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DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## ***Program serving youth with disabilities or exceptional needs strives to survive despite elimination of \$1M in funding from the state***

**Sacramento, California, October 5, 2009**—Access Teen, this region's only program specifically designed to meet the after-school social and recreational needs of youth and young adults with disabilities or exceptional needs, is doing all it can to continue operating after losing a million dollars in funding due to state budget cuts.

For years the Access Teen program has used outdoor sports, indoor games, crafts, community outings, socialization, and dedicated staff to make profound impacts on the lives of youth with disabilities or exceptional needs. The program did this 5-days-a-week, 12-months-a-year, after the end of each school day until 6 p.m.

With the loss of a million dollars in state funding—100% of Access Teen's overall budget—it seemed certain that the program would stop operating. Knowing that many families would face countless difficulties if the program stopped operating, the Department of Parks and Recreation chose to preserve the program by transforming it to a fee-based program. Access Teen is now available as a fee-based program with a severely discounted \$400 monthly participation fee.

By operating as a fee-based program, youth with disabilities or exceptional needs will continue to have access to a program that nurtures their social and emotional development, promotes self-esteem, and lays the foundation for greater independence.

As with all fee-based programs, Access Teen's continued existence depends in part on the number of families that participate in the program. The Department encourages families that are looking for a proven afterschool program for youth and young adults with disabilities or exceptional needs to inquire about the Access Teen program.

Families can obtain more information about the program by calling (916) 808-6085 between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Media-related inquiries can be forwarded to Hindolo Brima, Media and Communications Specialist for the Department of Parks and Recreation, at (916) 622-8066.

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