

**Superintendent's Report
Parks and Seattle Center Committee
Sept. 2, 2010**

Part I: Youth Job Readiness Programs and Youth Employment

Parks plays an important role in providing job readiness opportunities for youth. Through these opportunities, youth provide valuable services to Seattle's citizens while learning about workplace expectations, developing marketable skills and applying their education to "hands-on" experiences. These opportunities also provide positive activities and prevent youth from engaging in anti-social behaviors.

National research and local teen voices emphatically agree on the importance of meaningful job training which leads to real employment as one key factor which keeps teens in school. Specialists in juvenile crime prevention also testify to the importance of providing teen with legitimate opportunities to make money, and public health research shows that teens who work as well as attend school have lower rates of teen pregnancy.

We typically have more interest in these programs than we have funding to sponsor. We have submitted a BIP requesting to expand the program.

Youth Engaged in Service (YES)

YES! -- is a summer volunteer, leadership development and civic engagement program for youth 13 to 18 years of age. YES participants volunteer 120 hours over a 6-week period during the summer. The majority of YES youth are placed at Seattle Parks and Recreation facilities or programs including, but limited to: Community Centers, Environmental Learning Centers, City Wide Athletics, and the South Lake Union building. YES participants were also placed at selected non-profits: Center for Wooden Boats and Rainier Historical Society. This year, we have 55 youth participating in the program. They do 120 hours of service, and receive \$150 honorarium.

TATU – Teens against Tobacco Use – YES Program (funded by the Teens Giving Back Grant)

In partnership with Teen Signature Programs, YES participants ages 13 – 18 receive training from the American Heart and Lung Association around the dangers of tobacco use. Participants create skits, monologues, and materials to present at various community center day camps, playground programs, community festivals and fairs. These youth participate in job training workshops and a community service work party during their 6 weeks of service. Upon completion of their 120 hrs of service, participants receive a \$150 stipend. Ten teens participate in this program each summer.

Student Youth Employment Program (SYEP)

Although this program is run through the Human Services Department, Seattle Parks is one of its largest placement partners in the summer months. Of the 400 program participants this summer, 65 worked in Seattle Parks and Recreation this year. Participants are from low-income families, and 90 percent are youth of color. They have little or no work experience, and often struggle in school. Teens involved in this program work at community centers, in our summer day camp programs for youth with disabilities as junior counselors, and other areas of recreation. Teens can work up to 28 hours a week during the 7-week program, and earn \$8.55 an hour.

Career Workplace Exploration in Skilled Trades (CWEST)

CWEST provides experience in the skilled trades through classroom learning and paid internships. Skilled trades include crafts such as carpentry, plumbing, auto mechanics, electrical work and more. Students earn money as they work under the supervision of a journey-level mentor. The program is sponsored by Seattle Public Schools, and places students in one of many skilled trade settings, including Seattle Parks. Students are at least 16 years old. This year, we had 10 teens placed with us. They received high school credit for their work.

Student Teen Employment Prep (STEP)

About 60 teens ages 14 – 19 years old participated in 2010 in this summer program. Their primary work included doing restoration in our parks – mostly forests and wetlands. They work closely with our Natural Resources Unit and Green Seattle Partnership. This is funded partially from the general fund and from the Associated Recreation Council. Some of the money from our sale of Wild Waves tix goes to ARC to support STEP. It is also supported by grants. These kids work 200 hours over the course of six weeks, and receive a \$599 stipend.

Summer of Service (SOS)

This is the second year we have received federal grant money that supports SOS. SOS participants work in teams of 10 with two adult staff for six weeks, four days a week, six hours per day. Three of the four days, teens will be working on a variety of environmentally related service projects, including forest and wetland restoration. The fourth day is dedicated to exploring environmental justice issues, climate change and the initiatives/policies on a local and global level that guide our decisions/behaviors, post high school options, job preparedness and life skills activities, leadership development as well as focused reflection exercises and activities. Each student who completes at least 100 hours of service is then eligible for a summer of service educational award of \$500 to be used to pay for educational expenses at qualified higher education institutions. This year we had 85 students participate in the program. Participants are between the ages of 13 and 16 years old. They worked at the Atlantic City Nursery this summer.

O₂ – Outdoor Opportunities Program

The Outdoor Opportunities (O₂) program is an outdoor expedition level program designed to expose teens to environmental education, urban conservation, and stewardship, while creating an environment for community leadership and empowerment. The O₂ program provides both job readiness and service learning opportunities for participants ages 15 – 19. Youth participate in leadership skills development and provide support and direct leadership to youth participating in mountain biking, rock climbing and trail restoration with the US Forest Service Skykomish Ranger District. Participants who complete the orientation, training, and program implementation requirements of the program receive a stipend.

Aquatics

Aquatics employs approximately 450 summer staff at 8 indoor pools, 2 outdoor pools, 9 lifeguarded beaches, 25 wading pools, 5 boat ramps and 2 small craft boating centers. Currently, 321 of our employees are between the ages of 16-25 (71% of our work force). About 26% are people of color. In order to train future employees, Aquatics regularly offers lifeguard training classes. In 2007, we offered 7 classes which served 69 participants. 62 of these participants passed the lifeguard certification test.

Jr. Lifeguard Training Internship

The Lifeguard Training Team is a free 8-week program designed to train and certify youth in lifesaving skills. Seattle Parks and Recreation offers this program each summer at Mt. Baker Beach. The training includes American Red Cross certification in Lifeguard Training, First Aid, CPR and beach-specific rescue techniques. It is a great way to build self esteem, job skills and long lasting friendships. Seattle Parks provides books, uniforms, and basic materials at no charge to participants who work individually, in small groups and with the rest of the team to build skills and knowledge throughout the summer. Since attendance is critical to success, all teens must attend all scheduled trainings. Each summer, we train about 25 teens between the ages of 15 – 17 to become lifeguards. Each participant receives 128 hours of training.

Youth Athletics

Twenty-three teens aged 14 to 20 participate with our Citywide and Youth Athletics Department in the summer working as ballfield attendants, concessions stand workers and junior coaches in our summer sport camps. All students employed in these summer programs earn about \$10 an hour.

Youth Development Grant Programs

About 12 youth have worked in a variety of programs that are narrowly focused on specific areas of interest. These include:

- Culinary Arts Internship
- Youth Entrepreneurs Program
- Journalism Study
- Warren Miller Freedom Foundation
- Rock the Garden
- Online Academy Mentorship Program

RecTech Summer Internship Technology Program

This summer internship program allows teens ages 14 – 18 to build self-esteem, explore digital media skills and gain employment training and job skills that will help become successful. Internships are offered in:

- Digital darkroom and photojournalism
- Video production
- Web design
- Basic online media

We had 40 participants this year -- 10 at each of the four RechTech sites. Most of the interns received a \$599 stipend and 15 hours of service learning.

Junior Naturalist Program

The Junior Naturalist Program was created in 1998 to meet the need for quality programming for teens ages 12-16 at Discovery Park. Junior Naturalists must have a desire to work with young children, be motivated to become a role model, learn leadership skills, and have an interest in the natural environment. Jr. Naturalists participate in 15 hrs of training prior to volunteering with the Summer Day Camp program. This program serves approximately 30 youth each summer.

The Able Teens (TAT)

The TAT program is an after-school vocational skills training program for teens (14-19) with developmental disabilities. The program partners with and provides volunteer support with agencies and community based organizations such as community centers, food banks and libraries. TAT members learn skills such as cleaning, cooking, food preparation, event set-up, organization and customer service.

Each TAT member has a person-centered-plan developed for them that will identify skills, interests and establish goals for school and employment. In addition, each member will and learn how to search for a job, complete an application, write a resume, and interview.

Youth Violence Prevention Program (YVPP)

We have more than 475 youth participating in the YVPP at three sites.

- Garfield TLC Extended Hours Program 184 Youth
- Rainier CC Extended Hours Programs 114 Youth
- Southwest TLC Extended Hours Programs 179 Youth

Youth participate in programs they have created themselves, as well as in paid summer employment positions. Youth have created more than 1,180 hours of programming for themselves. They also have participated in job readiness programs through YVPP.

- **Summer Employment Opportunities**
 - Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center Summer Performing Arts Academy
 - Seattle Goodwill's Summer Training and Skills Building Program (Forest/Trail Restoration in partnership with Parks YVPI and Green Seattle Partnership),
 - Music Literacy Interns
- **168 youth have participated in Job Readiness programs**
 - two Lifeguard Certification classes (6 youth graduated)
 - First Aid/CPR Training
 - Food Handler's Permit Training
 - Teen Chef for Strengthening Families Program (SFP) Training
 - Employment Readiness Workshop/Open House (hosted by Seattle Parks Human Resource Unit staff).
- **Girl Specific Programming**
 - Girls Only Charette – 35 unrelated ethnically diverse youth worked together at Yesler CC
 - Girls Interns hired to coordinate Girls Spa Day – Sept. 26

Part II: General News

Lake Union Park fatal shooting. Police continue to investigate the murder of a young man who had attended a private Quinceañera party that had rented the Lake Union Park Armory. The shooting occurred just outside armory around 12 midnight on August 20, 2010. Those involved had been attending the party. Parks staff was on duty, but were unaware of the shooting outside of the building. No Parks staff were involved or injured.

Green Seattle Partnership (GSP). GSP is gaining an international reputation as a working example of community stewardship. Last weekend Patrick Harvie, a member of the Scottish Parliament's Green Party, worked at our Lewis Park volunteer event with staff. This is third such international visitors group, through the World Affairs Council, to meet with GSP representatives. We have shared with governmental officials from Urbakistan, Thailand, Sweden and most recently India. They have been impressed with the scope of volunteerism and the commitment to building stewardship in our communities.

Bell Street Park. At the Belltown Public Safety Forum on August 10, Parks Acting Superintendent, Christopher Williams announced that the Parks and Green Spaces Levy Oversight Committee approved an additional \$1 million of Levy funds be allocated to the Bell Street Park Project. This will make the total budget \$3.5 million dollars. The new park will be located between 1st and 5th Avenues on Bell Street. Construction is anticipated to begin in the spring of 2011 with completion in late summer 2011.

Cascade People's Center. The new agreement with the Cascade Neighborhood Council (CNC) to provide programming at the Cascade People's Center has been delivered to the Superintendent's office to be signed, and we're waiting for the CNC to provide insurance paperwork. The CNC will provide programming while a decision is made to begin a Request for Proposal (RFP) process for a long-term operator of the building.

Congressman Jim McDermott. The congressman visited Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center's Art in the Park program on Wednesday, August 4, to congratulate the staff on providing outstanding programming and Summer Food Service, which is federal subsidized. LHPAC has provided five years of successful programming, including excellent educational and art-based activities for participants in the park. The Congressman helped staff distribute the Summer Food Services lunches to 25 participants at the park.

The 45th Annual Laurelhurst Salmon Bake. This event took place on July 29, and brought more than 700 people from the neighborhood together to enjoy great music, a kids carnival, and, of course, great salmon! Approximately 40 volunteers from community and staff from around the city came together to make this a grand event.

Camp Long Renovation project. The grand re-opening for the building happened on July 31. It was a well attended and successful event. Camp Long staff have moved back in, and summer programs are occurring. Only minor construction items remain to be completed.

Fall course registration. Online registration for fall quarter courses at community centers, pools, ELCs, small craft centers began on Tuesday, August 10. Three hours into registration, more than 2,100 registrations had been completed with 43% taking place online.

Adult Softball Leagues. Citywide Athletics wrapped the Adult Softball season with season championship games. The top two seeds of each league competed for trophies and t-shirts. This season attracted more than 23 leagues, 210 teams and 4,200 participants!

Cal Anderson Turf Repair. The bids for this project were opened on Aug. 11, and there were two bids submitted. The project was awarded to A-1 Landscaping and Construction. Construction work will proceed as quickly as possible in September. The project is funded with \$250,000 from Seattle Public Utilities and will include new drainage, soil replacement, new turf, and site restoration.

Atlantic City Nursery. The Board of Park Commissioners held a public hearing on Aug. 12. The public commented on the draft use plan for the repurposing of the nursery site. The draft use plan includes an area for urban farming, wetland restoration, and public access. The Board will discuss the draft use plan and make a recommendation to the Superintendent on Sept. 9.

Milfoil Harvester. There has been a bumper crop of invasive milfoil grass this year in Lake Washington. To deal with it, staff refurbished an old milfoil harvester and began “mowing” the lake. The mower cuts to a depth of 5 feet and removes the cut plants on an interior conveyor belt which is then off loaded to shore. The harvested milfoil is a great compost material, and we have been using it in our parks.

Arts in Nature Festival. Camp Long hosted the Nature Consortium’s Arts in Nature Festival last weekend. This year’s festival brought 3,000 people to the park, and raised \$2,700 in donations for the Camp Long Advisory Council. This year was also the first year of an Arts in Nature Camp offered to youth from Yesler Terrace and Rainier Vista. About 40 students spent a week at Camp Long before the festival, helped set up for the festival, and had their art on display.

Emerald City Open Water Swim. This Parks’ sponsored event marked the 26th year of open water swimming competition with good weather. More than 300 participants ranging from 9 years old to nearly 70 years young turned out. The event has connected with a dozen sponsors that provided food, awards and prizes. The winning time for swimming a mile was a blazing 19 minutes and 48 seconds!

Danskin Triathlon. This past weekend, the 15th Danskin Triathlon took place at Mount Baker Rowing and Sailing Center. There were 45 beach lifeguards hired to staff the event this year as well as three powerboats and drivers supplied by Mount Baker Rowing and Sailing Center. Lifeguards made just over 1,200 minor assists in the water. There were four pullouts due to fatigue and/or minor medical issues. Seattle Police Harbor Patrol had two boats at the site to keep boat traffic at bay and assist in the event of an emergency.

Seattle Hempfest. About 100,000 turned out each day for Hempfest this past weekend, Aug. 21- 22, at Myrtle Edwards and Elliott Bay parks. Seattle Police created a new queuing system along Broad Street and Elliott Ave that worked well, but the crowds grew into the streets and significantly impacted traffic on both days. The large numbers of people and the large numbers of commercial vendors in the festival footprint exceed the capacity of the park. The event has outgrown this venue.