

A10 • Monday, July 5, 2010

MISSING

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proper attention," said police detective Green Beverly, who took over investigating juvenile runaways a year ago.

The department developed the page because of the popularity of its "Mae West" website, which features photos and information on men and women charged in homicides, sexual assaults and other crimes.

The missing juvenile page was added in mid-June. Of the 13 runaways featured on the site Friday, five had been located. At least two were found after someone spotted the police department's page and called in, police Lt. David O'Dea said.

"We are hoping kids look at the website and know someone cares," O'Dea said.

The website does not cost the department any money to operate. It's updated by Beverly and the department's community relations specialist.

It features teens reported missing to Tacoma police. Over the past year, the department has taken 402 runaway reports. Some teens have left home several times before and return quickly. Others stay away longer.

Beverly currently is looking into 69 runaway cases. Those featured so far on the website were chosen because they had photos of the runaway, there were signs the teens were in danger or they've been gone more than a year.

She looks for indications the runaways were abused, involved in drug use or with someone they might have met online or involved in criminal activity. The department passes along names to a federal task force that looks for runaway and young girls involved in the sex trade.

In many cases, Beverly said, she's reportedly tried to contact family members and found disconnected numbers and invalid addresses.

"They are more vulnerable," O'Dea said of the teenagers. "We have to look out for them."

Having a photo is crucial, Beverly said she asks patrol officers to get recent photos when they take runaway reports.

The department updates the website with new names and faces. The number of runaways featured on the page will not be limited, O'Dea said.

"The whole idea is to find them," O'Dea said. "It's working for us, we will keep putting them up there."

So far, the page features only juveniles reported as runaways. It does not display the names, photos and information on children in the Captain's Club, which give donors something extra for their money, but will succeed, once the community knows about them.

"Every year we do something new and we learn something," she said.

THOUSANDS ENJOY FESTIVAL

Despite the budget construction, the thousands of Independence Day revelers who showed up at the two-mile-long Ruston Bay fair enthusiastically willed down superior corn dogs, brewed hamburgers of craft and food booths and applauded musical jockeys and rappers.

Headliners were toward the sky as a U.S. Navy F/A-18C Hornet roared across Commencement Bay during the afternoon air show.

A group of 2nd class petty officers from the USS Steadman



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holders win prizes. Despite the dismal response, the fair featured the grand prize: a two-night stay at the Silver Chubb Inn and was asked to push the ceremonial button. Instead, the night's fireworks.

Laid said the organization got a late start on the fundraiser and wasn't able to begin publicizing them until about a month ago.

"Part of the problem is we're a volunteer-driven organization. All of us have full-time jobs, and we don't always have enough people to make things happen," she said.

Still, it was a disappointing response to Miller. "We're very proud why the public has not been stepping forward to help out," he said. "They just aren't into their god-given right this event will take place every year."

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