



## CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

### PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** January 23, 2013

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission

**FROM:** Recreation Division, Parks and Recreation Department

**SUBJECT:** Neighborhood and Outreach Services' Food Distribution Program

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Commission receive a presentation on the Food Distribution Program.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

The food distribution program is made up of two types of distribution; fresh produce (Farmers Market) and packaged food (Food Pantry). Beginning in 1997, the program started as a Farmers Market providing produce to low income families at the Lower Westside Community Center. The program targeted residents of this densely populated neighborhood eventually growing to include the Westside and Eastside neighborhoods by 2007 and operating at the Franklin, Westside, and Davis Neighborhood Centers.

The program is provided through a three pronged approach: a partnership with the FoodBank of Santa Barbara County for food, a volunteer workforce to implement the distribution, and department staff to provide the program coordination and training. The City also provides facility use and tables for set up. Open to anyone living within the City of Santa Barbara, participants need only to provide their name, address, and household size for statistical and tracking information.

During the Fiscal Year 2012, Neighborhood and Outreach Services has helped to provide food to over 12,900 families through partnership with the FoodBank and assistance from community volunteers. The 265,000 pounds of food provided during the distributions has a value of \$42,500. The monetary value of the 2,080 volunteer hours logged has a value of \$24,960 in volunteer service.

#### Food Distribution Dates, Times & Locations:

- Parque de los Niños
  - 1st Tuesday, 1:30 pm - Food Pantry
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday, 1:30 pm - Farmers Market
- Westside Neighborhood Center – Every Monday 1:00 pm - Farmers Market
- Louise Lowry Davis Center - Every Monday 1:00 pm - Farmers Market

Agenda Item: 5

- Franklin Neighborhood Center
  - Every Thursday, 1:00 pm - Farmers Market
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday, 1:30 pm - Food Pantry

The food distribution program has faced several challenges through the years including gathering volunteers for annual trainings, maintaining a consistent group of sufficiently trained volunteers, and providing a safe and equitable environment for food distribution. Staff is currently looking for a permanent indoor space in which to hold the Lower Westside distribution, which was displaced by the closure of the Lower Westside Center a few years ago. Though Parque de los Niños is a nice space, an indoor space is preferable.

Staff finds success in outstanding dedicated volunteers, how a simple program has the ability to reach almost 13,000 needy families and their ability to meet the sustained growth that peaked during the economic downturn of recent years. Staff invites the Commission to stop by a distribution and share in the success.

**PREPARED BY:** Mark Alvarado, Neighborhood and Outreach Services Senior Supervisor

**SUBMITTED BY:** Sarah Hanna, Recreation Programs Manager

**APPROVED BY:** Nancy L. Rapp, Parks and Recreation Director