



State Rep. Elaine Nekritz hangs with teens at the Niles Teen Center during her talk as part of the center's new guest speaker series.

Talkin' With Teens

Nekritz, Youth Discuss Government Issues

About 15 teens gathered at the Niles Teen Center to hear State Rep. Elaine Nekritz (D-57th) talk about government last week.

The talk was the first of its kind in the newly expanded Teen Center located in Golf Mill Shopping Center.

Nekritz spoke for nearly an hour with teens curious about a wide variety of subjects ranging from driver education requirements and laws on cell phone usage while driving, to the impact of Nekritz's work on her family to the federal government's proposed plan to purchase Thompson State Prison to house terrorism suspects currently being held at Guantánamo Bay.

One teen, John Kaczchowski, even brought up possibly shadowing Nekritz for the day as she does her job.

Teen Center Director Mark Williams said the turnout was smaller than he had expected, likely

because of several competing events at area high schools and junior highs the same day.

Future speakers include Niles Police Officer Robert Tornabene discussing Internet safety on Thursday, Jan. 21 at 5:30 p.m., Niles Mayor Robert Callero, who attended last Thursday's discussion, discussing local government on Thursday, Feb. 18 at 5:30 p.m., and representatives from Niles Family Services discussing conflict resolution on Mar. 18 at 5:30 p.m.

Williams said the speaker series and other expanded programming is now possible because of the expansion of the Teen Center.

Last summer the Teen Center took over an adjacent storefront in Golf Mill knocking out a wall and expanding the center by 1,001 square feet.

Programs can now take place without interrupting other activities in the center.