

Advertisers, businesses take notice of teen-agers

By Priscilla Calderon

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With songs from the Backstreet Boys, N'Sync and other teen-idol groups dominating the airwaves, and with the invasion of "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" and "Dawson's Creek" on television, today's teens are taking the media by storm. Generation Y is producing the new leaders of trends, overtaking the baby boomers.

Jennifer Flattmann of Per-rault and Associates, a local market-research company,

said teens are making an impact on society.

"A lot of businesses are directed toward teens now," Flattmann said. "You see it almost every where, from music ... to the movies."

Burges High School social studies teacher Pat Knapp said she sees the drastic difference in teens becoming the center of entertainment as compared to when she was a teen-ager.

"Teens weren't quite the media event as they are today," Knapp said. "There would still be teens on TV shows like

'American Bandstand,' but back then the focus was more on home and family."

The media have directed their attention to this teen generation because it has the time to waste, said Burges High sophomore Josh Medrano.

"A majority of teens spend all their extra time using some sort of entertainment, such as going to movies, watching television or listening to music," Medrano said.

"The media has good business with them, so obviously a lot of shows and music are going to be di-

rected toward them."

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, people between the ages of 12 and 19 make up the largest teen population in U.S. history. They also spent \$141 billion last year.

Flattmann said this is why entertainment businesses are so interested in today's teens.

"The entertainment and marketing businesses see that teens of today have the money to waste on their products and shows," Flattmann said.

"They use advertising that appeals to them, especially clothing companies like the

Gap. Their images, music and topics are all geared toward the youth group."

Parkland High School freshman Jason Montelongo said he sees the effects of teens on society.

"Everyone seems to be focused on us," Montelongo said. "We have become one of the biggest money-spenders in America today. Everyone wants to win us over and take a piece of our extra cash. It's cool because you know you're making a big impact. It's also cool knowing that so many people

are interested in what we want and think."

Flattmann said this might be more than just a trend.

"As long as teens continue to look for entertainment and products that deals with teens, the media will continue giving it to teens," Flattmann said. "With the increasing growth in the number of teens, it's almost guaranteed that in the future you'll be seeing a lot more businesses catering to them."

Priscilla Calderon is a student at Burges High School.