

# Coral Springs, FL

## Demographic Information

- ★ Self-reported suburban area with population of 129,766
- ★ Poverty rate: 7.3
- ★ Race and Ethnicity breakdown:

<b>Non-Hispanic White</b>	<b>57.0%</b>
<b>Non-Hispanic Black or African American</b>	<b>13.0%</b>
<b>Non-Hispanic Asian</b>	<b>4.0%</b>
<b>Non-Hispanic American Indian and Alaskan Native</b>	<b>2.0%</b>
<b>Non-Hispanic Other</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Non-Hispanic Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Non-Hispanic Other race</b>	<b>4.0%</b>
<b>Non-Hispanic Multiracial (two or more races)</b>	<b>20.0%</b>
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	<b>25.0%</b>

## Overview

We believe Coral Springs is a great place to grow up. Our residents tell us through satisfaction surveys and town hall meetings that this is a fundamental attraction of living in our city. Our community planning process is predicated on hearing the voice of all of our customers, 30% of whom are young people. We listen to the young people of our City and their voices influence all of our City's strategic priorities. With careful thought and practical purpose, we have woven initiatives for young people into each of our published priorities.

It takes the entire community working together to provide the right environment for children to flourish. Many adults have opportunities to influence young people—from family members, caregivers, and teachers to coaches, tutors, neighbors, mentors, and employers; the list goes on and on. We have several mentoring and internship programs, School Resource Officers, Taravella Innovation Zone and numerous committees and associations that exist to meet the challenge of creating a strong web of adult support.

Last year, Morgan Quitno Press, a major police research firm, named Coral Springs the tenth safest city in the nation. Out of the nine large cities in Broward County, Coral Springs has the lowest crime rate. We create safe places by establishing programs addressing gangs, drugs, bullying, and traffic safety (GRADE, BRAVE, SafetyTown, Teen Safe Driving). The City Commission establishes ordinances designed to protect youth from negative influences and dangerous situations, such as smoking, go-peds, sexual predators, and pool safety codes. We provide safe places and programs that help youth develop their skills and capacities, both social and vocational. One method we use is to create forums to explore the myriad issues facing today's youth, such as Study Circles, SAC, UniTown, UniTeens, and UniKids.

We are committed to giving every child a healthy start. We offer many classes, like Kid Cuisine and YogaKids to improve wellness, have a comprehensive recreational sports league with over 2,000 teams to encourage active lifestyles and our local hospital offers a variety of health improvement classes for kids and expectant mothers. Our "Quitters are Winners" program has had proven success in educating kids on the dangers of smoking. One of the biggest educational challenges our community has faced was overcrowding in our countywide school system. The City has successfully reduced the overcrowding by opening a Charter School, transforming an under-used shopping mall into a middle and high school. The City also donated land to the School Board to build new schools.

Another important aspect of our efforts for youth is our established priority to promote diversity and tolerance. Each year, the City sponsors many events and programs to capitalize on our strength in diversity through communicating, celebrating and understanding our differences and similarities. Surveys shows that 95% of residents feel the City Government shows respect for religious and ethnic diversity. Many programs make this high rating possible. One is Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) Celebration, a youth-focused program with special school day appearances of keynote civil rights speakers, an art contest, performing arts productions, and a scholarship program. In 2007, 600 kids attended MLK events. In August 2006, Money magazine published an article listing the nation's Top 90 Best Places to Live, and Coral Springs was named the best in Florida. Our goal is to become the best in the nation. We will continue our successful initiatives, policies and programs, as well as create new ones to improve the life of young people and accomplish our mission to be "the nation's premier community in which to live, work and raise a family."

### **Commitment, Collaboration, Awareness, Data and Advocacy**

- ★ YOUTH SERVICES COMMITTEE Formed in 2004 to promote and increase opportunities for young people, and led by the City's Youth Services Coordinator, the committee pulls together community stakeholders from public/private organizations, including schools, universities, businesses, parent groups, Chamber of Commerce and local government. Their focus is to promote positive recreational outlets, empower youth to pursue City leadership opportunities, develop solutions to youth problems and facilitate communication between member organizations. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION This community-wide collaboration brings together business owners, youth service leaders and school staff meet to bridge the business and educational communities. Since 2002 this group has created scholarships, a school teacher/volunteer recognition program, and an internship template for businesses. The committee created "StudentCentral," a web site where students and parents learn about service hour opportunities, scholarships, and topics of student interest. Finally, the committee is adopting an "Ethics Seminar," where 250 high school seniors sit with local business leaders to learn about business ethics and real-life ethical dilemmas.
- ★ FAMILY SUCCESS CENTER A City/County partnership that provides underprivileged families with human services like child/family therapy, financial assistance resources, job search training for teens, and referrals to social services. The Family Success Center is centrally located in Coral Springs and provides convenient access to case management, self-sufficiency programs, emergency financial assistance, employment referral, child care information and referral, housing counseling and assistance, substance abuse counseling, and psychotherapy.

### **Alliance Priorities: Dropout Prevention/School Readiness and the National Action Strategies**

- ★ The Chamber of Commerce Committee on Education "Bridge to Leadership" scholarship annually awards \$500 to one senior at each of five high schools. BUSINESS SUCCESS DAY Teaches teens how to enter the workforce with lessons on interview skills, job applications, appropriate dress and manners, resume writing, etc.
- ★ THE NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM- promotes and strengthens the stability, development, revitalization and preservation of the City's neighborhoods through community-based problem-solving, neighborhood-oriented services and public/ private cooperation. There is a matching grant program available and neighborhood involvement is encouraged through block parties.
- ★ TRANSITIONAL HOUSING FOR FOSTER TEENS The SOS Children's Village Coconut Creek consists of eleven family houses, and a community center, all clustered on a palm-lined cul-de-sac in a suburban neighborhood. SOS Village supports foster children by giving them a non-institutional environment to grow up in along with life skill training and personal counseling. For children under 18, the Village is an example of foster care at its best. Once a child reaches their 18 birthday however, they have graduated from the foster care system but are often in need of a transitional home to assist them with becoming independent, productive adults.
- ★ At the beginning of each school year, every student in the Coral Springs public schools receives information and forms to take home on student on low cost health insurance through the Medicaid program. A random survey of Coral Springs school principals, including the three principals who collaborated on this application, revealed that school personnel do follow-up with families where school staff have recognized a need, to ensure that those parents are aware of the benefits available to them.
- ★ WWW.CSTEENSUNDECIDED.COM This a new web site developed to serve kids who may be seeking an alternative to the traditional high school diploma followed by college. The goal is to educate kids about options other than dropping out of school. The website contains information on GEDs, learning a trade, enrolling in technical school or taking virtual classes.

## **Resources Youth Receive: The Five Promises**

- ★ **Caring Adults:** MENTOR PROGRAMS (2007 totals of participating youth) Middle School – 49 Senior/Youth- 12 Sawgrass Nature Center – 28 Speakers Bureau – 316 One Day Leadership – 55 Summer Leadership - 28 Atrisk youth are identified by school staff and paired with trained adult mentor. Currently, we have 133 active mentors.
- ★ **Safe Places:** SAFETY TOWN City kindergartners (2,800 annually) visit this "town", developed in partnership with Coral Springs Kiwanis, Police and Fire Departments, to learn traffic rules and basic safety skills.
- ★ **A Healthy Start:** FAMILY SUCCESS CENTER Here underprivileged families can “one-stop shop” for human services such as therapy for families and children, financial assistance resources for parents, job search training for teens, and referrals to any social service which builds a stronger and healthier family.
- ★ **An Effective Education:** TARAVELLA INNOVATION ZONE The City partners with Taravella High School and feeder schools to incorporate Sterling Award criteria into learning methods and classroom management. Last year one feeder school was awarded the Governor's Sterling Award for their performance superiority.
- ★ **Opportunities to Help Others:** OLUNTEER SERVICE HOURS According to Broward Public Schools, last year 2,342 Coral Springs high school seniors gave over 226,000 volunteer service hours.

## **Media Issues/Challenges Identified:**

Coral Springs has the reputation of being family-friendly with an abundance of offerings for young children and their parents. However, local media often portrays Coral Springs as a nice town where the teen population is bored with “nothing to do.” We are challenged to find that right mix of providing what teens need and satisfying what teens want, and making our residents aware of what is available to them. We want to provide teens with safe, appropriate and fun activities. For some, it may be an alternative to unhealthy or illegal activities. For others, it may simply be an alternative to being alone or watching TV after school. One challenge we face is getting the teens to participate. For example, we offered a teen dance, a teen trip to an athletic event and also a teen trip to a video game arcade and we did not get anyone registered for any of those activities. We have learned that teens do not like to be supervised, especially by City staff, and they want the activities to be their ideas. In order to take action to resolve this issue, we enlisted the aid of the Student Advisory Council (SAC).

SAC is comprised of student representatives from each of the five area high schools, and meets biweekly to discuss community issues and to plan and carry out teen events/service projects. In 2006, SAC conducted a random survey of 193 local teens to learn what they would like to have offered. The survey revealed that teens want concerts, drive-in movies and clubs that have activities other than sports or public service. Armed with the information gathered from the SAC survey and teen committee members, the City has developed guidelines for creating new teen programming: · Offer appropriate activities that teens want · Involve teens in the planning and implementation of events · Tailor our marketing methods to the teen audience Examples of new offerings to teens: The Car Club, where members refurbish a car, similar to a popular television show on MTV. The Car Club recently held its first meeting to an audience of almost 200 teens. SAC is taking a lead in planning and implementing teen events. They are currently planning and promoting a teen concert, “Battle of the Bands,” and will assist in picking the bands. We have published the Teen What To Do Guide that lists activities for teens, both City-sponsored activities and those held by schools and private businesses. We have utilized the schools in helping to advertise and announce events for the Teens. Finally, we are marketing to teens in popular cyber hangouts such as csteens.com, My Space, Face Book and You Tube. For the Teen Political Forum for example, we solicited questions from teens on You Tube, and replayed those questions during the event so that elected officials could respond to them.