



The Henson Ridge Newsletter

1898 Frederick Douglas Road, SE, Washington, DC 20020

Partnering Organizations

Within the neighborhood of Henson Ridge there are a number of different organizations that have formed a partnership that is aimed at working with the residents to address the issues and concerns that may be plaguing this community. The organizations and the services that they provide are as follows:

- DC Parks and Recreation: providing computer classes, science classes, and hosting town-hall meetings
- KidSafe: providing a tutorial program for children in grade levels 1st – 8th
- Sasha Bruce Youth-work: facilitating workshops aimed at life-skills training, sex education, drug awareness, and an array of other services
- Peaceoholics: mediating between rivaling crews and neighborhoods and providing resources for young people
- East of the River Clergy Police Community Partnership, Inc. (ERCPCP): working with the newly formed Henson Ridge Youth Leadership Council (HRYLC) to develop leadership skills, life skills, and teamwork development

D.C. Parks and Recreation

The programs that operate within the community of Henson Ridge primarily operate out of the Frederick Douglass Recreation Center which is located in the back of Henson Ridge. This recreation center is also recognized as a safe haven site under Weed and Seed Initiative. Within the Frederick Douglass Recreation Center **KidSafe** provides tutoring for the kids in its program, the HRYLC meets, Sasha Bruce provides workshops for the community, and the Peaceoholics gathers there with the young people of Henson Ridge.



In addition to providing the space for these partners to utilize the Frederick Douglas Recreation Center also has a number of resources that it provides for the community of Henson Ridge. These resources include but are not limited to; karate classes, computer classes, aerobics classes, a newly added drum making class, meals, and a vast array of other programs.

The KidSafe Program

KidSafe's mission is to help our most vulnerable families provide safe, responsible and economically stable environments where they and their children can thrive. KidSafe works to fulfill its mission through two



goals: Out-of-School Time Programs provide a safe, nurturing, year-round environment where student's work to increase reading and math literacy; we provide enrichment opportunities for children and youth that will support student learning and development. Open Books & Open Doors Family Literacy Project provides opportunities for parents to strengthen, empower and educate themselves and their families and to become engaged as active participants in their child's education. For the past ten years, KidSafe has worked to create a continuous learning circle between the school, the KidSafe Center and the home.

The projected yearly outcomes of KidSafe Centers are:

- 75% of students will increase their school attendance rate to 85% or higher;
- 40% of students identified as performing "Below Basic" or at "Basic" will increase their reading and math literacy by 20%;
- 80% of students will demonstrate an increase in self-esteem and sound decision-making skills, and increased positive behaviors in the Center and in their classroom as measured on Behavior Indicators Surveys; and
- 35% of parents will participate in family events, volunteer for one or more KidSafe Center activities with their children, or serve on the Community Advisory Group.

Sasha Bruce Youthbuild

Academic training toward a GED, vocational classroom training in carpentry, and on-site carpentry experience for young people between ages 18 and 24. All participants are self-referred.

YouthBuild assists with job placement in carpentry and other fields. The program is designed for young people who:



- Are not enrolled in school
- Test at or above the seventh-grade level in math and language skills
- Have an interest in carpentry
- Are committed to changing their lives

Within Henson Ridge specifically, a number of programs have been offered that have; provided the young people with abstinence and sex education, training for young women on respecting themselves and others, and collective training for males and females on effective communication and leadership skills development. Children enrolled in the **KidSafe** program and the members of the Henson Ridge Youth Leadership Council (HRYLC) regularly participate in these workshops.

Peaceoholics (Def: People Addicted to Peace)



We look forward to solidifying and instituting programs in and around the Washington, DC area. By setting an example in the Nations Capital we will be able to initiate legislation that will spread the Peaceoholics Vision/Mission Nation wide.

Within Henson Ridge specifically, the Peaceoholics have been effective at addressing the concerns of rivalries between the community of Henson Ridge and the surrounding neighborhoods. Some of the measures that have been used to address this have been the institution of community meetings that take place once a week at the Peaceoholics office along with a number of attractive programs that the young people of the community have participated in such as the anti-violence training for Peace-Go's and participation in the march for voting rights here in DC. Recently there was also a community service project where the young people cleaned up the neighborhood and a cookout for the residents.

The East of the River Clergy, Police, Community Partnership's



HRYLC

The Henson Ridge Youth Leadership Council (HRYLC) was established in January of 2007. The mission of the HRYLC is to reach a carefully selected group of creative, outgoing, and intelligent young people with various backgrounds from the Henson Ridge community and surrounding areas, equip them with leadership and life-training skills, and then empower them to be leaders in their community and

subsequently have a positive effect on their peers. From a pool of approximately fifteen applications that were distributed, ten young people were selected to represent this community as the HRYLC.

As members of this council, participants must adhere to the rules outlined in the East of the River Clergy Police Community Partnership, Inc. (ERCPCP) employee handbook, additional rules that the members help to develop and that are site specific, excel academically, attend school everyday, show improvement in behavior, and participate in a number of community-based activities and events. We believe in meeting the young people where they are. With that said, it is not pertinent that the participants have exceptional grades or behavior at the start of the program. Ideally, the goal is for the young people to progress as a result of their participation in the HRYLC.

In addition to the covering of a curriculum instilling leadership and life-training skills, the members are required to attend workshops aimed at addressing many of the concerns and issues that teens are faced with today, tutor and mentor younger children from a partnering organization, and attend field trips that are both educational and recreational. As a supplement to the curriculum, participants have a journaling exercise twice a week in which they listen and journal to songs that stimulate thoughts, ideas, and emotions. The idea of this exercise is to help them to express themselves through the art of writing.

As an incentive in participating in the HRYLC, members whom have consistently participated and have assisted with the advancement of the program receive a stipend every two weeks. The purpose of giving a small stipend is just a perk, if you will for all of the hard work that the members put forth. In addition to the stipend, members receive community service hours for their participation in the development and execution of community events, and they also go on trips that are free of any charge.