



## Perris Press Release

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### Newly Open Teen Center is an Investment in the Future

A sketch drawn on a sheet of paper by two Perris Parks and Recreation Department employees was dedicated Wednesday as the City's new Teen Center, a facility that features computers, interactive video games, a big-screen television and a recording studio.

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch led a contingent of City elected officials and administrators and about 100 visitors at Wednesday's ribbon-cutting ceremony.

"You can never do too much to outreach and help the youth of our City," Busch said. "Every time you do, you make a difference in someone's life, and that helps the City."

Busch said the Teen Center that was once old is new again. The new Teen Center is located on the site of the Stalter Youth Center which originally was dedicated in 1955. Over the years, Perris senior citizens began using the facility, which eventually became a full-time senior center. Perris' seniors will share the same site with City teenagers, as the Teen Center will be open several afternoons each week, after the Senior Center closes.

The City spent \$777,000 to build the new Teen Center and improve the existing Senior Center. Those improvements included new exterior facades, landscaping, larger and ADA-approved restrooms, new flooring and lighting and new kitchen counters and appliances in the Senior Center portion of the building. Funding came from money designated for such projects.

As plans for a new teen center began emerging about two-and-a-half years ago, Perris Deputy City Manager Darren Madkin said he solicited ideas from Parks and Recreation staff.

He said employees Josh Estrada and Sarina Brannon drew up a schematic that served as the genesis of the Teen Center and credits their vision for what eventually became the new after-school gathering spot.

"They didn't draw it on a napkin but it was close," Madkin said of the original paper drawing.

The Teen Center features computers, the latest electronic game stations, game tables, a lounge area, furniture, flat-screen televisions to operate a Nintendo Wii system and a small recording studio for performing artists. Students from, 13 to 17-years old can finish their homework, read, visit their friends or spend time watching television and chatting. They can move to the beat of a virtual workout. They can work on computers but those will be monitored to keep students away from any inappropriate content.

Mayor Busch was the first person to try out the recording studio, taping his version of "Row, Row Row Your Boat." He predicted the Teen Center will be in constant demand once the word spreads around Perris. About 20 cadets from the California Military Institute got a sneak peek at the Teen Center during Wednesday's opening day ceremonies.

"It's obvious we're going to get a lot of youth," Busch said. "The word will get around and spread like wildfire."

Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Al Landers and City Councilwoman Joanne Evans serve on the Parks and Recreation subcommittee. Both commended Madkin and his staff for turning a portion of the former Senior Center into a first-rate Teen Center.

Landers said the new center will provide a place where teen-agers who don't have a computer at home can come and finish their homework. They can also play foosball, watch television, play an assortment of video games and chill with their friends.

"The Teen Center shows that Perris continues to invest in the future of our children," Landers said. "Things like this do not happen by themselves. It takes people putting their minds together and working together to bring about positive change for our community."

Evans said she that for years, she brought her mother to the Senior Center. Mondays and Thursdays were bingo times; Wednesdays for art classes. To see part of the old Senior Center reborn for teen-age use, Evans said, "is absolutely amazing."

"I am so happy to see this," Evans said. "I hope everybody who comes here will enjoy it."

City Councilman Mark Yarbrough said Perris is a place where things continue to happen even during a tough economy. He credits strong support from the Perris community with making the Teen Center a reality.

"In Perris we find ways to get things done," he said. "Where there's a will, there's a way. It's because this community cares. It's a collective effort."

City Manager Richard Belmudez said Perris administrators are proud of the campus, which includes several buildings including City Hall, the City Council Chambers and Bob Glass Gym. Now the Teen/Senior Center takes its place among the gems of Perris, he said.

"Seeing the fruits of our labor enjoyed by the community gives us the motivation to do what we do," he said. The CMI teens took advantage of the opportunity to be among the first to enjoy the new center. Adrianna Pearson, 17, played an interactive xBox-360 Kinect game.

"I love playing video games," said Pearson, a CMI junior. "This is my first time to visit the Teen Center but I will definitely be back to hang out with my friends."

Junior Jose Marin, 16, gyrated to the music of Cascada while playing the interactive Dance Central III video game.

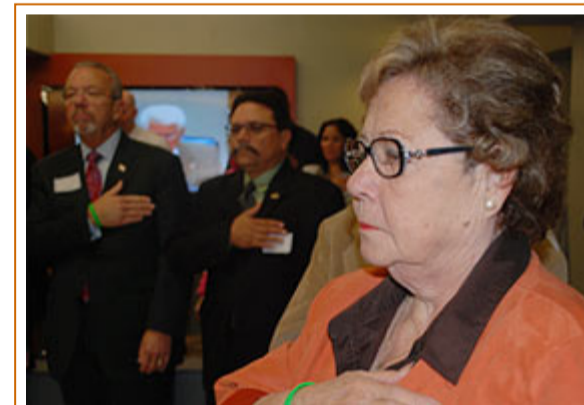
"Everybody likes video games," Marin said. "The Teen Center will bring teens together. We can hang out and stay out of trouble."



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch sings "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" at the Teen Center's recording studio Wednesday morning.



Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Al Landers: "The Teen Center shows that Perris continues to invest in the future of our children."



Perris City Councilwoman Joanne Evans and other dignitaries stand at attention during the singing of the National Anthem.



Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough chats with Parks and Recreation employee Sarina Brannon, who sang the National Anthem.



A California Military Institute cadet dances to an interactive video game at the Teen Center.