



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
Committee

Date: August 30, 2021

From: Elizabeth Ayers
Director, Recreation and Sport Services

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01

Re: Summer Program Update 2021

Staff Recommendation

That the staff report titled, "Summer Program Update 2021", dated August 30, 2021, from the Director, Recreation and Sport Services, be received for information.

Elizabeth Ayers
Director, Recreation and Sport Services
(604-247-4669)

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Arts, Culture & Heritage Parks Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS: 	APPROVED BY CAO

Staff Report

Origin

Summer is a highly anticipated season in community facilities characterized by distinct programming opportunities for the City and our community partners. This report provides a summary of the Community Services Division's summer programs and initiatives for children, youth and families that met multiple objectives related to Council-approved strategies including the Recreation and Sport Strategy (2019-2024), Community Wellness Strategy (2018-2023), and Arts Strategy (2019-2024).

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #3 One Community Together:

Vibrant and diverse arts and cultural activities and opportunities for community engagement and connection.

3.1 Foster community resiliency, neighbourhood identity, sense of belonging, and intercultural harmony.

3.2 Enhance arts and cultural programs and activities.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #4 An Active and Thriving Richmond:

An active and thriving community characterized by diverse social and wellness programs, services and spaces that foster health and well-being for all.

4.1 Robust, affordable, and accessible sport, recreation, wellness and social programs for people of all ages and abilities.

This report supports the following focus areas in the Recreation and Sport Strategy 2019-2024:

Focus Area #2 Engaged Community:

Recreation and sport opportunities are accessible, inclusive and support the needs of a growing and diverse population in Richmond.

Focus Area #3 Physical Literacy and Sport for Life:

Richmond residents have the fundamental movement skills, competence, confidence and motivation to move for a lifetime.

Focus Area #6 Community Capacity-Building:

Collaborations, partnerships and volunteerism are strengthened to expand the reach and impact of recreation and sport in Richmond.

This report supports the following focus areas in the Community Wellness Strategy 2018-2023:

Focus Area #1:

Foster healthy, active and involved lifestyles for all Richmond residents with an emphasis on physical activity, healthy eating and mental wellness.

Focus Area #2:

Enhance physical and social connectedness within and among neighbourhoods and communities.

Analysis

Through a relationship-based service delivery model, Community Services and respective Community Associations and Societies offered a wide range of summer programs and activities for children, youth and families designed to meet diverse physical, social and cultural interests and needs. As in previous years, the 2021 summer season offered distinct opportunities for programming due to the following factors:

- Children and youth are out of school;
- Warmer days allow for a wider variety of activities;
- Outdoor pools and school facilities are available for use; and
- Young adults and youth are available to work and volunteer in programs in the community.

Affordable, accessible and inclusive opportunities for all ages were offered during the summer to provide participants with active, interesting and fun experiences to learn new skills, connect to their community, and reinforce a sense of belonging. Programs and activities for children, youth and families were especially important given the nine week break for the majority of schools in Richmond. Since many parents and guardians work during the summer, full day camp options were popular as a daycare alternative. Registered programs, typically occurring once per week over several weeks, were also available. Additionally, family-oriented, drop-in style activities, such as public skates at the Richmond Ice Centre, public swims at South Arm Outdoor Pool, or the Richmond Museum's *City at Work* exhibition, provided opportunities for families to participate together. The Recreation Fee Subsidy Program continued to support children, youth and families to participate in summer programs and camps, with over \$3,500 in funding provided over the nine week period.

Table 1 below lists the participation for summer daycamps and other registered programs over the past three summers, with 2019 being the last ‘regular’ operating year prior to the pandemic.

Table 1: Community Services Summer Registration – Daycamps and Registered Programs

Program Category	2019 Registrations	2020 Registrations	2021 Registrations
Summer Daycamps	11,816	1,298	5,687
Registered Programs	17,913	1,319	11,793
Total	29,729	2,617	17,480

Table 2 below lists the participation in other registered programs, not including daycamps, broken down by program category.

Table 2: Community Services Summer Registration – Registered Programs by Program Category

Registered Program Category	2019 Registrations*	2020 Registrations*	2021 Registrations*
Swimming lessons	6,396	368	2,188
Skating lessons	890	0**	930
Arts – dance, music, visual and performing arts	3,970	68	1,320
Computers, Technology and Social Media	140	0**	24
Cooking	401	0**	0**
General Interest (including Museum and Heritage programs)	880	82	753
Martial Arts	621	16	239
Nature and Science	560	81	594
Online	n/a	n/a	1,509***
Racquet Sports – tennis and badminton	870	85	495
Sports/Fitness/Health – physical literacy, sports (e.g., basketball, soccer) and group exercise	3,185	562	3,741
Total	17,913	1,262	11,793

* Includes registration for all ages

** Not offered due to COVID-19 health restrictions

*** Included in other program categories prior to 2021

Despite limitations on program offerings due to health restrictions, registration numbers were promising in 2021 and indicate a steady recovery towards pre-pandemic participation. It is expected that program offerings and participation numbers will return to historical levels in 2022, barring any further COVID-19 impacts.

Daycamps

Daycamps provide engaging experiences for children to stay active, try new things, build social skills, connect with new peers and build a sense of community belonging. Daycamps also play an important function in providing child care for working parents or guardians. As the COVID-19 pandemic continued, daycamps were even more important due to the social isolation, increased screen time and lower activity levels that many have experienced. In alignment with health and safety restrictions, daycamps took place outdoors with an emphasis on activities within the local neighbourhood. Participant numbers were limited with a higher ratio of instructors to participants, and participants were organized into smaller cohorts. Summer daycamps were offered through community centres, the Richmond Arts Centre, Richmond Nature Park and Minoru Arena, as well as an Archaeology Summer Camp at the London Heritage Farm.

Furthermore, the West Richmond Summer Slam Basketball Program, comprising of basketball camps and an inclusive league, resumed in 2021. This grass-roots developmental basketball experience provided approximately 250 children and youth in grades 4 to 11 with the opportunity to partake in a positive and inviting environment while growing their skills, developing team work and building positive relationships. Summer Slam also provided volunteer and paid employment opportunities for 24 youth.

Drop-in Programs and Registered Visits

In addition to summer daycamps and registered programs, a wide range of drop-in and registered visit opportunities were available. These included fitness and sport activities at community centres, including Minoru Centre for Active Living, as well as public skates at the Richmond Ice Centre, where over 7,000 registered and drop-in visits occurred.

Always a popular and highly anticipated seasonal amenity, the Steveston and South Arm Outdoor Pools provide another way for children, youth and families to be active and play together. Indoor public swimming was also offered, in addition to swimming lessons at both indoor and outdoor pools. Over 97,000 visits were recorded for public swims and lane swims at the City's aquatics facilities over July and August.

The Voyage of the Gikumi: Exploring the Fraser River Estuary was an exciting new offering at Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site this summer, which consisted of a pre-registered three hour boat cruise aboard the MV Gikumi, a 67-year old restored West Coast work boat. The unforgettable experience enabled participants to discover the engaging stories, lore and legends that make the Fraser River such a potent force for both creation and destruction. Over 110 people attended the tours, including four sold-out voyages.

Youth Programs and Activities

A wide variety of activities were offered for youth this summer across the City's community centres, with a greater focus on outdoor-based programs. In addition to our 'traditional' registered programs attended by over 200 youth in 2021, over 60 youth participated in newly offered programs such as Bike Camps, Photo Walks, and High School Prep camps. The breadth of experiences offered ranged from sport skills, hip hop and K-pop dance, improv theatre, leadership, self-care, do-it-yourself and STEM projects, visual arts and financial literacy. In addition, a number of low cost, no cost opportunities such as weekly open gyms and youth hangouts were provided to allow a safe place for youth to spend time while being active and meeting friends.

The Link Program ("Link"), a referral-based program led by a Youth Outreach Worker to provide support and mentorship to vulnerable youth while building capacity, connecting with peers and developing a sense of community belonging, was also offered. Link enabled 16 youth to build strong, positive relationships with the goal of transitioning them into mainstream recreational, cultural and social opportunities, such as those offered through the City's nine community centres. The program was offered two to three times per week over seven weeks and provided youth with different physical and social activities such as hiking, biking, and indoor climbing at locations within the Lower Mainland, with some activities facilitated in partnership with youth-focused clinical counsellors from Vancouver Coastal Health.

The Richmond Youth Media Program ("RYMP") also continued weekly skill sessions and community engagement projects, including outdoor RYMP in the Park sessions. The 200+ hours of projects that youth engaged in included learning macro nature photography and music video creation, as well as a youth presentation to our community partners at The Foundry.

Lastly, Richmond Public Art partnered with the West Richmond Community Association to commission artists Sam McWilliams, Paige Gratland and Phranc to create a public artwork in collaboration with LGBTQ2+ youth. The youth played an active role in developing the project opportunity, including the development of the call to artists, artist selection, concept development and installation of the artwork. *Signs of Pride* is a vinyl wrap installed on three exterior concrete columns on the west façade of the West Richmond Community Centre.

Free Programs, Events and Activities

There were a variety of free programs and events for children and families alike, which allowed participants to enjoy physical, artistic, cultural and social activities. These opportunities included:

- Weekly, free drop-in programs offered at nine neighbourhood parks throughout the city, for children from six to 12 years of age to try fun arts, crafts and sports facilitated by Summer Outreach Leaders;
- Neighbourhood Block Party at South Arm Community Centre, which featured an outdoor paint night, taiko drumming workshop and social media contest;

- Living History program at London Heritage Farm and Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site, an opportunity to step into the past to view and participate in historical demonstrations led by costume interpreters;
- Richmond Nature Park's four walking trails, where visitors used their free trail guide to explore the plants and animals in bog, forest and pond habitats;
- Terra Nova Adventure Play Environment, which gave families an opportunity to play and be adventurous together, whether sliding down the hillside slide, zooming along the zipline or climbing the 10 metre tall tree house;
- Richmond Museum's exhibition, *City at Work*, where attendees explored the invisible inner workings of the City of Richmond;
- Richmond Art Gallery's summer exhibition, *Imperfect Offerings*, featuring delicately repaired kintsugi pottery, with related online and in-person events;
- Big Red Scavenger Hunt, a web-based outdoors adventure to uncover Steveston's history and mysteries at heritage locations such as Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site, Imperial Landing and the Gulf of Georgia Cannery;
- Canada Day in Richmond, a re-imagined online festival presented in partnership with Steveston Salmon Festival with a salmon-themed public art scavenger hunt, digital parade, pre-recorded mainstage and more;
- Richmond Maritime Festival at the Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site, with wooden boats, storytelling and roving entertainment; and
- Branscombe House's online and in-person workshops for youth and adults in zine making, basket weaving, printmaking and more, led by artist-in-residence, Rachel Rozanski.

These free programs, events and activities provided opportunities for children and families to meet new friends, connect and get to know each other, and explore the wonders of their local community, thus supporting physical, mental, social and emotional wellness and leading to a more connected community.

Employment and Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers play a vital role in supporting the delivery of many summer programs and events. Volunteers learn new skills and accomplish personal development goals while increasing competence, confidence and build community capacity. These volunteer positions often lead to employment as a daycamp leader, youth leader or program instructor in future years. Many students, at the high school and post secondary level, find that the skills developed in summer programs, such as leadership, critical thinking and decision making, are highly valued in future careers. Volunteers were welcomed back to our summer programs and events in 2021 which resulted in over 40 volunteers contributing over 2,500 hours of service altogether.

Program Highlights

Participants shared their appreciation for the variety of programs and the benefits they and their children experienced. The following are a few of the many positive testimonials from Summer

2021 program leaders and participants, demonstrating the benefits to participating in these meaningful and impactful activities:

“I made so many new friends at camps. We even play basketball together after camps now!” – Participant, 14 years old, City Centre Community Centre

“I have benefited immensely from LINK. I was able to meet new friends, explore new places, and have the time of my life! As a teenager, I tend to stay indoors more than I should and joining this program was just the outlet I needed. It offered a multitude of activities to do indoors and outdoors and I fully enjoyed all the ones I attended! I highly recommend this program to any teenagers wanting to spice up their lives!” – Participant, 18 years old

“[Our youth employee] began his journey at the Nature Park in 2017 as a participant in Camp Ecology for two summers. He also accompanied his mother to the Nature Park program she was the instructor for. Soon after, he volunteered for Polliwog Preschool Camp. He was inspired by the amazing role models his leaders were for him and he wanted to embody those same characteristics. He is now part of our staff team and is working his way up to become a leader. We strive to pull children away from their devices and plug them back into nature to create more youths like [him]!” – Nature Park

“I just really want to thank you and your team of coaches for putting together this amazing [Summer Slam] league. Honestly, it has been THE highlight of my son’s summer. He really looks forward to each practice and game. I really appreciate how the coaches are so encouraging and positive. He has developed a real love for basketball through playing in this league. His skills have improved and he is motivated to practice at home. It’s been so tremendous for [him] and I am very grateful to you and all the coaches for your time, dedication, and hard work!” – Parent/guardian of 11 year old participant, West Richmond Community Centre

“I really liked learning how to code in camps! Even though there are a lot of free resources online, I liked learning from the leaders. It was so fun!” – Participant, 13 years old, City Centre Community Centre

“[My son] came home really excited about a leadership program [the daycamp leader] did with the group yesterday. He showed me his training worksheets and was very interested in it. I thought this was amazing and wanted to let you know.” – Parent/guardian of 8 year old participant, West Richmond Community Centre

“A family who registered their child in our camps moved here from Hong Kong two months ago and were nervous that their child would be really shy in camps not have any friends here. The parents complimented our leaders on their abilities to create an environment that was inclusive and encouraged new friendships. The child came into camp not knowing anyone in Canada and left the camp making new friends in their neighbourhood.” – Summer Coordinator, Steveston Community Centre

“Open gym has been one of the best highlights of summer. To me, open gym was a way to practice and have fun with people. It was also a way to practice volleyball with people who were at different levels, and to meet new people.” – Participant, 15 years old, Cambie Community Centre

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

Summer programs continue to be valued by the community. They provide opportunities for participants of all ages to meet new friends, and remain physically and mentally active while developing new skills and building confidence. Summer programs also assist in building stronger and more resilient neighbourhoods. All of these opportunities are fundamental to achieving the City’s Recreation and Sport Strategy vision for Richmond to be a leader in the planning and delivery of recreation and sport opportunities, inspiring individuals and communities to be active, connected and healthy for a lifetime.



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