

C. G. GRANT
CONSULTANT

Post Office Box 1299
Los Altos, California 94023

415/856-9100

For your information
CB

The Peninsula Times Tribune

Sunday, September 10, 1989

66th Year

Editorial

This dream needs tireless legwork

LEAVING HOME THEIR preconceived notions and setting aside their political differences, a group of 50 people assembled in East Palo Alto last week for an extraordinary meeting. For some of the locals in a community still fraught by rifts dating back to 1983 incorporation battles, it was the first time in years they had met with a sense of camaraderie. For the non-residents of East Palo Alto who had come to see how they might help, it was a

East Palo Alto youngsters have no swimming pool, clean parks or playing fields.

rare effort at coordination. The purpose of the meeting, in a nutshell, was to pool ideas and resources to create a recreation program — and an alternative to the beckoning drug scene — for the city's youth.

Currently, there are some scattered youth clubs in the city. But East Palo Alto youngsters enjoy virtually none of the facilities — clean parks, playing fields, swimming pools — taken for granted by middle class kids across the freeway. The only publicly owned swimming pool is covered with muck and not available for use. School district playing fields — casualties of a tight budget — are untended and strewn with broken glass. Entrenched drug traffic in a major city park scares off people who might actually want to use a playground.

Into that situation this summer walked C.G. Grant, a self-described specialist in "developing quality programs with no money." Working under a grant from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, she painstakingly took inventory of youth services already available, as well as those that are needed and desired. Along the way she collected an army of "technical assistants" — outsiders possessing either know-how or fund raising ability to make change happen. Among them were a local architect, who donated her professional skills; Tom Beckett of the Stanford Athletic Department, who is interested in helping with field maintenance; Ed Clements, who is looking at ways local Rotary Clubs can help; the the 4-H Club; East Palo Alto's Lettuce Work Women's Cooperative; the YMCA; Reggie Jackson, and many others. Last week's meeting, held in the Ravenswood City School District board room with lunch provided by the Walter S. Johnson Foundation, gathered these neighbors and community residents together to pledge their efforts.

While we commend this pledge, we naturally worry about its execution. All too often in East Palo Alto, ambitious programs have withered for lack of follow-through. Flowers are planted, and die for lack of water. C.G. Grant's Packard Foundation grant has run out, and now is up to the city to coordinate this outpouring of community spirit for a recreation program. We urge all involved to doggedly pursue this dream.