

Teen board gives students positive reasons to hang out

By TONIE MILLER-UZZEL
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It isn't all glamour and runway modeling. Being a member of the Killeen Mall Teen Board means serving the community, too.

Killeen Mall Teen Board is in its first year as a service-oriented organization, said Wendy Keck, marketing director of Killeen Mall. In the past, the mall had a modeling organization.

"I didn't like the idea of these teens being singled out for how they look, so we changed the format," Keck, who is the leader of the group, said.

Keck said Teen Board was set up to give teens who enjoy spending time at the mall a chance to be there for positive reasons.

"It's a lot of fun," Keck said.

Killeen High School junior Kalena Kahookele said she is involved in volleyball and student council in school, but Teen Board was a big step into a different organization away from school.

Karen Jung, a junior at Killeen High School, said she got involved because she thought it would be an interesting way to help the community.

Kahookele said the teachers at school explained the program and the benefits of meeting people and enjoying time at the mall.

"I like everything about it," Kahookele said. "The window modeling is fun. People come up and try to make us laugh."

She said the fund-raisers are fun because she enjoys doing something good for others.

"Things like the blood drive, it can be long and drawn out. But it's for a good reason and that's why we do it," Kahookele said.

Teen Board is a chance for teens to become involved with something positive in the community and get involved in community service, Keck said.

The members must commit to one meeting per month and one mall event per month. The members are selected by an application and essay in which they tell something unique about themselves, Keck said.

In exchange for their time, the members get fun things like store discounts, window modeling, runway modeling and fun events as a group. Some of the members were featured in a public service ad, a direct-mail postcard promoting the back-to-school fashion show and more.

"Each month we join in service projects, like helping with the American Red Cross blood drive. The fashion shows are just the icing on the cake," Jung said.

Currently, the board is made up of

28 students from Killeen and Florence schools, but the board will be opened up next year to include Copperas Cove students.

"We want a diverse teen board. They learn from each other," Keck said.

Jung said she has made lots of new friends and has found things in common with other members of the board.

The members have participated in fund-raisers for the Muscular Dystrophy Association with face-painting at the mall, answering phones during the telethon and they helped out on a blood drive.

"They really do neat things," Keck

here. Now she's out there modeling and getting involved. We also see where their grades come up with the benefit of positive influence from each other. It builds confidence."

Teen Board is open and the members have become friends, Kahookele said. She said some members are athletic, others have different jobs they work, but the diversity has been good.

"It is really fun helping others grow. We help each other out," Jung said.

"We do things together and have a lot of fun. Now, when I see some of the kids at school, we say 'Hi' more often," Kahookele said of her new friends.

Aklinski, Steven Berch, Oscar Harris, Jennifer Johnsen, Melissa Perez, Johnathan Walker, Tim Ball, Andrea Betancourt, Iesha Brothers, Erika Fenton, Leana Hogge, Karen Jung, Jordan Pollack, Luke Talbot, Brooke Whitaker, Jasmine Cormier, Karla Fogarty, Synette Isaac, Kalena Kahookele and Maxine Turner.

The Ellison High School students are Shawn Brackin, Lemuel Williams, Crystal Bennett, Antoinette Booker and Victor Rodriguez. Florence High School students are Marisa Farris and Amy Whithead and Killeen Ninth Grade Center ninth-grader Sara Smith.



Herald Photo by DIANE OLSEN

Tim Ball, Anoinette Hooker, and Jasmine Cormier sit at the Teen Board Table at the Killeen Mall recently and look at photos of teen members while they wait to recruit others.

noted.

Additionally, the members provide some information to mall administrators on ways to handle crowded conditions in the food court during lunches.

"We asked them for their ideas and we're getting some direction. We also ask them issues bothering kids about the mall," Keck said.

Kahookele said the Teen Board members get a lot of compliments from merchants about their participation.

"Usually, people only see the bad things teens do at the mall. But, with us, they see it's not only the bad stuff," she noted.

Additionally, Teen Board has some other positive benefits for the students in addition to having fun and serving the community.

"It gives them a lot of self-confidence," Keck said. "One girl was so scared when she applied that she only said a few words the first time I met

She said she would encourage her friends to become a part of Teen Board because of her good experience.

"We've learned to be polite to people when they're not being so nice. And I've definitely learned patience," she said of her experiences.

"These kids renew your faith that there are great kids out there and it really keeps you from being jaded to today's youth. It's really fun to see these kids blossom," Keck added.

The teen board members will help distribute candy to children at the mall on Halloween.

The teen board members are Killeen High School students Geoff

*We have 7,894 ways to make them say
Wow, what happened to you this summer?
at a price that was made for
you!*

KILLEEN MALL
Killeen Mall is a member of the Killeen Mall Group

Killeen Mall Teen Board Members Jennifer Johnson and Andrea Betancourt were featured in a direct mail and sent to 35,000 area residents to promote the back to school fashion show and sales.

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