



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee
From: Serena Lusk
Senior Manager, Recreation and Sport Services
Re: Summer 2017 Program Update

Date: August 31, 2017
File: 11-7000-01/2017-Vol 01

Staff Recommendation

That the staff report titled "Summer 2017 Program Update," dated August 31, 2017, from the Senior Manager, Recreation and Sport Services, be received for information.

for
Serena Lusk
Senior Manager, Recreation and Sport Services
(604-233-3344)

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Arts, Culture & Heritage Community Social Development Parks Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS: 	APPROVED BY CAO (DEPUTY)

Staff Report

Origin

The City's Summer 2017 programs span a nine-week period that coincide with the Richmond School District's break in classes. This education break is an opportunity for the City to promote healthy, active lifestyles for preschoolers, children and youth. Providing these opportunities for children and youth is an investment in the community, as these programs lay the foundation for overall well-being and transitioning into adulthood.

The programs and services offered during the summer session also meet multiple objectives related to Council-approved strategies including the Wellness Strategy, Social Development Strategy, Parks and Open Space Strategy, Arts Strategy, Museum and Heritage Strategy as well as Volunteer Management Plan.

This report supports Council's 2014-2018 Term Goal #2 A Vibrant, Active and Connected City:

Continue the development and implementation of an excellent and accessible system of programs, services, and public spaces that reflect Richmond's demographics, rich heritage, diverse needs, and unique opportunities, and that facilitate active, caring, and connected communities.

2.3. *Outstanding places, programs and services that support active living, wellness and a sense of belonging.*

2.4. *Vibrant arts, culture and heritage opportunities.*

This report provides information on the number of participants registered in programs and day camps offered by the City and its partners during Summer 2017. It also highlights the impact and successes of these programs through participant testimonials.

Analysis

The City's summer programs and day camps served more than 28,400 children and youth in 2017, a number consistent with previous years. The great variety of programs offered through all departments within Community Services provided opportunities for children of all ages to learn and develop skills in an area of their interest. Day camps serve two needs – they provide essential care for children whose parents are at work during the day and also provide a fun, active and engaging environment.

Not only do the participants benefit from a positive, healthy environment but so too do the program and camp facilitators, both staff and volunteers. The coming together of different age groups and roles fosters community connection and contributes to a vibrant city.

It doesn't matter if you attend camps as a child participating in programs, or as a volunteer or staff leader; you will leave camps having learned new things about yourself and your community, along with unforgettable memories.

-A participant, Volunteer and Thompson Community Centre Staff

Camps and Programs

The City and its partners offered a great selection of programs and day camps throughout the summer. A few examples of the fun and creative programs include *Superhero School*, *Creepy Crawlies*, *Maritime Treasure Hunt* and *Leadership Training*, as well as the more traditional programs such as painting, musical theatre and sports camps.

Table 1 below outlines program and day camp registration numbers broken down by age category. Total registration is essentially equal year over year, with a less than one per cent difference. These numbers indicate continued support and interest by the community in both day camps and programs across the Community Services Division. It is interesting to note that the number of participants in the programs has remained consistent at approximately 11,000 unique individuals for 2016 and 2017.

Table 1: Program and Day Camp Participation Rates

Age Group	Number of Registrants		Number of Day Camp Registrants	
	2016	2017	2016	2017
Preschoolers	5,178	5,011	1,509	1,440
Children	10,320	10,414	9,979	10,231
Youth	1,641	1,471	460	376
Total	17,139	16,896	11,948	12,047

Day camps and programs are essential avenues to foster learning, creativity and healthy, active lifestyles. The feedback below illustrates their great impact and success.

My daughter comes home happy and inspired every day this week.

-Parent, Arts programs

Jonathan really enjoyed his time at the Nature Park and learned a lot this summer. He always looked forward to the field trips each Friday, and all his footprints and crafts are displayed in his room carefully... we think the program is excellent, and you're all doing a great job educating children about nature and the environment.

-Parent, Nature Park

I have witnessed each day in programs how excited the kids are about the idea of cooking healthy snacks and meals, and they can't wait to show their family at pick-up what they did during the camp and how proud they are of what they have made that day.

-Recreation Leader, Sea Island Community Centre

Leadership Development

There are multiple opportunities to develop leadership skills during summer programs and day camps. Programs such as *Leadership Training* develop leadership skills in youth and provide mentorship opportunities. Both participants and program leaders benefit from the experience and learn from each other. These programs set the foundation for future life and career success, as illustrated by the quotes below:

Being a summer leader provides youth and young adults with the opportunity to build life skills that will help them in whatever they pursue, be it in recreation or other career paths. As a summer leader I gained invaluable experience which helped to develop superior communication, conflict resolution, time management, budgeting and leadership skills that have helped me in my life and career.

-Former Summer Camp Leader

It has been a wonderful experience watching our new (youth) leaders and instructors grow and develop their leadership skills throughout the summer. It reminds me how important recreation is and what it can do to build community.

-Recreation Leader, Sea Island Community Centre

Youth leadership team is my favourite experience because it involves planning, execution, and teambuilding.

-Youth

Volunteer Participation

For youth, the opportunity to volunteer allows them to learn, develop skills, mentor and be mentored, as well as have fun with people of all ages. The City provides opportunities to volunteer in various programs, camps and events. Volunteers were involved with 310 opportunities throughout the summer. As of August 28, 2017, volunteers provided nearly 17,000 hours of service, which enables many City events, activities and programs to operate.

Youth report the value of volunteer opportunities:

Making unexpected friends, meeting interesting people with interesting life experiences, and building connections with kids and seniors.

-Volunteer

Volunteering as an assistant swimming teacher was an experience that allowed myself to form connections with the children involved. Although a great deal of patience was needed, my hard work paid off when the children were able to improve and advance to the next level.

-Volunteer

Low Cost, No Cost Opportunities

Low cost and no cost programs are provided by the City and its partners as a way to reduce barriers and provide access to the numerous benefits of the programs and services. There were more than 60 free events, activities and programs offered throughout the summer.

Last summer's popular Swim and Skate All Summer pass was offered again this year. For \$19, children were able to access unlimited aquatic and arena drop-in sessions throughout the summer. This year, 2,648 people purchased the pass, a slight increase from 2016.

Neighbourhood Free Play is a City-wide outreach program offering free weekly programs with inclusive opportunities for children to be active, meet other children and engage in games, crafts, sports, reading and other fun activities. More than 600 children participated at nine locations across the City including a mix of parks, low income residential areas and community centres. The program has been well-received.

One of the special things about the program I did was making friends and playing with other kids.
-Participant

Excellent program!! My girls loved it and (the leader) was always welcoming and interacting with all kids, making sure all the kids were included. He did an amazing job. Thank you for offering this.
-Parent

The Playbox was available to the community through Thompson Community Centre for the first time this summer. The Playbox supplies games and sports equipment, and provides unlimited access and opportunity for families to get outdoors and engage with other families through active play. A Community Development Coordinator from Thompson Community Centre witnessed its positive impacts:

The Playbox has encouraged more outdoor play in our park. It is wonderful to see not just families, but our day camps and program users: playing soccer and badminton, throwing Frisbees, or taking turns jumping rope all while laughing and smiling! It's been a reassuring experience for our staff to witness the positive interactions with the Playbox and in a small way, the sense of community it is building.
-Community Development Coordinator, Thompson Community Centre

The learnings from the Avenues of Change research indicated a need for continued low cost and no cost opportunities for young children and their families living the City Centre area. Activities such as *Creative Play* and *Fun in Lang Park* offered through the City Centre Community Association provided opportunities for families to engage in activities and connect with others in their community.

Open Gym, Richmond Youth Media Program, Art after Dark and Nightshift for youth were other low and no cost programs offered throughout the summer. Activities such as geocaching and participating in the Sharing Farm's Social Club are just a few of the many free activities for all ages.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

Summer 2017 was a highly successful program season, engaging preschoolers, children and youth. The Community Services Division continues to offer quality programs and day camps to Richmond residents. As the many user testimonials indicate, community services programs are helping instill healthy, active lifestyle habits into children and laying the foundation for healthy adulthood and a vibrant community.



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