

SKATEPARKS REDUCE ILLICIT BEHAVIOR

The myth surrounding skateparks is that they are a breeding ground for crime and other illicit activities. As we explained earlier, while there will be an occasional "bad seed", providing designated spaces for positive activities is the best way to curb unlawful behavior among youth. When youth having nothing to do or nowhere to go – that is when they cause trouble.

It's no secret that children who are involved in team sports don't have the time to get into trouble, but it turns out you don't have to be dragging them to the soccer field or baseball diamond. Activities you might not expect -- like skateboarding -- might be just what teens and adolescents need. Research out of the University of North Carolina found that skateboarding is among the activities that might help keep children out of trouble.

"I think skateboarding kids are a focused group of kids," said Diana Harris, a parent. Compared to their couch potato peers, active adolescents -- including skateboarders -- were less likely to engage in risky behavior like smoking and drinking.

"I think that is a group we see as being a little more on the risky side, but instead of being on the risky side, they were actually protected from those behaviors," said Dr. Penny Gordon-Larsen, a researcher.

Source: *NBC Philadelphia*

"Keeping Active Best Way To Keep Kids Out Of Trouble"
April 3, 2006

This area is located in one of the most impoverished areas in Long Beach, and the park currently has given hundreds of kids in the neighborhood an alternative to drugs, gangs and the many negatives they face each day. The City's application shows that the project meets the goals of Job Creation, Benefiting Low Income Communities, Blight Reduction and Economic Development and Smart Growth.

Reduction in Crime since the Skate Park was installed: From 2003 to 2008, crime has dropped in the immediate area around the park, which has historically been a very high crime area of the city. Since 2003, drug related incidents have dropped 60.9%, violent crime has dropped 29.3% and overall incidents have dropped 22.8%. Further, calls for service have dropped 23.0%.

Source: *"News Release: Long Beach Rejects Assertion that 14th street skate Park Project is Stimulus Waste"* Ed Kamlan, Public Affairs Specialist City Manager's Office - City of Long Beach

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Young skaters roll into smooth concrete bowls and ramps that both parents and health officials see as a constructive and positive way to keep children away from drugs, gangs and crime.

"Skateboarding here gives us something to do instead of crazy stuff," Zuniga said, adding that the negative influences for teens are still prevalent in his neighborhood.

In 2008, Ciudad Juárez initiated "Reclaiming Public Spaces," a project that includes the remodeling or construction of parks, community centers, skateboard parks and extreme sports parks.

"One of the psychosocial benefits is to feel safe again, reclaiming public spaces helps people feel like a community again, the busier the place, the more appealing for the youth and the safest people feel," said Monica Chavira, M.A., Mental Health Consultant for the Pan American Health Organization.

"There is more opportunity for social interaction with other youth which helps develop trusting and cohesive communities."

Sports, like skateboarding, is providing the children of Juárez an alternative to the violence surrounding them, Chavira said.

"Skateboarding as an urban playing activity is beneficial for kids because it works as a positive escape route where the community and all the skate park users begin to take ownership of their park and take care of it themselves," she said. "In this individual activity there are no organizing factors limiting the creativity of the individual and it can become a highly motivational sport that encourages perseverance and discipline."

Source : Fox News Latino

"Ciudad Juarez Skatepark Lets Kids be Kids Amid Drug Violence"

Joseph Kolb - September 26, 2012