

Aim of Friday, Saturday night activities is to curtail teenage drinking in Kamiah

By Kathy Hedberg of the Tribune
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Kamiah youngsters will have some entertainment options other than drinking alcohol beginning this weekend.

The Kamiah Community Partners Coalition is launching Friday and Saturday night activities in an effort to curb an increase in underage drinking.

Sharlene Johnson, program coordinator for the group, said there have been nine arrests of Kamiah youth on alcohol-related charges since June. That is a jump from one such arrest a year ago and it's due to more local law enforcement paid for by a grant from the Drug Free Communities.

Johnson said underage drinking "is a continuing problem, but I do think that our community is starting to see it as an issue and is more willing to do something about it."

The coalition's goal is to have a variety of activities every Friday and Saturday night at the Kamiah Elementary School multi-purpose room.

"It's to keep kids off the street," Johnson said.

This week's theme will be open gym and starts at 6 p.m. for children in third to sixth grade. All children younger than third grade must be accompanied by an adult.

Youth in seventh through 12th grades will be invited from 9 p.m. to midnight. The event is free of charge.

On Saturday bowling will be offered at Tamarack Lanes in Kamiah starting at 6 p.m. for children in kindergarten through sixth grade. Seventh- through 12th-graders are invited to bowl from 9 to midnight. Cost is \$1 per person. All events will be chaperoned.

Johnson said the events are partly funded by the grant and also from community supporters.

"There will be something every Friday and Saturday for them to do and we will continue throughout the year. But we're just starting it," she said.

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