

## *Benefits of Mobile Recreation and Mobile Skatepark Programs*

- Skating has become popular, both as a recreational activity and sport, across the nation and here in Costa Mesa in large part because while skating can appeal to all youth and adults, it especially appeals to youth who can't or don't want to play more traditional, organized youth sports such as baseball, basketball, football or soccer. Thom Fisher, senior transportation planner for the Pima Association of Governments, says "Skate parks have been enjoying a renaissance in recent years, in large part because they serve kids who don't play organized sports."

Skating is a highly active, energetic, recreational activity that has evolved into a sporting event that helps fight sedentary lifestyles that contribute to the obesity of America's youth. This program is a good motivation for children to get out of their house and away from TVs, computers, and other electronic games, and to engage themselves in physical, healthy activity. The U.S. Surgeon General has issued the following statements about obesity in today's youth: "In 1999, 13% of children aged 6 to 11 years old and 14% of adolescents aged 12 to 19 old in the United States were overweight. This prevalence has nearly tripled for adolescents in the past 2 decades."

- The Mobile Recreation Program, and to a certain extent the Mobile Skate Park program, offer the same values and benefits to the children participating in them as found in most any other youth after school playground program. The Mobile Recreation and Mobile Skate Park programs are just other ways of providing recreation service delivery to Costa Mesa's youth.

California voters overwhelmingly supported an after school program initiative in the last election. Numerous studies support the need for after school programs. The "After School Alliance" (website [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org)) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising awareness of the importance of after school programs and advocating for quality, affordable programs for all children. It is supported by a group of public, private and nonprofit organizations that share the Alliance's vision of ensuring that all children have access to after school programs by 2010.

The Search Institute (website [www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org)) identified 40 developmental assets that have a positive influence on children's lives. One of the 40 developmental assets identifies children that spend three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community. Another developmental asset identifies children that receive support from three or more non-parent adults (i.e. parks and recreation staff) are more likely to be successful and lead positive, healthy, and active adult lifestyles.

Law enforcement statistics indicate youth crime is highest during after school hours from 3-6pm when children have the greatest risk of getting into trouble and/or making

poor decisions. The program provides fun and engaging activities to keep participants occupied and out of negative and/or destructive activities and behaviors that can accompany excessive amounts of free time after school and during school vacations.

- Recreation staff maintain a safe and secure environment for the children participating in the programs. Children playing in today's urban environment without supervision can experience unfortunate or disastrous results, either because of the inappropriate or illegal activity they may choose to involve themselves in, and/or due to the issues of violence (i.e. molestation, abduction, etc.) that criminals pose toward unsupervised children.