

Funds for popular city trail will make lighting possible

Chris Metz
Oregon Daily Emerald

A fund-raising effort for the purchase of lights for the Adidas/Amazon running trail started Monday at the Amazon trail head.

Larry Norris, Oregon Track Club Masters vice president and chairman of the lighting project, is spearheading the project that will place 27 lights along the heavily-used trail. According to Norris, the lights will make the trail more accessible.

"The lights really are for the community," Norris said, "so that we can get the regular people off the street . . . and get out and exercise."

Suzy Hamilton, the 1992 Olympian, agreed, adding that the lights will allow greater use of the trail by more people.

"It's going to enable more people to use the trails who couldn't use it because it gets so dark late," Hamilton said.

Monday's meeting at the trail invited interested people in the running community to learn more about the project and donate funds. The project is privately-funded with the cost of the 27 lights being about \$16,000. The lights will be installed along the west half-mile of the trail.

Eugene Mayor Ruth Bascom attended the meeting and expressed her support for the project that has been in the works for quite some time.

"It's been more than a decade," Bascom said, "that people have been telling me that they would do something about this facility and the need for the lights. I am proud of the few of you that have said 'It's time to really move on it.' The city is going to count more and more on the private sector."

Besides the accessibility factor, the need for a safer place to run at night was a main concern of

the coordinators and supporters of the project. Annette Peters, the American record-holder at the 5,000 meters, believes lights will make the popular trail a better place to run.

"For safety reasons," Peters said, "it's going to be a wonderful thing to have lights out here."

The Amazon Trail was built in 1975 as an alternative to other popular running trails and to provide a closer training facility for those wanting distance workouts.

The trail was redone in the fall of 1983 with the considerable help of Adidas, which covered approximately 75 percent of the costs of the improvements that included a new, rock base and a consistent width. The trail was renamed the Adidas Oregon Trail in recognition of the company's support.

According to project supporters, the trail, which is recognized as one of the better outdoor training facilities in the area, will be greatly improved by the new lighting system and bolster Eugene's already-existing reputation as a quality place to train for runners.

"A lot of people look at Eugene as a running Mecca," two-time Olympian Steve Plasencia said. "People think that there's 100 miles of trail in Eugene. This set of lights that will go around the trail — it's just another little piece of that infrastructure that we've set up here that makes our community a little bit unique."

Norris said approximately seven of the 27 lights were already paid for, and noted many goods and services for the project were going to be donated by local companies and individuals. Norris hoped installation of the lights would begin sometime in the winter, but said the weather may push back the project until spring.

Birth rate still increasing in Washington



SEATTLE (AP) — The pregnancy rate for teens in Washington state has leveled out in recent years, but the birth rate is increasing, an epidemiologist with the Seattle-King County Health Department said Monday.

A key factor in the trend is that many teens do not consider abortion an option, said Dr. Jim Krieger, one of the study's four authors.

Many believe it is immoral to terminate a pregnancy, he said in a telephone interview after his department conducted a news conference to release a study on King County pregnancies among 15 to 17-year-olds.

"That message has gotten through to them," Krieger said, referring to the emotional abortion debate that has been a subject of controversy for Americans for decades.

But many teens also erroneously believe abortion to be illegal, he said.

And many also are not aware they do not need parental permission for an abortion or that Medicaid will finance the procedure for eligible teens and maintain confidentiality.

The study covers teen pregnancies from 1980 through 1992, the latest year for which figures were available. It was released to coincide with the opening in Bellevue of a three-day statewide conference on teen pregnancy prevention, sponsored in part by the Washington Alliance Concerned with School-Age Parents.

The Seattle-King County

Health Department noted that teen pregnancy is a matter of public concern "because of the detrimental effect to mothers and their children, outcomes that include poverty, unemployment and poor educational opportunities."

About 60 percent of King County teens have engaged in sexual activity by the time they finish high school, and about 56 percent said they had engaged in unprotected sex in at least one instance, according to a 1993 Seattle School District teen health survey.

Krieger said the county agency hoped to make information on the options for pregnant teens available for distribution through schools and recreation facilities.

The state Health Department, which unveiled its "Teen Futures Project" campaign last summer to reduce teen pregnancy, applauded the county effort.

The state campaign encourages abstinence and, if there is to be sexual activity, contraception, spokeswoman Melinda Harmon said.

"We're trying to prevent it in the first place," she said, and to make teens aware of the possible consequences of sexual activity.

Harmon conceded the state campaign's radio spots do not urge pregnant teens to consider abortion, or advise them of the rights and options attending that choice.

"We can't do that!" she said, adding, "They'd probably burn us down."

Pregnant teens should be advised of their options, abortion or a full-term pregnancy, with a subsequent decision

about keeping the baby or putting it up for adoption by any publicly funded health or family-planning clinic, Harmon said.

She conceded some private doctors may not advise teens of the option of abortion, and that some teens may delay disclosing a pregnancy.

While the report focused on King County, Krieger said state Health Department figures indicate a statewide trend toward a flat pregnancy rate and a rising birth rate — more pregnant teens carrying their babies to term.

In King County, the 1992 pregnancy rate for 15 to 17-year-old girls was 56.5 per 1,000, for 1,349 pregnant teens — similar to the national rate and fairly stable since 1980. In Seattle, the rate had increased about 25 percent since 1981, with one in nine young women becoming pregnant in 1992. In the rest of King County, the rate declined 6.7 percent during that period, with one in 24 girls becoming pregnant in 1992.

But overall, the rate held steady during the 11-year period of the study.

At the same time, the study found, the abortion rate dropped. In 1980, 72.2 percent of King County teen pregnancies ended in abortion. By 1992, the figure had dropped to 54.4 percent.

And the birth rate increased by 55.2 percent in King County between 1980 and 1992, to 25.8 per 1,000 young women. In 1992, there were 615 births to mothers between 15 and 17.

The study found teens in poor areas were more than five times as likely as those in wealthy areas to become mothers.

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