

Cops' summer hoops league makes play for teen outreach

By Tenley Woodman

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Police are hoping to make teen outreach a slam dunk, thanks to the Blue Hill Boys & Girls Club's outdoor summer basketball league, tipping off tonight.

Officers from Dorchester's area B-3 station will act as referees during the seven-week program, which ends Aug. 22.

"We are trying to bridge the gap between officers and young men, especially kids between the ages of 15 and 18," said Scott McLellan, director of the Blue Hill club.

The league is partially funded by a grant from the Suffolk District Attorney's Washington Street/Talbot Avenue Safe Neighborhood Initiative. Nearly 100 kids have signed up.

Club member Stephen Edmonds, 15, of Mattapan said the recent violence makes young people targets for police harassment. Givaughn Jones of Dorchester agreed.

"I would say fashion sense has a lot to do with it. Everybody dresses so much alike nowadays, everyone looks alike," said Jones, 15.

The club has also reached out to nonmembers. Teens interested in playing must pay for a \$5 club membership, which also gives them access to the facilities for a year.

Member Tariq Tate, 15, said the league is a good idea for the neighborhood.

"I think it would be good for everyone here. It will be nice to have some other competition and get to know other people," he said.