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## New teen center growing popular

Barbara Hootman

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The Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club Teen Center at Carver Community Center in Black Mountain is becoming a popular place that provides youth between the ages of 14 and 18 a safe and supportive Christian environment after school.

The center opened on January 17, and already a steady flow of teens choose to be at the center rather than be at home alone, or friends' houses.

"If I wasn't here at the center, I'd be at a friend's house, just hanging out," Elijah Gimmons said.

"If I'm here, I'm out of trouble."

Danielle Jordan is the coordinator of the center that is open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m.

"This is a great group of teenagers," she said. "The center is growing slowly, but steadily," she said. "Right now it is made up of teens who are really interested in having a place where they can interact with other teens. Here they can talk about anything that is on their mind."

There are snacks, video games, books, and tutoring for those needing help with homework.

"This is a place to come where kids can grow socially, spiritually, and academically," Jordan said. "Sometimes it is spiritual warfare in their conversations, but it is okay. Not all of the teens are Christian, but they all want to share their ideas. It is a place where different opinions are welcome."

There are plans to establish a computer lab with a variety of electronic devices available to the students.

"We need donations of couches and comfortable chairs," Jordan said. "We could use recreational type donations, including basketballs and games. We always need volunteers to teach the teens different subjects."

Eighteen-year-old Je'Cwahn King, an Owen High School student, comes to the center often.

"It is fun at the center," he said. "Everything is supervised, and that is good. One of the best things is the free tutoring that you can get with your homework. The free tutoring is fun for the pocketbook. The center needs donations of books. What we have makes our library look as dry as a desert. Also, the center needs current movies that appeal to teens. We need computers for the computer lab.

"I enjoy coming here because it inspires me to be with other people. I like to interact with other teens. I

come here and write my music and listen to others.”

As the center grows, more subject matter will be added to the afternoon activities.

They will add such subjects as “Money Matters” and establish a Keystone Club, which is a chartered leadership and service club with elected officers. The Keystone Club implements activities in six areas, including service to club and community, character and leadership development, education and career exploration, unity, free enterprise and social recreation.

There is a yearly fee of \$10. Transportation is provided to the center, but at this time teens have to make arrangements to get home.

“I love being here with this group of teens,” Jordan said. “If a teen is 18 years old, he needs to be enrolled in an area high school to participate in this teen center.” For more information, call (828) 768-0266.

Staff writer Barbara Hootman can be reached at [barbara@blackmountainnews.com](mailto:barbara@blackmountainnews.com).

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