



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: February 24, 2016
TO: Parks and Recreation Commission
FROM: Recreation Division, Parks and Recreation Department
SUBJECT: Santa Barbara Arts Alliance Program Report

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receives a presentation regarding the Santa Barbara Arts Alliance program and recognizes the youth participants and adult mentors currently part of the program.

DISCUSSION:

Background

The Santa Barbara Arts Alliance program is a free art-based mentoring program that provides leadership and life skills development opportunities through hands-on service projects. The program allows youth to take lead roles in developing, planning and implementing service projects, including graffiti abatement, neighborhood clean-ups, and the creation and installation of murals in public spaces previously plagued by graffiti vandalism. The program is based at the Franklin Neighborhood Center and is held after school from 3:00 - 6:30 pm, Monday through Friday with occasional weekend projects.

The program was started in the summer of 2005 after the Department received a \$3,000 grant from the Santa Barbara County Arts Commission for the restoration of the existing murals at Ortega Park. Staff involved low-income and underserved youth from the surrounding neighborhoods in the restoration of the four existing murals with such great success that parents and youth requested the City continue the program on a year-round basis.

Eleven years later, the program serves approximately 50 youth, aged 13-21, annually. Staff target youth meeting any one of the following criteria:

- Youth living in communities exposed to violence and poverty
- Youth with a family history of violence and incarceration
- Youth with a history of participating in graffiti vandalism
- Youth at risk of being on probation or on probation

- Youth at risk of dropping out of school and/or having poor academic performance and attendance

In addition to creating original murals and individual art projects, youth participate in scheduled neighborhood cleanups. Program staff and participants partner with Looking Good Santa Barbara via the Adopt A Block program and have adopted neighborhoods in the Lower Eastside, Lower Westside, and the Milpas Street business corridor for ongoing clean-ups and graffiti abatement activities. The group participates in four Looking Good Santa Barbara official cleanups a year earning up to \$500 for each cleanup with 20 youth and adults working a four-hour day. Monies earned go back to support the program.

One of the key components to the success of this program is the Artist Mentors who share similar backgrounds with program participants and understand the social pressures of poverty, crime, gangs, tagging crews, and potential for youth violence. Adult mentors work directly with the youth and are able to connect and inspire them, providing fun skill-building art activities that help youth overcome their insecurities and build confidence. Mr. Carlos Cuellar was the founding Artist Mentor (2005-2012), and Mr. Manuel Unzueta, a well-known local artist and muralist has been involved in the program since 2008. In 2012, Miss Annette Unzueta (Manuel's daughter) joined the program. Each has made their positive mark on this program. Currently, Miguel Rodriguez and Danny Meza, two former program participants, take lead roles as Artist Mentors. Miguel and Danny are committed and passionate about working with youth in the Department's prevention efforts. Having once been program participants, they are now able to give back to a program that has given them so much.

Murals created by Santa Barbara Arts Alliance

To date, program participants and their artist mentors have created 29 murals, including:

1. 2005, "Blue Whale", Ortega Park Swimming Pool
2. 2007, "Coatlicue", Ortega Park
3. 2008, "La Misión" (Plexiglás), El Puente School
4. 2008, "Mayan Symbols", Ortega Park Stage
5. 2008, "Neighborhood Sports", Ortega Park
6. 2008, "Niño del Maíz", Ortega Park
7. 2008, "Playa", Ortega Park
8. 2009, "Jaguar", Eastside Park
9. 2009, "Los Sembradores", Eastside Park
10. 2010, "Postcards of Travel" (plywood/temporary), Santa Barbara Airport
11. 2011, "Diversity", Bohnett Park
12. 2011, "Mayan Ball Players", Bohnett Park
13. 2011, "Peace Around the World, Bohnett Park
14. 2012, "Children at Play", Westside Boys & Girls Club
15. 2012, "Rise Above", Bohnett Park

16. 2012, "Santa Barbara Beach", Bohnett Park
17. 2012, "Sea Scape", Westside Neighborhood Center
18. 2012, "We are Champions", Westside Boys & Girls Club
19. 2013 "Rainbow Bridge", Santa Barbara Junior High School
20. 2013 "Vans World", Westside Neighborhood Center
21. 2013, "Chumash Channel Crossing", Eastside Park
22. 2013, "Libraries Where Adventures Begin", Eastside Library
23. 2013, "Mayan Symbols", Franklin Neighborhood Center
24. 2013, "Quetzalcoatl", Franklin Neighborhood Center
25. 2013, "Sciences Mural", Santa Barbara Junior High School
26. 2014, "Firebird", La Cuesta High School
27. 2014, "Chumash", Cleveland Elementary School
28. 2015, "Honoring Our Veterans", Santa Barbara Veterans Hall
29. 2015, "La Catrina" (plywood/temporary) Día de Los Muertos, Santa Barbara Bowl
30. 2016, Ladera & Coronel Street – In progress

Awards and Recognitions Received

Since its inception, the program has received a number of awards and recognition of which both participants and staff are very proud. They include:

1. 2011 Special Congressional Recognition from Congresswoman Lois Capps
2. 2011 Spirit of Service Award 2011, Looking Good Santa Barbara
3. 2012 Hugh Peterson Award, Seascape Park Murals, Santa Barbara Beautiful.
4. 2013 Hugh Peterson Award, Eastside Mural, Santa Barbara Beautiful.
5. 2016 National Award for Local Arts Leadership - The U.S. Conference of Mayors recognized Santa Barbara Mayor Helene Schneider with the National Award for Local Arts Leadership at the Mayors' winter meeting in Washington, D.C. Jan. 25, 2016. The Santa Barbara Arts Alliance played a major role in this recognition.

Annual Budget

The cost to run the Santa Barbara Arts Alliance program is approximately \$17,600 annually. Funds are used to pay the hourly artist mentors who work directly with the program participants and to cover the cost of program supplies (paint, brushes, etc.) The General Fund provides in-kind salary support for staff member Ricardo Venegas, Neighborhood and Outreach Coordinator II, to coordinate the program.

Since 2005, the program has been supported with annual grants from the Santa Barbara County Arts Commission and Human Services funding from the City of Santa Barbara. A small number of donations have also been received from individuals and groups in addition to in-kind contributions from local businesses.

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