



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee

Date: April 9, 2021

From: Elizabeth Ayers
Director, Recreation and Sport Services

File: 11-7000-01/2021-Vol 01

Re: Spring Break Program Update 2021

Staff Recommendation

That the staff report titled, "Spring Break Program Update 2021", dated April 9, 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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Parks Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Richmond Public Library	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS: 	APPROVED BY CAO

Staff Report

Origin

Spring Break 2021 provided a unique programming opportunity for the City and our community partners. With a two week break for the majority of schools in Richmond, staff activated facilities and offered programs and services that met multiple objectives related to Council-approved strategies including the Recreation and Sport Strategy (2019-2024), Community Wellness Strategy (2018-2023), Arts Strategy (2019-2024), and Parks and Open Space Strategy (2012-2022).

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.

3.2 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.

Analysis

In 2021, Spring Break in the majority of Richmond schools was from March 15 to 26. The Community Services Division and the Richmond Public Library offered a wide range of programs designed to meet the physical, social and cultural interests and needs of children, youth and their families throughout the holiday. Spring Break opportunities have always been important and even more so during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the social isolation and lower activity levels that many have experienced.

The Spring Break programs were designed to serve a range of needs. As many parents or guardians often work during the school break, full day camp options were popular as a daycare alternative. Additionally, family-oriented activities, such as the Richmond Museum's *City at Work* exhibition or public skates at Minoru Arena, have provided opportunities for families to participate together. Activities were also offered during the evenings and weekends to meet varying schedules and needs.

Program Highlights

Programs for Spring Break 2021 have been highlighted along with participation numbers for each of the program categories, as outlined in Table 1 on the following page.

Table 1: Participation for Spring Break 2021 Camps, Programs and Activities

Department or Facility	Program	Number of Participants
Community Services	Camps and Programs	1,186
Arenas	Public Skates	3,326
Aquatics	Advanced Aquatic Courses	73
Aquatics	Public Swims	14,162
Richmond Public Library	In-Person and Virtual Activities	2,369

Low Cost, No Cost Opportunities

In addition to many Spring Break-specific programs that were offered, a variety of free activities were available for families to get out and recreate together while enjoying Richmond's parks and cultural facilities. Some of these activities have been listed below:

- Richmond Nature Park's four walking trails were open for visitors using their free trail guide to explore the plants and animals in bog, forest and pond habitats.
- Terra Nova Adventure Play Environment 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 Art Gallery exhibition, *Inaction*, by Brendan Fernandes, an internationally recognized artist whose practice brings together visual arts, video and dance, welcomed 211 visitors during the two-week period, which represented an increase over recent attendance numbers.
- Self-guided historical walking tours in the Terra Nova and Brighthouse neighbourhoods enabled participants to explore the city with Richmond Museum's free downloadable self-guided walking tours, taking them back in time to meet early farmers and residents, smelling the fishy action of clanging canneries, and hearing the humming busyness of our diverse wetlands.

As always, the Recreation Fee Subsidy program was available to families in need of financial support for programs or camps during Spring Break.

Camps and Programs

Over 1,100 preschoolers, children and youth participated in camps and programs offered through community centres and arenas throughout the city. Camp opportunities included Bike Camps, Engineering the Future, Art Fusion, Skating, Sports and Variety Camp, Youth Leadership, and Karate and More Camp. A variety of programs and/or workshops were also offered, such as Photo Walks, Jewellery Making, Multisport Skills, Basketball Skills, Acrylic Painting and Babysitting Basics. Families were also invited to register for Family Open Gym timeslots at many of the community centres.

The Richmond Arts Centre offered the Arts Experience Camp for children and preteens, whereby participants took part in an array of hands-on arts experiences in visual arts, ceramics, musical theatre and drama. Campers also went on a "field trip" to the *City at Work* exhibition at the

Richmond Museum, and participated in drawing workshop inspired by the current exhibition, *Inaction*, at the Richmond Art Gallery.

Public Skates

Always a popular activity for all ages, over 3,000 people participated in this fun and active experience. To provide more weekday opportunities for children, youth and families during the school break, 1,600 additional registered skating visits were offered, over and above the current public skating schedule at Minoru Arenas and Richmond Ice Centre.

Advanced Aquatic Courses

As a means to develop leadership skills and prepare youth for work opportunities, many youth participated in advanced aquatic training over spring break. Courses included Bronze Medallion, Bronze Cross, Water Safety Instructor, and National Lifeguard Pool and Waterpark Certification, which train youth for employment as lifeguards and swimming instructors. Six short format courses were offered during Spring Break allowing 73 students to advance their skills and prepare them for future employment.

Public Swimming

A popular way for children, youth, and families to be active together, over 14,000 people participated in pre-registered public swims at Minoru Centre for Active Living and Watermania during the two week break. Over 2,700 of the total public swim visits occurred at Watermania, which reopened to the public on the first Monday of Spring Break after being closed due to the pandemic.

Richmond Public Library

A variety of outdoor in-person and virtual Spring Break activities were offered, including Programming for Fun with Scratch, Springtime Storywalk®, Family Storytimes and an Among Us Tournament for youth. The Richmond Public Library's outdoor in-person activities reached 56 people and their virtual activities reached over 2,300 participants.

Testimonials

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 Spring Break 2021 program participants demonstrating the benefits to participating in these meaningful and impactful activities.

"Thank you so much for all the good work you and your team [in the Preschool Exploration Camp] are doing! Our family truly appreciates it, especially in these pandemic work-from-home days!" – Parent/guardian, Thompson Community Centre

"I love going to South Arm during Spring Break because it is the only way I can see my friends during COVID." – Camp participant, grade 1, South Arm Community Centre

"I really liked taking our art projects to do outside at the park. It was such a beautiful day!" – Camp participant, 9-12 years old, City Centre Community Centre

“My 5 year old daughter has been participating at the South Arm spring break program this year, and I cannot thank you enough for this incredible opportunity we had. Such a great relief for working parents and a great way to learn and stay active for children. I want to thank everyone for giving us a chance to be part of this great program and creating a safe and nurturing community.” – Parent/guardian, South Arm Community Centre

“I want to share that SACC Spring Break Programs are extremely important to my family. I am a frontline healthcare worker who works more than 40 hours a week, and my husband works in a production facility. We don't have the option to work from home. Knowing we can send [our son] safely to SACC for Spring Break is a huge relief to us both, allowing us to save our vacation time to spend with our kids in the summer. I know that he enjoys the variety of activities at SACC and is learning a lot of the foundational social and physical skills he needs. These are group learning opportunities we do not have at home.” – Parent/guardian, South Arm Community Centre

“[My daughter] LOVED the skating lessons and the camp. [She] has ADHD and ODD and it can be difficult to manage her impulsivity and self control but the staff were above and beyond accommodating and accepting with her. [She] enjoyed it so much that she asked to be signed up for the next session of skating lessons. I hope that they will keep offering lessons and programs like spring break.” – Parent/guardian, Arenas

“Taking aquatic leadership courses allows me to develop leadership skills that last forever and are transferable to different areas in life. Teaching swimming lessons is important because you can see the benefits you bring to a swimmers life and it brings a smile to your face. I enjoy these courses because it builds positive community relationships.” – Youth participant, Aquatics

“[My daughter] loved [the Springtime Storywalk®] so much that she walked the second round and told the story to her little brother by herself!” – Parent/guardian, Brighthouse Library

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

Richmond residents were offered a wide variety of opportunities to participate in healthy, fun and safe activities throughout Spring Break. In conjunction with our community partners, the City was able to deliver on key initiatives identified in Community Services strategic plans, ultimately working to make Richmond the most appealing, livable and well managed community in Canada.



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