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Sponsor:

Council
Member
Mills

WHEREAS, positive youth development is essential to children’s social, psychological, and emotional skills, as well as their academic performance. It is paramount to the health, safety, economic prosperity, and overall well-being of our youth, their families, and our City that young people know how to access community support at this critical stage of life. As residents increasingly rely on the internet for information about community resources, an online database for youth services can facilitate valuable connections between our City’s youth and the organizations that serve their needs; and

WHEREAS, there are numerous governmental, quasi-governmental, and nongovernmental organizations working tirelessly to offer meaningful developmental opportunities to our youth. An online database would be instrumental to informing young people, their parents, and concerned community members about activities in close proximity to their homes; and

WHEREAS, more than one in five Wilmingtonians is under the age of 21. The Delaware Afterschool Network (DEAN) estimates that 47% of kids in Delaware would participate in extra-curricular programs if available, but only 11% take part in afterschool activities. In 2020, approximately 14% of kids in Delaware were left unsupervised between the hours of 3 pm and 6 pm; and

WHEREAS, research has shown that children who lack parks are more likely to be physically inactive, have excessive screen-time, get less sleep, and have a greater probability of developing attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Recreational activities improve health, promote social development, and encourage physical activity. The City’s parks and

recreational centers serve as gathering places for people to explore and enjoy outdoor activities, build stronger communities, promote healthy living, and engage in positive youth development activities. Exposure to recreational facilities has also been shown to reduce childhood obesity. Although about 71% of U.S residents live within a walkable distance of a local park and other recreation opportunity, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that about 14.7 million American children are obese. Obesity prevalence was 26.2% among Hispanic children, 24.8% among Black children, 16.6% among White children, and 9.0% among Asian children; and

WHEREAS, youth service organizations play an invaluable role in helping youth socialize with peers, improve their communication, learn life skills, and benefit from seeing positive role models. Research shows that many children have problems with violence and aggression because they lack nonviolent conflict resolution skills. In 2021, the Wilmington Police Department reported 18 juvenile shooting victims, 16 juvenile shooting incidents, and 45 juvenile gun arrests; and

WHEREAS, raising awareness of youth-focused resources and safe spaces is cited as a component of violence prevention and intervention. The CDC “Accelerating Youth Violence Prevention and Positive Development: A Call to Action” report recommended that connecting youth to caring adults and activities prevents youth violence and creates protective community environments. According to the Community Based Public Safety Collective “Landscape Analysis Report for the City of Wilmington,” facilitating access to community services and resources is a key component of violence intervention; and

WHEREAS, 81% of Delaware parents says youth development programs, like after-school programs, would help them keep their jobs. As the City works to foster resilience, our

youth service agencies also play a role in expanding our residents' economic capacity and preparing our children for promising futures; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Census approximates that 90% of Wilmington households have a computer and more than three-quarters have a broadband internet subscription. An online youth services directory would amplify the work of local organizations and aid the recruitment of young people who could benefit from their activities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON that this Legislative body supports the creation of online youth services directory to facilitate connections between Wilmington's positive youth development organizations and the youth they seek to serve.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wilmington City Council strongly urges the Administration to take the necessary steps to implement an online youth services directory that will better position our City for the future.

Passed by City Council,

ATTEST: _____
City Clerk

SYNOPSIS: This Resolution expresses strong support from the Wilmington City Council for the development of online youth services directory. As residents increasingly rely on the internet for information about community resources, an online database for youth services can facilitate valuable connections between Wilmington's youth and the organizations that serve their needs.