



**CITY OF SANTA BARBARA**  
**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT**

**AGENDA DATE:** September 28, 2022

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission

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

**SUBJECT:** Summer Camp 2022

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Parks and Recreation Commission receive a presentation on 2022 summer camp performance.

**DISCUSSION:**

Background

For Parks and Recreation Department staff, summer camp is one of the defining features of the year—a ten-month cycle of analyzing, planning, organizing, hiring, training, and operations that unites the Department in service to our community. Summer camp gives young people an opportunity to develop skills and build independence outside of an academic setting. Since Camp Conestoga, the first City of Santa Barbara summer camp, opened in 1947, our camps have introduced children and teens to the wonders of their hometown, forging friendships, building appreciation for public parks, and connecting children and families to their local recreation and sports centers. Whatever the subject matter or setting, Parks and Recreation summer camps create safe opportunities for focused play and having fun.

Discussion

This summer, even with the expected return and competition from other local camp providers and minimum staffing levels due to ongoing shortages of hourly camp staff, the Department welcomed 2,886 unduplicated children to the fun of Santa Barbara's parks and recreation system.

*Summer Camp Programming*

The Parks and Recreation Department summer camp season offered the following:

- 18 returning summer camps – 90% compared to 2021
  - 4 operated by City staff
    - *Nature, Skate, and Jr. Lifeguards Camps, and Summer Fun*

- 14 operated by a third-party independent contractor
  - *Beach Volleyball, Beginning Water Polo, Bizzy Girls, Boogie & Surf, Ceramics, Hearts Horseback Riding, LEGO, Lobster Jo's, Pickleball, Tennis & Beach, Theater, Trapeze, and Youth Evolution Basketball and Soccer Camps.*
- 214 total sessions
- Diverse themes, with subject matter including water skills and safety, engineering, sports, crafts, business, financial literacy, and general free-form outdoor fun
- 3,366,575 total hours of summer camp provided
- Summer Camp options for children and teenagers from age 4 to age 18
- Learn-to-swim options for 380 children as young as 6 months old
- 97 teen leadership positions through the junior counselor program in five camps

### *Summer Camp Marketing*

Planning for the 2022 summer camp marketing campaign began in Fall 2021, with the campaign launching in February 2022 and spanning the entire camp season. A mixture of paid and earned media was leveraged across print, broadcast, and digital channels. Content capture was also coordinated for use in future marketing campaigns. Planning for the 2023 summer camp marketing campaign will soon be underway.

### *Summer Camp Performance*

Increased camp offerings from other local providers in 2022 resulted in 594 fewer registrations (11%) than in 2021. A few metrics helpful in evaluating program success follow here:

- 4,982 total registrations
- \$1,258,651 in gross revenue
- 2,886 unduplicated children and teenagers participated
- 151 scholarships awarded (more than \$51,272 in value), allowing children to enjoy a high-quality summer camp experience at no cost or greatly-reduced cost
- Parks and Recreation's drop-in camp, Summer Fun, gave an extremely low-cost, high-quality summer camp experience to 493 children and teens, an increase of 317 participants over 2021
  - Summer Fun is a nine-week, full-day camp; it is free of charge, aside from a one-time processing fee of \$25 per camper
  - Returned to operating two Summer Fun sites—at Franklin and Washington Elementary Schools
- 93% of parents/guardians surveyed responded that they'd be likely or extremely likely to recommend a Department summer camp to their friends and family

Summer camp surveys sent to participants' parents or guardians after each camp session provided glowing testimonials across each of our camps, such as:

*My grandson was very hesitant to go to a tennis and beach camp.... After the first day, he came home simply glowing with excitement! After that first week, we*

*signed up for two more weeks in August and closed the summer out with a bang, or wicked backhand!*

*Junior Lifeguards is the quintessential summer experience for any kid growing up in coastal California. Along with teaching water safety and getting to know the ocean on an up close and personal level, you can't beat the physical development that comes along with all of the activity involved. The City of Santa Barbara Jr. Lifeguard program gets two thumbs up from this family, unquestionably.*

*My son had never done Nature Camp before this summer, but he loved it! He really enjoyed the songs and liked to sing us the camp songs when he got home. We'll definitely sign him up again next year, and he's hoping to become a JC once he's old enough.*

*I cannot say enough how much we loved our son's experience at skateboarding camp. He was so happy each day! He learned so much in such a (short) period of time and he gained SO MUCH confidence! Now he gets excited to take his board outside and skate around... We will DEFINITELY be back next summer!*

As these numbers and positive reviews show, it was another great year for Parks and Recreation summer camps. Looking ahead, staff are already planning and working towards enhancing summer camps for 2023.

**PREPARED BY:** Eryn Blazey, Marketing Coordinator

**REVIEWED BY:** Rich Hanna, Recreation Manager

**APPROVED BY:** Jill E. Zachary, Parks and Recreation Director