



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: February 27, 2013

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Recreation Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Inclusion Program

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receive a presentation on the Inclusion Program.

DISCUSSION:

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is a law enacted by the U.S. Congress to establish a clear and comprehensive prohibition of discrimination on the basis of disability. The ADA is a wide ranging civil rights law that affords protection to individuals with "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity." For recreation services, implementation of the ADA provides individuals with reasonable accommodations for equal enjoyment of recreation programs, and facilities.

The Recreation Division's inclusion program is designed to lift discrimination barriers, and provide opportunities for children and adults with disabilities to attend camps, clinics, sport leagues, afterschool programs, and activities offered by the Parks and Recreation Department. The goal is for participants to have an enjoyable recreation experience with the support they need, where they can interact and socialize with peers of all abilities in a safe and fun environment.

Inclusion participants may require special accommodation to access recreation programs due to physical, medical (seizures, asthma, moderate to severe allergies, diabetes, etc.), developmental (autism, down's syndrome, cerebral palsy), or emotional behavioral disabilities (Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)).

How the Inclusion Program Works

The Inclusion Coordinator reviews all activity registration forms where the parent or participant has indicated "yes" in the health or special needs area. An assessment of the participant's health or special needs is conducted to determine what level of accommodation is required. Accommodation varies from no additional support or special accommodation needed, to assigning additional staff support. In many cases,

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supplemental information is obtained from the participant's parent/legal guardian in order to better serve and understand the child's needs while attending the program. A formal Assessment Team meeting may be required in order to develop a support plan to promote optimum success and safety. The Assessment Team may include any of the following staff: Inclusion Coordinator, Registered Nurse, Host Program Director, Recreation Supervisor, Inclusion Support Staff assigned to the participant as well as the participant, their parent/legal guardian, their private aid, and other staff as needed. After the meeting, a written protocol is developed to identify proactive and reactive support strategies for recreation staff to implement. The Inclusion Coordinator then visits the program site to review pertinent information with staff, provide for program quality monitoring, ongoing staff feedback, and hands on training opportunities.

After proper assessment, most children are able to join in the activity for which they are registered. Exceptions to this may occur if participation in the program would jeopardize an individual's safety or if accommodation(s) would require a fundamental alteration of the activity itself. Participants that require the highest level of support are typically those with developmental disabilities or emotional behavioral disorders who exhibit moderate to severe challenging behavior at times. Individuals with these diagnoses may have difficulty with impulse control (i.e. running away at non-opportune times), transitioning from one activity to another or communicating their wants and needs (i.e. tantrum when fearful, angry or frustrated). These participants may require additional staff support to facilitate social interactions with peers, and to navigate through the day-to-day program activities due to auditory processing and/or motor differences. In most cases, the assessment process identifies triggers to challenging behavior and staff is able to change the environment in order to promote positive behavior outcomes.

Some of these individuals are new to our programs and have never attended camp before; their success hinges on the comprehensive assessment, multi-section staff involvement, and frequent contacts made by the Inclusion Coordinator with the family and outside agencies (i.e. special education teachers, counselors, case managers supporting the child). A significant effort is made to provide additional specialized training to staff about medical needs such as asthma, severe allergic reactions, and diabetes. In addition, a large percentage of participants diagnosed with ADD or ADHD are, in most cases, successfully supported by the Host Program staff.

Participation Numbers

The table below illustrates the inclusion participation trends in summer programs and the Recreation Afterschool Program over the last seven years. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2006, 314 individuals were assessed for disability, medical, or behavioral concerns and 27 individuals were identified as requiring inclusion staff support. During Fiscal Year 2012

there where over 450 individuals assessed and 81 individuals were provided with inclusion staff support. This change represents a 200% increase of inclusion participants served.

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Individuals supported	27	31	38	25	39	53	81

Inclusion Program Budget

The Inclusion Program is coordinated by a .8 FTE Recreation Coordinator (who is called the Inclusion Coordinator). This position and support staff hourly salaries and benefits (\$67,000 in Fiscal Year 2013) are budgeted in Youth Activities, yet the benefits of inclusion services are spread throughout the Recreation Division to support all programs and participants. Participants pay the same activity fee; no additional fees are charged to receive inclusion support.

Strengths and Challenges

The City's Inclusion Program policies and procedures have been recognized as a model for other municipalities and service providers. The Assessment Team, now in its tenth full year, has been able to build on past knowledge and experience in order to streamline systems during tough budget times while continuing to provide the highest program quality and level of customer service that the City embodies. Participants have achieved a greater level of success due to the Assessment Team process which identifies needs and strategies ahead of time, as well as, specific training needs in relation to specific disability types.

The Inclusion Program is heavily dependent on a multitude of supplemental medical forms. Information received from the supplemental forms gives the Assessment Team crucial information that is shared with the Camp or Site Director, and the recreation leaders providing the supervision of the participant. Parents of participants do not always disclose that their child has a special need or they may not return the required supplemental forms in a timely manner. This area continues to be one of the biggest challenges facing the Inclusion staff followed by the steady increase in participants served, and the complexity of supporting numerous programs going on simultaneously during the summer months.

From year to year, it is impossible to predict the exact number of staff that will be required to support the number of inclusion participants identified as needing extra supervision. This makes it difficult for planning staff resources. The Department is fortunate to have a small team of experienced Inclusion Support Staff who work closely with the Inclusion Coordinator to ensure that participants who need support are accommodated. In addition,

the support received from other program areas (i.e. Aquatics, Sports, Tennis and Active Adults) has been instrumental to the program's success. Recreation Supervisors from these programs have been very involved in the Assessment Team process and help to ensure that appropriate staffing and resources are in place to support the inclusion participants who are enrolled in their programs.

The inclusion philosophy has been embraced by all Department staff (from inclusion support staff, to hourly recreation leaders, directors, supervisors, outside contractors, managers, clerical and other administrative positions). Our training motto is that "inclusion is **EVERYONE'S** responsibility". The Assessment Team members have developed close working relationships with many of the inclusion participant families, schools, and other outside support agency representatives, which help facilitate a proactive, planning approach. Using a multi-disciplinary **team** approach ensures that we are doing everything in our power to promote the participant's success in our programs.

ATTACHMENTS: Inclusion Assessment Forms

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