



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: August 28, 2013

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Recreation Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Neighborhood and Outreach Services' Community Kitchen and Culinary Programs

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receive a presentation on the Westside Community Kitchen, Culinary Programs, and proposed Food Production Academy.

DISCUSSION:

In December 2012, a \$41,000 grant from the Orfalea Foundation was awarded to the Parks and Recreation Community Foundation for use by the Parks and Recreation Department to develop the community kitchen at the Westside Neighborhood Center and fund a wide range of culinary programs. Over the last seven months, funds have been used to pay hourly salaries and culinary program operational expenses, purchase kitchen equipment, and to partially cover costs associated with kitchen upgrades required by the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department.

Community Kitchen

For approximately 15 years, the kitchen at the Westside Neighborhood Center has served as the business site for a single catering company and was not maintained to commercial kitchen industry standards. Along the South Coast, commercial kitchens are a scarce commodity, and sought by both for-profit and non-profit entities. Recognizing the potential for both public culinary and nutrition programs, and use as a shared commercial kitchen space, Neighborhood and Outreach Services applied to the Orfalea Foundation for a grant to tackle the obvious opportunity. The goal was to make the kitchen self-sustaining where staff, programs, services, equipment, and supplies would be supported by annual revenue generated, thus building a commercial venture with public benefit.

After negotiating a phased-in change from a single business lease to an hourly kitchen reservation by facility permit, renovation began by clearing out rooms full of storage, and cleaning the facility from top to bottom. Staff worked with the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department to determine kitchen needs to correct violations and receive a commercial kitchen health permit. The refrigeration and freezer have been repaired. A deep fat fryer has been removed and an ice maker installed. These expenses have been covered by the Orfalea Foundation grant funds and the City's Public Works Department. Cooking

and serving equipment has been purchased and a new rent structure, policies, user requirements, and monitor checklists have been developed to facilitate kitchen rental.

The rehabilitation of the kitchen offers the opportunity for greater facility income through fees from catering of events, commercial kitchen use by small businesses, and conducting cooking programs of interest to the public. Realistic projections indicate a tripling of revenue over historical figures (when there was only one catering company taking advantage of this public space).

Feed Your Family Right (FYFR)

Also funded through the Orfalea Foundation grant, FYFR is a multi-generational program designed to encourage intentional shopping, cooking, and eating where basic cooking instruction is paired with nutritional education. Participants are introduced to healthy ingredients and healthful methods of cooking. Participants were recruited from an existing Westside Neighborhood Center after-school tutoring program sponsored by the Santa Barbara School of Squash (SBSOS). In collaboration with SBSOS, participants received academic, physical, and nutritional instruction.

The pilot program recruited 12 Westside resident families with youth in 4th to 7th grades and at least one accompanying parent, to participate in eight weeks of culinary instruction beginning mid-April and ending in June. The parents and youth were very enthusiastic about the program, as demonstrated by their retention and excellent attendance, averaging 20 to 25 individuals per week. Weekly instruction was provided by Chef JP Luvanvi with coordination and support provided by part-time Recreation Specialist Mark Sherman. The grant has also supported the employment of an at-risk teen, which, under the supervision of Mark Sherman, is learning valuable culinary and commercial kitchen maintenance skills. The teen is being mentored to finish his GED and enroll at Santa Barbara City College (SBCC). A second teen has been added to the program to help in the garden, and with kitchen maintenance.

The Orfalea Foundation has pledged to provide an instructor for the second series of classes to begin with the new school year this fall in collaboration with SBSOS.

La Cuesta Continuing Education & Catering Corp

After approval of a recent MOU between the Santa Barbara Unified School District (SBUSD) and the City, the Westside Neighborhood Center is now home to the La Cuesta Continuing Education program. The addition of students receiving school instruction at the site has provided a natural expansion of the culinary program into academic job training of food service skills. The new Catering Corp program will include practical experience under the watchful and knowledgeable eye of a select group of catering professionals. The classroom instruction includes coursework leading to a food handler's ServSafe certificate. The final curriculum is under development to satisfy requirements for a culinary certification acceptable to the SBUSD and possibly, SBCC.

Non-Profit Culinary Training

Other training at the kitchen was conducted by a tenant of the Westside Center, UCP/Work Inc., for kitchen and life skills training, and by the Orfalea Foundation for training neighborhood health advocates. There is interest from other community partners to utilize the kitchen for trainings, education, and fundraising.

Future Programming

Neighborhood and Outreach Services has submitted a second grant to the Santa Barbara Foundation to help support and further expand on our successes. Our goal is to create the Food Production Academy, which will utilize the kitchen and community gardens for job training, entrepreneurial incubation, nutrition, gardening, and culinary education. The grant proposal outlines programs to strengthen our current offerings which target at-risk teens and families, and further expand with the creation of new program, "Cottage Industry Preparatory Course" aimed at launching food entrepreneurs. This course will provide instruction in food preservation, safe food-handling, and food preparation in accordance with the newly instituted Homemade Food Act to preserve the garden bounty. Eventually, the programs would be expanded to Eastside residents near the Franklin Neighborhood Center, and further develop partnerships with health, education, and commercial entities in Santa Barbara.

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