklist and over 2,000 changes. The Board appointed Margaret Poirier as clerk for the Board in August.

The Board participated in committee hearings in Montpelier pertaining to changes in Vermont Election Laws. State representatives were anxious to pursue discussions with our Board particularly since Burlington represents the largest voter base in the State.

In a continuing effort to help educate and train local ward officials as to election day procedures, a Board member is in attendance at the City Clerk's training sessions. The Board is looking ahead to instituting a voter outreach program and participating in the Bicentennial celebration of the U.S. Constitution.

Our office is on the third floor of City Hall, Room 30; office hours are Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Since we are now fully automated, we can provide the checklist to interested parties in both printed and magnetic media form.