

## CATEGORY INTEGRATION

Over 1,400,000 square feet (over 130,060 square meters)

# Mall talks to teens with musical messages

**H**anes Mall's primary trade area includes 38,000 middle and high school students. They contribute significantly to sales — but they also cause trouble.

Teens hang out at the mall on weekend nights, often congesting walkways and parking lots, violating the mall's code of conduct and intimidating older customers, who had lodged complaints and shopped less on those nights due to gang activity, fights and thefts.

The problem peaks between January and April, when there are relatively few other activities available for kids. During the winter, Hanes Mall's youth traffic soars to 600 teens on the typical weekend night — 25 percent of total traffic.

The area's juvenile and gang-related crime was rising, and at the mall, dress-code and concealed-weapons violations, fights, car break-ins and purse snatchings rose in tandem with local statistics.

The mall gave security staff a communications course, increased police presence at the center, worked with Crime Stoppers and posted the code of conduct throughout the center. But when a security officer was assaulted and a family was injured during a brawl, the mall realized that unless further preventive measures were taken, it would have to enact a youth-guardian policy, which would undoubtedly hurt sales.

### Implementation

Hoping to avoid a punitive atmosphere, the mall instead sought to boost awareness of its code of conduct.

The mall set its code of conduct to music with a rock-pop song called "The Code." Its lyrics used teen slang and phonetic spelling. Stanzas spelled out the code's rules, emphasizing courtesy and the need for peace. For example, one lyric reads: "The aisles are wide, yeah, I like to keep things all clean, they're cool and neat. No runnin' or climbin' or profanity; respect other shoppers like a family: It's called The Code."

A second song was written around Crime Stoppers' hotline. "Gimme a Tip" describes a student who overhears plans for a fight at the mall and worries about calling Crime Stoppers but makes the call in the end.

The center printed lyrics to both songs — plus the code's full legal text — on a poster folded into the size of a CD. Because the schools serve more than 3,8000 Hispanics, both songs and the



code were translated into Spanish as well. A mock CD insert was placed inside the folded poster; it invited students to "perform your version of 'The Code' for your chance to win a \$500 CBL Mall Gift Card."

The school district let Hanes Mall hand-distribute its "album" to middle- and high school students at the start of the 2005–2006 school year.

The mall held a public competition for students to perform their version of "The Code." Representatives from Crime Stoppers, mall security, retailers, mall management and the Winston-Salem police department served as judges, who with the help of the audience's applause chose a winner.

### Results

Thirty students, representing 15 of the school system's 30 schools, performed pop, R&B, a cappella and hip-hop versions of "The Code" before an audience of 300 shoppers. One student wrote his own lyrics to a song called "Welcome to Hanes Mall." From January through April 2006, 32 percent fewer fights occurred at the mall, which issued 11 percent fewer bans. And sales actually increased during these months, by 2.5 percent over the year-earlier period. ■

#### The Code

Hanes Mall  
Winston-Salem, N.C.

**Expenses:** \$17,871

**Owned/Managed by:** CBL & Associates Properties, Inc.

**Professional Recognition:** Brenda McNeeley, marketing director, Dennis Cerny, CMD, CSM, mall manager, Shannon Gonzalez, SCMD, regional marketing director, Barb Ivankovich, SCMD, vice president, mall marketing