

Grant funds after-school programs

By **CONSTANCE NEYER**
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The Hispanic Health Council will receive a \$150,000 federal grant to establish after-school programs in the southeast section of the city.

"We're very excited about it," said Rolando Martinez, executive director of the council. "It's a good thing that's happening."

April Goff Brown, city youth services director, applied for the grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which says the grant is renewable for up to five years if Congress funds it.

Under the grant, local agencies will set up programs for youth — from tutoring to entrepreneurship — and offer parents

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courses in English as a Second Language and tutorial programs.

The health council will work with several other agencies to establish the programs, including Center City Churches, South End Community Services, OP-MAD (Organized Parents Make a Difference), Capitol Region Education Network and Strengthen the Sheldon-Charter Oak Neighborhoods.

City officials said the grant was sought because of the crime, violent behavior and other illicit activity among youth from 11 to 16. Martinez said they will set up homework centers at R.E. Betances, M.D. Fox, Kinsella, Naylor, Burr, Dwight, Bulkeley and South Middle schools.

Martinez said he was delighted about the grant.

"It was national competition for this grant, and we feel that we are very fortunate to have gotten it," he said. "The city working together with parents' groups will put together a terrific program that will benefit the children of Hartford in the southeast quadrant."

Goff Brown said the money was obtained from a community schools' grant category that seeks after-school pro-

gramming with a focus on academic enrichment and entrepreneurial skills.

"When I heard we were one of 48 [chosen for the grant] and over 7,000 applications, I felt we were on the right track about what needed to be done in Hartford," said Goff Brown. "It reaffirmed that we are forward-thinking in how we develop services and how things should be done for kids and the family."

She said the southeast area was chosen because it does not have as many social services as are available in other parts of the city.

"That's not to say that other parts of the city aren't needy, but they have some already and we can use this here and get this into other parts of the city," she said.

The programs should be under way by January in each of the schools.