

Buhl to support teen effort to spread anti-meth message

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By Blair Koch - Times-News correspondent | Posted: Sunday, May 16, 2010 1:00

BUHL — Buhl High School Senior Elizabeth Comer hopes her planned mural project will change lives.

On Monday, Comer approached the Buhl City Council about her idea to paint murals on tabletops at Eastman Park, each with a positive message tying into a larger anti-methamphetamine theme.

Comer plans to paint the murals as part of a scholarship opportunity from the edgy Idaho Meth Project's Paint the State campaign.

“Personally, I don't believe the Idaho Meth Project is sending its message in a positive way,” Comer said. “Much of it's advertisements are vulgar and not pleasing to the eye. I want to do something in a positive light.”

Idaho Meth Project, based on a similar Montana program, began its attempt to curb meth usage in 2008.

The program's advertising campaign is gritty to say the least. Comer wants to change that, hoping people can be lured away from the drug by focusing on the beauty of everyday life.

She said using park tabletops as her canvas will help her art target large numbers of people from all walks of life.

While support was voiced during Monday's meeting, city council members were concerned that murals painted directly onto the tables would be vandalized; ruining Comer's work before projects are judged in July.

“I couldn't tell you that (the murals) would last overnight,” said Parks and Recreation Director Kelly Peterson. “Sadly, but true.”

Peterson said the tables are painted yearly but graffiti and vandalism quickly return.

The council suggested Comer paint her murals on the walls inside the city pool, which would protect her work.

“I hate to see it somewhere where it is mistreated,” said Councilman Kyle Hauser.

Comer said she appreciates the city’s support of her efforts.

“Meth is still an issue in the Buhl area but it seems hidden, brushed under the rug, but the drug is still here,” Comer said. “I understand the city’s concern about making sure my work isn’t ruined before it being judged but at the same time think that those people in the park who are vandalizing the tables may be those needing to see the message.”

In the meantime, Comer will continue to work with city to find a solution that meets the competition’s criteria.

“It’s going to be interesting to see how it wraps up,” Comer said.

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