

CeaseFire will undergo rebirth

Aurora anti-violence program: Leaders hope to avoid money problems; recruit staff of four

By Matt Hanley and Heather Gillers
STAFF WRITERS

AURORA — Plagued by financial problems during its first two years, CeaseFire Aurora lost two sponsors, its entire staff and the confidence of many residents. But the anti-violence program is launching a comeback.

By the end of May, outreach workers are expected to hit city streets. According to the CeaseFire model, they'll meet youth on their own turf — at the gas station, in the liquor store parking lot — and talk about alternatives to the temptations of gang membership, drugs and guns.

CeaseFire Aurora is getting a fresh start, after Aurora's Association for Individual Development (AID) signed a contract last week to take over the state-funded program, and has already begun hiring the four-person staff.

"It has had some false starts," said Joanne Furnas, who serves as the director of victim services for AID and will supervise CeaseFire.

❖ Turn to **CEASEFIRE, A2**



SEBASTIAN SZYSZKA
SPECIAL TO THE BEACON-NEWS

Adam Tracy, age 19, flies through the air to win the running long jump event during the Special Olympics in Naperville Sunday afternoon.

'A beautiful experience'

Some 800 athletes, including 40 from Hope Wall School, compete in Special Olympics

By Tim Wagner
STAFF WRITER

NAPERVILLE — Her face shone brighter than the prizes glimmering around her neck, that wide, impossible-to-detach smile a classic symbol of her latest achievements.

Heidi Bliss struck gold here Sunday. Did so twice. One on track, the other in field.

When someone she recognized passed by her impromptu awards party, Heidi jumped out, clasped the two medallions, and shouted: "I did it!" She was a champion in the 100-meter run and softball throw.

❖ Turn to **SPECIAL, A2**

PRO V. CON



SHOULD SCHOOLS BAN 'OBJECTIONABLE' DANCING?

BY JUSTINA WANG / STAFF WRITER

With prom just weeks away, Oswego High School officials have implemented a ban on "objectionable, sexual dancing."

Also called "front-to-back" dancing or "grinding," the latest teen moves have spurred nationwide debate between young and old over the last few years. Schools like Naperville North High School and Aurora Christian School already have rules in place against that type of dancing.

After the ban was announced at Oswego High School this spring, so few students bought tickets to the Turnabout dance in March that officials canceled the annual event.

Teens say it's just the age-old generation gap at work, but administrators say these students have crossed a line.

QuickPoll

Today's question

Should administrators restrict the way students dance at school-sponsored events?

To vote YES, call (630) 844-5871

To vote NO, call (630) 844-5873

Or vote online at www.suburbanchicagonews.com

This is a nonscientific poll. Votes will be accepted by phone or online until 4 p.m. today. No mail-in votes or comments will be accepted.

Results will appear in Tuesday's Beacon News.

PRO

Principal says scene at homecoming dance was 'shocking, unpleasant'

That type of dancing is sexually explicit, inappropriate and has no place at school functions, one leader says.

When Oswego High interim Principal Frank Babich attended the school's homecoming dance in the fall, he felt like he'd walked onto the set of the 1980s movie *Dirty Dancing*. Only dirtier.

His usually well-behaved students were moving in ways he'd never seen.

"It was shocking," he said. "I was unpleasantly surprised."

After speaking with co-workers and administrators at other schools, Babich decided he needed to establish some order on the dance floor. The new rule makes school dances a safer, more comfortable environment for students, he said.

"Parents expect us to be doing the right things for their children," he said. "We owe it to those parents to be responsible."

Babich said he's heard from students, complaining that their freedom was taken away, but he believes the teens will be grateful later on that he saved them from embarrassment.

"If students look back on this a year or two down the road, they'll realize that we're just trying to make things better and more appropriate for them," he said.

CON

Student says the fact adults don't like trend doesn't mean it's wrong

The problem isn't the way they're dancing, said senior Robbie DeJesus.

It's the way school officials are reacting.

Every generation fights with their elders about things like music and dance. Just because the adults don't get the latest trend, doesn't mean it's wrong, he said.

"The school is just being too conservative," DeJesus said.

He and other students boycotted the school's Turnabout dance in March, declaring that if they don't have the right to move the way they want to move, then they don't want to dance at all.

DeJesus said he'll still attend prom next month, along with most other students.

He'll also be "grinding" and dancing the way they have always done.

"If they kick me out, they kick me out," he said.

DeJesus said he supports school officials placing limits on students who are acting sexually or inappropriately on the dance floor. But he thinks the rules have gone too far.

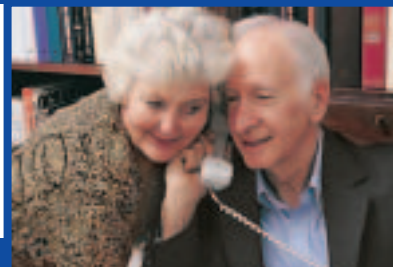
"It's just dancing," he said. "It's a way to move to the type of music we listen to."



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