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# Williams: More youth activities needed

By Chris Sykes  
Staff Writer

Councilwoman Donna K. Williams said she firmly believes in recreation and youth activities that can help keep Orange's young people out of trouble.

"We have a great recreation department in Orange, but it would be nice to sit down with other municipal leaders, youth advocates and service providers to see how other communities are doing it," Williams said. "Recreation opportunities for our children and young people are diminishing because of

cuts in funding. As a result we've seen increases in crime and violence. The way to counteract that is to come up with alternative funding sources to make sure we will be capable of doing what we need to do for our young people."

Williams said creating programs and activities for youths would have the effect of improving the overall public safety in Orange. The problem, she said, is getting the community and elected representatives to realize that and act.

"The opportunities that were available to my generation as kids

are not there for the kids today. We need to figure out how to solve that problem," Williams said.

Keith Pressey, supervisor for the city's Division of Recreation, said he agrees with Williams. Pressey said Orange had a successful summer when it came to the number of programs available and the amount of youth participation, but he always wants to improve.

Pressey said that is why the support of Williams and other youth advocates is important, especially since students return to school Sept. 8. He said that means the

division will have to focus on providing both after-school and recreation activities, a stronger challenge. "Recreation is all about creating memories that kids will have and keep for a lifetime," Pressey said. "All of the kids want to win, but when they don't, they feel disappointed that they were not able to complete the task. A loss is only a real loss when you fail to learn from it. As long as you can find something in the defeat to motivate you to work harder or try something different the next time, then it wasn't a total waste."

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