



The Independence Post

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See photos and a recap of HOME DAYS on pages 3 - 6.

EVENTS

Independence Kiwanis is holding its 86th Chicken Barbeque on Sunday, September 21, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Kiwanis Pavilion near the Civic Center.

The City will have a SHREDDING DAY on Saturday, September 27. See page 7 for details.

A WELLNESS EXPO is coming to Independence High School on Saturday, October 25, featuring Dr. Michael Roizen, Cleveland Clinic Chief Wellness Officer. See details on page 11.



Gregory P. Kurtz, Mayor

A MESSAGE FROM OUR MAYOR

Dear Resident:

With summer waning and the harvest moon approaching, some of us are beginning to prepare our homes in anticipation of rising fuel costs this winter. For some residents, the answer may be simply to install new windows with better insulation. But for some of our seniors, situations such as higher heating bills can be both frightening and overwhelming. Some fear the winter could stretch their wallets to the breaking point.

We have also discovered that each month there are seniors who have no choice except to leave the City of Independence and live elsewhere. These are health-driven moves. We've had numerous examples of teary-eyed seniors telling our staff that they love this town, but due to disability or disease they need more care and attention than they can receive while living in their single-family home in our community. These are heart-breaking stories, happening every month, right here in our city.

In order to come up with a true assessment of the needs and situations of our senior population, the City recently mailed to each person age 60 and over a **Survey and Services Update** to help guide us as we begin to design programs to meet those needs. Moving ahead from that point will involve collecting input from a sampling of residents of all demographics to obtain a scientific assessment of our community's vision, ideas, and concerns. This survey will also include questions about the future of our Downtown Redevelopment.

As we go through this process of collecting data, if at any time you have input you would like us to consider, please do not hesitate to call me at 524-4131, or communicate with Kathleen Kapusta, our Coordinator of Senior Services, at 524-3035. Please remember...we are a **Community** striving to meet the needs for not only ourselves, but also for the future generations of families who will call Independence their home.

On another note, I am pleased to provide in the **Independence Post** a more in-depth look at two wonderful programs the City has embraced to assist young adults who need to develop a new sense of self and/or self esteem to make better choices. These two great pro-active programs, explained on Page 10, have had extremely positive results on youth who have had a brush with the courts.

Independence residents of **all ages** are important, and each generation has specific needs. We are committed to creating a community that fosters the philosophy of sharing when we can share and providing when we can provide...a community that does not just exist for today, but has a vision for our future.

Sincerely,

Gregory Kurtz
Mayor

MAYOR'S COURT

"The C-O-N-N-E-C-T program is organized by proven trained professionals in partnership with behavioral psychologists stressing the importance of core values, self discipline, respect, goal setting, appropriate and acceptable social behaviors. I have personally viewed this program in action and feel it has value as an alternative to traditional adult and juvenile diversion programs and provides a new and creative approach."

– Excerpt from letter from Michael S. Young, U.S. Secret Service, Retired

ALTERNATIVE SENTENCING PROGRAMS

The following two programs are being implemented as a proactive approach to offer youth the opportunity to learn from their past behavior. C-O-N-N-E-C-T, offered by Strong Style Martial Arts, and CHOICES, offered by L-E-A-D. (Leadership Equine Assisted Development) are two programs devised from totally different approaches but are receiving astoundingly successful results. These positive results are testimony that participation in one of these programs can help our youth who have had a brush with the courts into making better decisions in the future.



Martial Arts is about Respect and Commitment: Strong Style's Strength is in teaching kids to walk away with confidence. By building strong core values, self discipline, respect and confidence, a child's inner self becomes so strong that they have the self-control to avoid negative situations. Respect is of utmost importance at Strong Style, where positive attitudes are developed and nurtured.

What Professionals have to say:

"There will always be those who criticize martial arts. Pay no attention to the nay-sayers. Having been a Prosecutor, Law Director, Municipal Judge, Common Pleas Judge, and now, a Federal Judge, I have personally witnessed thousands of young adults lose their way because programs like [Strong Style's] were never made available to them."

– Excerpt from letter from Federal Judge Christopher A. Boyko to Strong Style Martial Arts.

What do you say to someone who thinks that martial arts programs teach kids to be violent? We have to say that it is inexperience talking. The truth is, **children who train in martial arts are less violent than those who don't.** In an article entitled, "Why Mixed Martial Arts Training is Good

for Children," author Mike Adams says, "Do you know which kids start the fights these days? It's the kids who have no discipline, no training, and no self esteem. But kids who train in martial arts – any form of martial arts – tend to become more responsible, more mature and far less likely to engage in any sort of violence. The very process of going through a program of intense exercise, stretching, hand-eye coordination and paying attention to an adult instructor makes kids more intelligent and more responsible. Sure, there are a few exceptions to this, but by and large, martial arts training makes children less violent, not more violent." The entire article can be found at www.naturalnews.com/023000.html.

Equine Program is about Growth and Learning:

L-E-A-D's Strength is in its horsepower!

Why horses? Horses provide an ideal means of giving youth an opportunity to experience the consequences of their behavior and immediately gain an awareness of their decision-making process. The reason is that horses were once prey animals, and in order to survive, they had to be fully aware of their surroundings. Because of this, horses recognize the slightest uneasiness when interacting with people. Not only do they notice this uneasiness, they reflect it back to us through their behaviors. This makes them perfect teachers for helping people learn about themselves and others' perceptions of them.

An example can be found in the comments made by a businessman who attended the adult workshop and was instructed to approach the horses as if they were his clients. He was feeling intimidated and fearful, which sent strong signals to the horses, and they did not want to cooperate. With the guidance of the workshop facilitator, he recognized that the horses were simply reflecting back the feelings he carried with him as he approached prospective clients. When he acknowledged his fear and worked to calm himself, the horses also became calmer and he was able to lead them through the exercises. His "up close and personal" work with the horses created a powerful awareness of his emotions and how they are picked up by others.

Youth in the "Choices" program are also faced with this immediate feedback and they learn intense and meaningful lessons from their interaction with the horses. People who violate the law are typically unaware of their choices. When asked, "Why did you do this?" their typical answer is "I don't know."

Interacting with horses requires them to take responsibility for their actions and decisions. It also allows them to see the consequences of their behavior in a safe but challenging setting. What better way to stay out of trouble than to understand the behavior patterns that got you there in the first place?



What Participants have to say:

"What would it have meant to you if the Mayor would have found you Guilty, charged you a \$500 fine and sent you on your way?"

"I wouldn't have learned anything; I would have just been out \$500 and I could have made the same mistake a week later."

– Anonymous Participant

"If I were fined it would have just put me down and upset me. I learned how to control myself in similar and different situations. I'm thankful to the city for giving me the opportunity to learn a different way, to see deeper into myself and how other things influence my decisions."

– Anonymous Participant