

## 'Zone' lands a large, green gift



JUST AROUND  
THE CORNER  
Barbara Williams

**A**n anonymous donor has filled the wish list for Brea teens: a pool table for The Zone, the Brea Community Center's gathering spot for teen-agers only.

Seventh-grader Justin Cao, a member of the Zone's Teen Advisory Board, said a pool table has been at the top of the request list in a recent poll of teens who spend time at the Zone. But corraling the big bucks for such an item was daunting, so the teens were more than delighted at the anonymous gift.

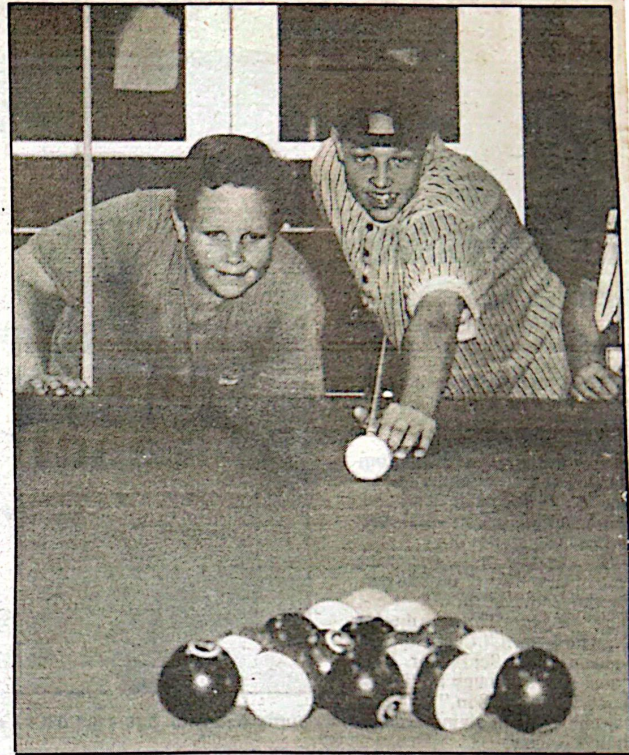
"I go to The Zone all the time with my friends, and playing pool is my favorite thing to do," said Cao.

Cao added that he also liked the video game and foosball tournaments, as well as "just hanging out."

"I started going to The Zone two weeks after it opened," he said. "It's somewhere to go after school and see all your friends."

During the year, The Zone is open to youths in the seventh grade through high school. In the summer, newly minted sixth-grade graduates are also eligible to use the facility.

Last Friday, sixth-graders were the guests of honor at The Zone's monthly Hot Friday Night dance. Their "sneak pre-



Adam and Stephen Donato, top, play pool on The Zone's recent acquisition. Amy Chen of Brea Olinda High, right, was named Girls League Girl of the Year.

may be purchased for a one-time fee of \$5. For more information about The Zone, call Gilbert Arriola at 990-7151.

# Brea group hits a positive note

Touring teens spread image of youth, talent

By Cerise A. Valenzuela  
The Orange County Register

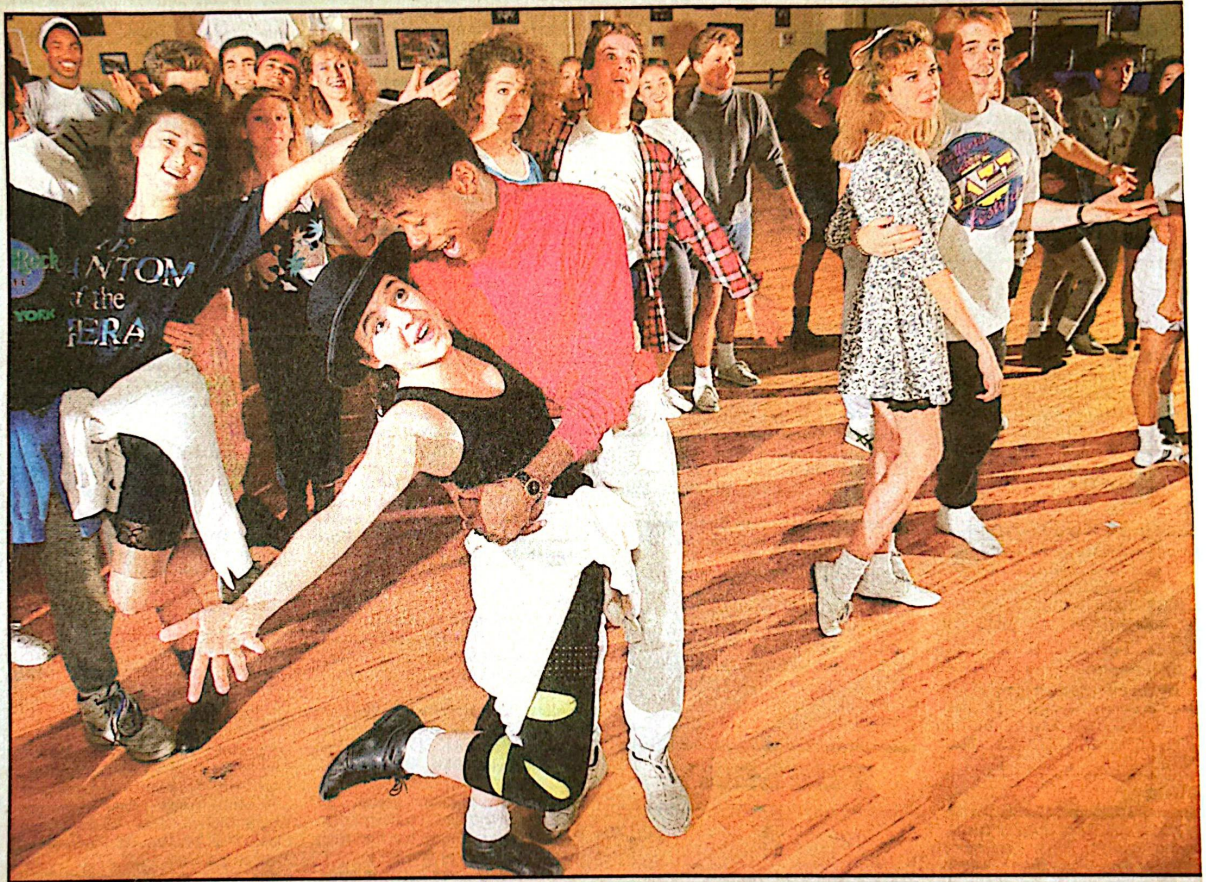
**O**klahoma." "Over the Rainbow." "On the Road Again." The theme song from "Phantom of the Opera."

Standing in the limelight hearing his voice mesh with others for these songs is a source of joy for Lee Childers of Fullerton.

As a performer with the Brea-based Young Americans, Childers, 19, said he's pleased the group promotes a positive role model for teen-agers — and a positive image of teens for adults.

"People will always believe what they want, but when they see the Young Americans out on stage in a positive light, then that's going to stick with them," said Childers, a Fullerton College student.

The group will sing and dance in its weekend Christmas Faire starting tonight. The two-hour shows will be presented under a tent at State College Boulevard and Birch Street, across from the Brea Mall.



Chas Metivier/The Orange County Register  
Cynthia McGonagle and Marahscalh Stanton rehearse a Christmas song with the Brea-based Young Americans, a 100-member group.

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When the Young Americans singing group was founded in 1962, adults loved it. Most teens preferred rebellious rock 'n' roll performers.

A strong positive image of the nation's youth was needed, said group founder and director Milton Anderson.

"We started a whole new trend when we got a group of talented young kids together in the first show choir," said An-

derson, 63, of Canyon Lake.

But audiences found it hard to believe that the group's teens could be positive examples to others, he said.

Former Young Americans admit the group was once considered uncool.

But times seem to have changed.

"The kids did a show recently at Anaheim High

School, and when the guys sang, all the girls started screaming like it was New Kids On The Block or something," said choreographer Bill Brawley, a Young American from 1973-76.

"We just didn't have that effect back then," he said.

Brawley said part of the growing acceptance of the group is that it has evolved

from a choir to a more varied show group.

"The kids who are members of the group these days are more versatile: singing, dancing and acting," said Brawley,

35.

Current Young Americans said it's cool to be in the group these days because their peers approach them after shows

# Singular

# sensation

## Unicycling class teaches riders to stand on their own

By Carolene Langie  
The Orange County Register

**J**ason Williams, 20, steadied himself on his unicycle by hanging onto a nearby pole. He thrust hard with his right foot and shoved off.

"Whoa," he said as he leaned forward. His feet pedaled quickly to keep up with his upper body as his arms teetered at his sides, seeking balance.

Williams leaned back a little to get control — maybe too far back.

"Whoa."

He dismounted awkwardly.

After a few more tries, the Brea resident mastered the mount and rode around the basketball court at Country Hills Park, where he takes a unicycling class.

Instructor Jim Colwell, 49, said mastering unicycling depends on balance.

"It is always a matter of gaining control, losing control and getting it back again," he said.

Colwell teaches the six-week course Thursdays, through Brea's Community Services Department at Country Hills Park. His five students, ages 9 to adult, pay \$25 if they are residents and \$30 if not.

Colwell learned to ride a unicycle 10 years ago when competing with his then-11-year-old daughter Cheryl.

"We were trying to see who could learn it first," he said. "She says I learned before she did, but I'm not sure. We practiced every day, and it took about six months."

When Colwell learned to ride the cycle and do a couple of tricks, he wanted to teach it to others, he said. So he became a member of the International Unicycling Federation, based in Michigan.

Then he approached the Community Services Department in Whittier four years ago to teach classes. He still teaches in Whittier on Saturdays, and this is his first session teaching with the Brea Community Services Department. A new session begins in Brea this summer.

"They feel real good when they accomplish something," Colwell said. "Me, too, for that matter. When I do something new, like learning to ride with one foot (pedaling), I want to show anybody around."

Williams agreed and said he

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Ed Carreon/The Orange County Register

plans to continue cycling after the course ends.

"I definitely feel like I've accomplished something when I ride," he said. "It's an experiment in positive thinking. It builds my confidence level, and it's also some physical activity."

Shane Owen, 12, of Garden Grove hopes to use his newly acquired cycling skills when he and his mom perform as clowns for children at parties.

Colwell teaches students to ride according to guidelines established by the federation, which prescribes 10 levels. He teaches his students only level one standards because six weeks is not enough time to master the 10 levels.

The standards in the first level include mounting the cycle unassisted, riding 50 meters and dismounting gracefully with the unicycle in front. Standards in higher levels involve more difficult mounts, hopping over obstacles, and cycling in a figure 8.

Tom Mirabella, 9, of Brea, gets a helping hand from his mother, Mary, while he practices atop his unicycle in a week class sponsored by the city at Country Hills Park in Brea.

and ask how they can audition.

Anderson said the group's objective is the same as always. Childers described it this way: "Show the world what you're made of and give them a look at what talented American teens are really like."

The 100-member group is composed of performers ages

## TEENS: Fans accept image of '90s group

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15-21, representing 22 Southern and Western states. About 45 of the performers are Orange County residents.

Marahscalh Stanton, 21, left his home and family, including seven sisters and four brothers, in Daphne, Ala., to join the group in October 1987.

"I drove two hours to see their show and I auditioned after the show," Stanton said. Less than a month after auditioning, Stanton moved to California, turning down a \$10,000 scholarship to study music at Jackson State University in Mississippi.

"I wanted so much to be a part of this family that worked so well together and gave so much happiness to people they didn't even know in their audiences," he said.

Some performers are area high school and college students. Others have been with the group several years and have put their education on hold to perform on tour.

Dawn Wesley, 17, of Placentia joined the group in October. The Brea Olinda High School senior said she doesn't plan to travel with the group now.

"I think I'll wait to travel with the group because you only graduate once and I want to be there," Wesley said. "But I'll stay with the group probably till I'm 21; I'll have plenty of time to travel then."

Working part-time as a hostess at the Pacific Railway Co. Restaurant in Placentia, attending school and practicing with the group for 20 hours a week can monopolize her time, but the rewards of performing are endless, Wesley said.

The group practices every Saturday and Sunday at Brea Olinda High. The Young Americans spend 10 hours a day practicing together and taking voice and dance classes.

"We not only learn but we have a great time learning things no book or classroom could ever teach us," Childers said. "Books can teach us facts and figures, but they can never teach us how to make an audience feel good."

He said the Young Americans are a special family.

"We're no different from the kids in the '70s, because we all go through the same pains growing up," he said. "But it helps that we have each other; we share our problems."

"We're just a big family that enjoys what we do."

Show times are 7 and 9:30 tonight, and 6 and 9 p.m. Friday. On Saturday and Sunday, shows will be every two hours between noon and 9 p.m. Admission is \$4-\$10.

# Teens have a place of their own

## Center offers video games, indoor hockey

By Cerise A. Valenzuela  
The Orange County Register

BREA — The rush begins about 6:45 p.m. as carloads of kids arrive at the Brea Heights shopping center.

Some come with roller skates slung over their shoulders and hockey sticks in hand. Others have school books tucked under their arms and a pocketful of quarters.

Soon the games begin.

"He shoots! He scores!" shouts one child as eight boys on roller skates scatter across the tile floor.

"Hurry and get more change," yells Aurora Sanchez to her friend playing video games.

Four boys wait impatiently along the court to be rotated into the indoor-hockey match and three girls sit on flowered couches at the sidelines and chairs near the video games watching the game.

This was the scene Monday at the American Explorers Youth Center on Brea Boulevard. The center is packed on Mondays with more than 100 youths who play hockey on roller skates inside the building.

So many kids come to play hockey that a league of eight teams has formed since the center opened March 16.

Kids ages 12 to 18 flock to the center daily, sometimes staying as late as 10 p.m. to help each other with homework, play video games and hockey or watch tele-



Brad Charlton, 13, left, and Grant Vogel, 14, play a video game at the American Explorers Youth Center in Brea that opened this month. Ed Carreon/The Orange County Register

vision.

They come from Brea, Fullerton, Placentia, Yorba Linda, La Habra and Diamond Bar, leaving school rivalries and gang ties at the door. Here, they help each other with homework and act like, well, kids.

On the second and fourth Satur-

days of the month, the same kids come to the center for the evening dances.

"It's like my second home here," said Aaron Olea, 15, of Fullerton. "I'm here every day when I'm not grounded, because it's a fun place to be and a good place to play hockey."

Attendance at the center began with about six kids who watched curiously in March as the youth center was being converted from an old hardware store, said Randy Gamboa, executive director and founder of American Explorers Inc.

"From there it was a chain re-

action," he said. "They told some friends and they told some friends. I thought we'd start with a small number of kids but it's been unbelievable."

At times the noise level is pretty high, Gamboa said. But putting up with the noise is worth it, he said.

To see these kids coming back every day is great. Some don't care about the video games. They just want a place to go."

Gamboa said the center's success was only a dream when he founded the youth group in 1986 and began providing weekend camping trips and adventures for young

children.

"But I knew there was a need for a place where they could go to get off the streets and away from the drugs and alcohol," he said. "And they like it here. It's their club and they are really proud of it."

The organization pays the operating costs of the center, such as heating, electricity and water, but

does not pay rent. The center plans to offer tutoring and parent seminars by September.





BREA INDIAN GUIDES

BREA LITTLE LEAGUE

JUNE 17, 1977

