



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: April 25, 2012

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Recreation Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: City Sponsored Egg Hunts and Recognition of Volunteers

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receives a presentation on the City Egg Hunts and recognizes community volunteers and organizations for their service and donations.

DISCUSSION:

Through the efforts of Neighborhood and Outreach Services and the Youth Activities sections, two fun-filled, free community Egg Hunts take place in our City Parks. These two events occur in Parque de los Niños and the Great Meadow at Chase Palm Park, serving hundreds of children. Annually on a Saturday in spring, families and friends gather to experience our parks, celebrate spring, and hunt for chocolate eggs and other goodies.

Egg Hunt at Parque de los Niños

The Neighborhood and Outreach Services staff, Neighborhood Advisory Council, and neighborhood volunteers have provided the annual Egg Hunt at Parque del los Niño's in the Lower Westside neighborhood for the past several years. This annual event brings many families and children, a majority of which are low income with very limited resources, to the park for a morning of fun activities. This year, the Neighborhood Advisory Council was joined by members of the Parks and Recreation Commission, Santa Barbara Youth Council, the Village, Boys and Girls Club West, and the Santa Barbara Police Officers Association (POA), to provide over 400 Easter eggs filled with candies and special prizes for over 200 children. This event was made possible through donations from such organizations as the Unity Shoppe, Santa Barbara Rape Crisis Center, and the Police Officer's Association, as well individual donations. A special thanks to Parks and Recreation Commissioner Chris Casebeer for spearheading the fundraising for this event! Senior and youth volunteers from the Louise Lowry Davis Center helped fill the colorful eggs with candies and prize-winning golden tickets. Donations provided 25 drawing prizes that included candy-filled egg baskets. Adding to the excitement of this special day, Mr. Bunny was on hand to greet the young children and pose for pictures.

Eggstravaganza at Chase Palm Park Great Meadow

Since April 1999, the first year the Eggstravaganza took place at the newly expanded Chase Palm Park, this annual event has hosted as many as 400 children (from toddlers to eight year olds) in four separate hunt areas. The hunts take place in the Great Meadow where eager gatherers with keen eyes wait for the signal to start. This year Mayor Pro Tem Frank Hotchkiss provided the countdown, and at 10:00 am Sgt. Mike McGrew revved up his motorcycle and thrilled the children with his siren signaling the start of the mad dash. With music playing in the background, children scrambled over the berm to a sea of colored eggs and chocolate. The City Fire Fighter (FFA) and Police Officer Associations have provided significant support to fund this event. The Associations contribute equally to purchase chocolate eggs and candy. The POA brings barricades and equipment for the event set-up and the FFA each year brings a fire engine, allowing children to climb inside the cab for pictures with the bunny. Plastic fire hats are provided for gathering eggs and both police and fire fighter badges are handed out to the children. Adding to the excitement of this special day, Mr. Bunny was on hand to greet the young children and pose for pictures.

Bunny Volunteers

Since April 2009, Scott McGregor, "The Bunny", has been a hoppy and willing volunteer at the Chase Palm Park Eggstravaganza taking the special role to a new level. With the help of trusted high school assistants, Scott quietly dons the large white suit, a heavy head, large teeth and set of pink ears, and is eager to please hundreds of children. During the Eggstravaganza, Scott pats heads, hugs excited children, holds babies and provides a special Bunny character in numerous bunny photo opportunities. Similarly, thanks go out to The Village for providing Mr. Bunny for the Parque de los Niños egg hunt event. These special volunteers bring smiles to young faces and make the day one to remember for years to come.

It's with tremendous gratitude that the Parks and Recreation Department recognizes the numerous volunteers and organizations that contribute to two events. Without their assistance and support, City Egg Hunts would not be possible.

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