

INTRODUCTION

Recreation is an essential service in establishing and maintaining a healthy, livable community. Availability and accessibility to recreation opportunities contributes to effective crime prevention and reducing health care costs. Opportunities and facilities that promote physical and mental well being, bring citizens together in positive, supportive, and fun atmospheres, and create memorable experiences for families are primary in a positive future for our community.

By proactively approaching the future needs of a growing and aging population, recreation programs and facilities contribute to a healthy community. The physical, mental, environmental, and economic contributions are great and far-reaching.

Roughly 40% of the public has participated in a recreation or arts program offered by the City of Olympia during the past 12 months. The highest participation in recreation programs is by people in the age groups of 25 to 34 (50%), 55 to 64 (48.6%), and 10 to 14 (47.6%).

The most needed recreation programs, according to survey respondents, are organized sports, swimming activities and cultural arts activities.

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YOUTH PROGRAMS

The Youth Programs Division provides a safe, positive environment for Olympia's youth by offering a variety of quality recreational activities and self esteem building experiences. These opportunities include the Middle School After School Program, a free drop-in program offered in cooperation with the Olympia School District, summer and school break day camps that target elementary aged youth, year round outdoor adventure camps and trips, and special events such as Middle School Activity Nights.

Recreational opportunities focus on the development of positive, meaningful, nurturing, and supportive relationships between staff, youth, school administrators, teachers, custodial staff, parents, and other youth service agencies. Physical and emotional safety for all staff and participants is highly emphasized.

It is important to offer a diverse array of recreational opportunities that allow youth to explore, learn and develop social, physical and problem solving skills. In the After School Program this is accomplished by conducting the recreational components brought to each activity site by recreation leaders on a rotating schedule. Components include Outdoor Adventure Skills, Sports and Field Games, Fitness and Dance, Arts, Crafts, Cooking and Leadership Development and Community Service. In addition, field trips and special guests are regularly scheduled. Day camp programs also include similar components with field trips, swimming and tennis lessons available.

Population Served/Benefits

Youth between the ages of 6 and 14 years of age make up the primary target population for this program area. Day camp programs are appropriate for 6 to 11 years olds, with a Leader-In-Training option for youth 12 to 14 years old.

Many of the youth participants in the After School program would be considered latchkey youth, having no adult supervision between the hours of 2:30 PM and 6:00 PM. The benefits of these programs are preventative, offering positive recreation options during after school hours. Youth participants also have opportunities to associate with positive adult role models in supervised activities where they learn and practice appropriate behavior and build supportive relationships.

Day camp participants also have many of the same opportunities, interacting in positive social situations. They also explore and experience new recreational activities.

Facilities Needed

It is important to work closely with the Olympia School District and other local agencies to access facilities for the implementation of these programs. The After School program is most effective when operating on site at each of the respective middle schools. Access to gymnasiums, home economics rooms, weight rooms, cafeterias and play fields allow for diverse program activities.

Elementary schools are suitable and offer appropriate facilities for day camp activities. The Olympia Center is widely used during school break camps with the exception of summer camps. Art rooms, cooking facilities, gymnasiums, and outdoor park areas are important in offering well-rounded program activities.

Staff Needs

Competitive salaries and benefits are vital to recruiting and hiring quality staff. It is also imperative to have funding available for quality staff training opportunities. The public demands responsible, intelligent, resourceful, and caring individuals to supervise their children. To maintain safe and appropriate staffing ratios, 1:8 for day camps, 1:6 for adventure camps, and 1:12 for after school programs, additional staffing positions will be necessary as the youth program grows.

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quality staff.*

TEEN PROGRAMS

The Teen Recreation Program offers a wide range of activity choices for teens in the City of Olympia. A year round afternoon program consistently offers activities Monday through Friday. Late Night activities are offered on Fridays in conjunction with the afternoon program. Teens know that five days a week including almost every Friday night, a positive recreation alternative is available.



Teen Recreation Program Participants

Quality staff provides a listening ear and positive role models for teens. They also plan and present a wide menu of recreational activities for teens to choose from. The fun includes field trips for bowling and laser tag, professional sporting events, dances, ceramics, photography and art, kayaking and windsurfing, basketball and hacky sack tournaments, concerts and trips. Educational activities offered by local service agencies are also sponsored regularly. The Teen Recreation Program focuses on providing fun, diverse recreational activities in a safe and supportive environment.

Population Served

The teen program targets any interested teen in the City between the ages of 12-17, unless enrolled in high school. Since January 2000, 1,200 teens have registered for the program. On any given Friday, 150-200 teens seek safe and positive alternatives to parties and other high- risk activities. Staff work diligently to create an environment that honors,

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program.*

He that will make a good use of any part of his life must allow a large part of it for recreation.”

-John Locke

promotes and supports diversity. Olympia teens who need support, activity alternatives, or simply a safe place to spend their free time are welcomed at The Olympia Center, agreeing to respect themselves, the program, the staff, and other program participants.

Facilities Needed

Currently, the Teen Recreation Program is housed at The Olympia Center, a comprehensive recreation facility that hosts a wide range of populations and activities. Although the program has integrated well within The Olympia Center, unique challenges such as sharing space, maintaining a reasonable noise level, and accommodating the increasingly successful growth of the program are ever present.

Staff Needs

Competitive salaries and benefits are vital to recruiting and hiring quality staff. It is also imperative to have funding available for quality staff training opportunities. The public demands responsible, intelligent, resourceful, and caring individuals to supervise their youth and teen participants. With the anticipation of future program growth, additional staffing will be necessary to maintain safe and appropriate supervisory ratio of 1:20.



Hershey's Track & Field Participants

ATHLETIC PROGRAMS

The Athletic Program division provides a safe, organized and challenging environment for Olympia's citizens by offering a variety of quality leagues, tournaments, and classes. These opportunities include adult soccer, volleyball and basketball, martial arts, fitness programs and youth clinics and camps. In addition, athletic field allocations for the

City and Olympia School District are managed by the Athletic Program within the Department.

Population Served/Benefits

Adults between the ages of 18 and 50 years of age make up the primary target population for adult leagues. Youth sports camp and clinics are appropriate for 6 to 11 year olds.



Preschool Gymnastics Class

Adult athletics provides opportunities for fitness, competition, social interaction, and wellness. Indirect benefits include decreased long-term health care costs and economic opportunities and expenditures diverted to more leisure activities and sports related equipment. Other economic benefits directly impact the community with revenue resources from tournaments positively impacting local hotels, restaurants, and tourism services. Youth participants also have opportunities to associate with positive adult role models in supervised activities where they learn and practice skills, appropriate behavior and build supportive relationships.

Athletic field allocation management creates an opportunity for a comprehensive and diverse approach to usage. The by-product is a fair

and manageable system for field use that efficiently utilizes existing facility resources.

Facilities Needed

To meet the needs for future athletic programs, it will be important to work closely with the Olympia School District and other local agencies to provide facilities for these programs. The Adult Basketball and Volleyball leagues use middle school gymnasiums as well as The Olympia Center gymnasium.

The Adult Soccer programs take advantage of local school fields as well as Yauger Park during the fall, which provides lighted fields.

Staff Needs

Competitive salaries and benefits are vital to recruiting and hiring quality staff. It is also imperative to have funding available for quality staff training opportunities. The public demands responsible, intelligent, resourceful, and caring individuals to supervise and implement quality athletic programs, clinics, and tournaments.

“Recreation is not only for the time. Recreation is forever afterward. Each person has his memory chest.”

-Howard S. Braucher



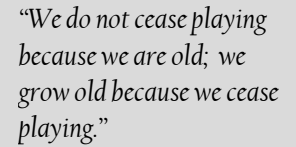
Ceramics Class Participant

LEISURE RECREATION CLASSES

Life long learning and recreational activities are taught through a variety of class offerings. Most of the leisure recreation classes are conducted at The Olympia Center. The offerings appeal to a population

of wide interests, skill level, and talents. Classes are available to youth, adults, and families and include art, dance, landscape design, languages, cooking, preschool, dog obedience, gymnastics, yoga, computer education, and investment. These opportunities introduce participants to new recreational activities as well as promote balance, relaxation and creative outlets for our citizens.

Under the leadership of the Parks, Arts & Recreation Department, the City should develop new programs and events to support the recreation activities that are most accessible to Olympia residents: bicycling and walking. The Department should sponsor leisure and moderate paced bicycle rides to help new riders gain strength and confidence for safe and independent riding. In addition, the City should support recreational walking and bicycling by developing maps that show the location of trails, routes, parks, and important interpretative and educational locations. The City should also consider bicycle safety and education programs for youth and adults in coordination with the Olympia Police Department and Transportation Division.



“We do not cease playing because we are old; we grow old because we cease playing.”

-Joseph Lee

Population Served/Benefits

All segments of the Olympia population are served through recreation classes and special events. Youth, teens, adults, families, and seniors have many opportunities to choose from. Scholarships are available to families and individuals that demonstrate financial need.

Promoting healthy lifestyles through positive and creative recreational opportunities benefits the entire community. Seniors engage in uplifting social interaction, vital to physical and emotional health, while continuing or learning new recreational skills. Youth and teens have opportunities to try new activities in a positive and supportive atmosphere while learning appropriate social skills. Adults enjoy continuing education opportunities, learning skills that empower them to become more self-sufficient, environmentally conscious, and physically and creatively active.

Facilities Needed

In anticipation of population growth, increased participant interest, and furthering skill development and activity offerings, additional recreation facilities are needed. While most classes are conducted at The Olympia Center, it does not have the capacity or functionality to host the current demand. Inappropriate flooring, classroom size, lighting and other aspects impair functional space. This impacts the cost effectiveness and quality of classes. Limited classroom space and building scheduling conflicts create waiting lists for popular classes, disappointing many would-be participants.

To meet the current as well as anticipated needs it is vital to work closely with other facilities operators, such as the Olympia School District and other local agencies to access facilities for the

implementation of these programs. While The Olympia Center offers a centrally located activity site, local schools offer more convenient and accessible activity sites for many other residents. Seniors and youth particularly will benefit greatly by establishing identified neighborhood educational facilities as community schools where recreational classes will be available. This concept also allows for the expansion of program schedules into after school hours during the school year and mornings during the summer. Schools offer complete and comprehensive recreational facilities with gymnasiums, art and music rooms, home economic rooms, computer labs, weight rooms, cafeterias and play fields.

More importantly, there is a need to build and maintain facilities that are dedicated solely to conducting a comprehensive recreation menu for all ages and interests levels.

Staff Needs

Competitive salaries and benefits are vital to recruiting and hiring quality staff, contractors, and instructors. It is imperative to have funding available for quality staff training opportunities. The public demands responsible, intelligent, resourceful, and caring individuals to teach and lead a variety of recreational classes.



Camp Runamuck

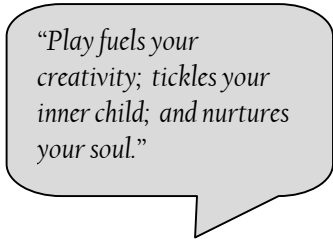
SPECIAL EVENTS

Community events promote family recreation and activities. Ethnic and cultural diversity is celebrated through dance and entertainment, food, art, crafts, and educational demonstrations. Youth activities include hands on projects, games, bubble gum blowing contests, petting zoos, and sensory and large motor skill activities. Families and adults enjoy a variety of music, dance and entertainment presentations. These events

are free to the public and sponsored largely by local businesses and sponsorship funding and in-kind services. For the community, special events is a time for people from all walks of life to come together celebrating, playing, and enjoying the vast recreational opportunities available.

Population Served/Benefits

All segments of the Olympia population are served through special events. Families and individuals have many opportunities to choose from. Families enjoy outings and experience a variety of recreational opportunities that they might otherwise not have access to due to limited finances, transportation or knowledge of resources. A sense of belonging to a vibrant community is a common thread throughout all of the events offered.



-Claudia Black

Staff Needs

Competitive salaries and benefits are vital to recruiting and hiring quality staff. It is imperative to have funding available for quality staff training opportunities. The public demands responsible, intelligent, resourceful and caring individuals to plan and implement a variety of special events. In addition, support staff are needed to assist with set up, supervision and take down of events.

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE PROGRAMS

Olympia and the surrounding area host a tremendous number of outdoor recreation resources. Opportunities to learn about and enjoy land and water activities only require organization and programming. Muscle-powered recreational activities available include sailing, windsurfing, hiking, mountain biking, skiing, whale watching, snow shoeing, rock climbing, and beach exploring.

Population Served/Benefits

Seniors and adults enjoy mid-week or weekend activities where they get outdoors, experience positive social interactions, and engage in physical activities. A chance to explore and participate in a variety of outdoor settings - city, county, state and national parks, wildlife refuge areas, and rivers, bays, and lakes - all offer pristine natural environments for relaxing and invigorating experiences.

Youth and teens explore a variety of outdoor skill development and educational opportunities through Outdoor Adventure Camps and Adventure Days. Camp activities include theme camps, such as rock climbing, mountain biking, sailing, or beach exploration and play, or a variety of combined activities such as hiking, sea kayaking, and rock climbing. Older youth can develop outdoor leadership skills through Adventure Leadership Challenge camps. Skills and instruction in

INFRASTRUCTURE AS ART!



Photo: Carl Cook

Integrating Function, Aesthetics & Metaphor

The Indian Creek Stormwater Treatment Facility was constructed in 2001 as a result of a unique collaboration between the City of Olympia Public Works Department, the Olympia Arts Commission, artist Elizabeth Conner, local Tribes and the Washington State Dept. of Transportation. Although the primary role of this facility is to clean stormwater runoff from Interstate 5, its unique design also integrates public art with the functional aspects of stormwater treatment and slope stabilization. Walking trails, landscape and views of the stormwater cleansing process transform this facility into a publicly accessible site that support creative solutions, discovery and education.

outdoor trip logistics, map and compass, outdoor cooking, low-impact camping, wilderness first aid and trip planning are the primary focus. Team building and leadership skill development enhances the camp activities.

Families enjoy winter sleigh rides, summer wagon train treks, up close tours to wildlife animal parks, and river raft trips. These offer unique and exciting experiences that strengthen and bind families to each other. These activities offer informal educational opportunities, social interaction, and exploration of the outstanding outdoor resources available.

Additional benefits include increased environmental and wildlife habitat awareness. Outdoor recreation enthusiasts that are educated and aware of their impact on wetlands, waterways, and trails contribute a great deal to protection, preservation and enhancement of outdoor resources. Citizens who participate in outdoor activities advocate and protect the very resources they use. This further contributes to an overall healthy community.

Economic benefits extend from local businesses benefiting from the sale of outdoor gear and equipment to local state and national parks. Park and trail user fees bring in revenue from entrance fees, backcountry permits, snow park permits, and some trail fees.

The physical, social, and emotional benefits participants gain from these activities are life long and far reaching. Mentoring and educating future outdoor stewards guarantees that local resources will be available for generations to come. The outdoor environment offers diverse classroom settings for informal education, appropriate settings for a variety of recreational activities - an exceptional atmosphere for uplifting, refreshing, and invigorating the mind and body.

Facilities Needed

While most outdoor activities are conducted in outdoor settings, there is a need for access to indoor facilities. Rock climbing gyms, swimming pools, and classroom space allows for conducting introductory classes related to rock climbing, kayaking, SCUBA diving, and outdoor cooking. Slide presentations and hands on activities such as knot tying, winter clothing and wilderness first aid classes require indoor facilities as well. Many activities and classes are held at local parks with limited shelter available in the event of inclement weather.

Sailing and windsurfing classes and camps are interrupted due to bad weather. With additional indoor facilities available alternative activities related to the camps or classes would allow for uninterrupted continuation of these programs.

Staff Needs

Outdoor recreation participant interest and skill level continues to increase, creating a demand for more opportunities for youth, teens, seniors, adults, and families. To meet this demand additional staffing is required. An Outdoor Adventure Recreation Coordinator will allow for the required research, planning, development and implementation of additional outdoor opportunities for the community. Pre-trips to new activity areas including the Cascade Marine trail for kayaking/camping, Capitol Forest trails for hiking and mountain biking, numerous state and national parks trails for hiking and backpacking as well as special tours such as Family Christmas tree cutting outings require additional hours for quality activities.

Trip leaders and staff who specialize in and meet standard certification requirements are needed to maintain safe and quality programs. Staffs who relate well to youth, teens, seniors, and families are necessary to conduct successful activities. Ratios for youth adventure camps are 1:6 while adult and family trips are 1:12.

Competitive salaries and benefits are vital to recruiting and hiring quality staff, contractors, and instructors. It is imperative to have funding available for quality staff training opportunities on an on-going basis. The public demands responsible, intelligent, resourceful, safety-conscious, and caring individuals to teach and lead outdoor adventure recreation classes, camps, and trips.

Conclusion

Public recreational programming is vital to a healthy community. The mental and physical well being of our citizens ensures vibrant, supportive, and safe neighborhoods. Nurturing our youth and supporting our family structure is the most cost-effective approach to crime prevention. Individuals - youth, adults, and seniors who feel nurtured gain a sense of belonging, make great contributions, and invest in their communities.

Public recreational programming is vital to a healthy community.

FUTURE NEEDS/CHALLENGES

Budget Resources

To meet the level of service demand by anticipated increased participation in youth and family activities, additional budget resources are necessary. Adult programs are currently and will continue to remain self-supporting.

Facilities

A shared vision of recreational programming by the Olympia School District with an enhanced or increased level of cooperation is needed to

meet the community’s needs. Schools that function as satellite or neighborhood recreation centers after school hours between 3 and 10 p.m. will allow for the expansion, availability, and accessibility of recreation programs to a larger segment of citizens. After school youth recreation programs, classes for seniors, adults, and families, and sports programs all will benefit by this shared vision.

Modifications to The Olympia Center building are also necessary. It is currently identified as a rental facility, senior center, youth center, and for recreation classes. However, limits of space, room configuration, flooring, and availability limit its use as a recreation center.

The lack of a local community aquatic facility greatly inhibits recreational program offerings. Day camps and youth programs have limited access to local YMCA pools or others operated by outside agencies. Swimming lessons, water aerobics, pool sports, competitive swimming and open swim opportunities are in high demand. Outdoor adventure programs also will be enhanced with access to pool facilities for introductory or educational purposes.

Outdoor athletic facility needs include lighted full sized, year round soccer fields. Tournament level softball and soccer fields also will allow for additional recreational opportunities as well as increase the quality of participation and improve safe playing conditions.

With population forecasts showing an aging and growing population, the future of recreation in Olympia needs to be addressed. Either specific recreation facilities must be built or future school facilities need to be designed and built with the intent of meeting this future deficit.

Transportation

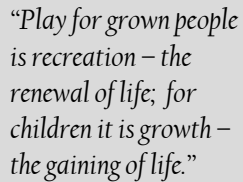
Limited availability of adequate program transportation negatively impacts program quality. Currently transportation is accessed through renting or leasing state, county, and private vehicles. Not only is the situation cost-prohibitive it also is often unreliable. To better serve program participants and enhance youth programs, camps, outdoor adventures, and classes, reliable transportation is needed.

Costs

The costs to run quality programs include: 1) staffing and training; 2) supplies and materials; 3) photocopies and binding; 4) uniforms and identification; 5) consumable supplies; 6) equipment; 7) transportation and fuel; 8) admission fees; 9) expert services and/or contractors; 10) marketing and promotion; and 11) photography.

Outdoor Adventure Programs

The costs to run quality outdoor adventure programs include: 1) staffing and training; 2) supplies and materials; 3) photocopies and binding; 4) uniforms and identification; 5) consumable supplies; 6)



“Play for grown people is recreation – the renewal of life; for children it is growth – the gaining of life.”

-Joseph Lee

equipment; 7) expert services and/or contractors; 8) marketing and promotion; 9) photography; and 10) and consistent, reliable, and available transportation for camps and trips.

Equipment needs are numerous based upon the initial program purpose of offering introductory outdoor activities. Many participants do not own or have access to the variety of outdoor gear related to selected activities and would not expect to purchase the gear until deciding to more aggressively pursue certain activities. Equipment and gear needs include snow shoes, cross country ski equipment, kayaks, canoes, and related gear, wind surfboards, binoculars, camp stoves, backpacks, tents, and mountain bikes. In order to properly maintain quality gear and equipment these items should be scheduled for replacement every 3 to 5 years.

The greatest challenge is in securing appropriate transportation means. Outdoor camps and trips are often limited due to the lack of appropriate transportation. Transportation needs include multiple 15-passenger vans with trailer hitch capacity and racks for storage containers. A kayak/canoe trailer, bicycle trailer, and enclosed gear trailer are also needed to provide quality activities.



Canine Good Citizenship Class Participant