



# 2020 Youth Services Annual Report

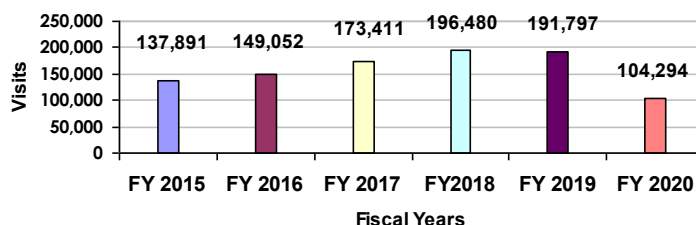
## YEAR IN REVIEW

Boise Parks and Recreation's school-based community centers are entering their 12th year of providing quality after-school supervision for deserving youth. These youth programs support and engage youth and families through meaningful experiences and positive interactions. By providing diverse experiences and activities the programs successfully reach new goals and accomplishments each year. We started the year running nine elementary after-school Kid City programs located at Morley Nelson, Whitney, Grace Jordan, Taft, Hawthorne, Garfield, Whittier, McMillan and Jefferson elementary schools as well as one teen program at South Junior High.

Sadly, the COVID-19 pandemic closed after-school programs across the nation and our after-school programs were no different. However, even though stay-at-home orders had begun, the City of Boise knew some families could not work from home and needed a safe option for their children to be during the day. Because of that, the day after the shutdowns began, Boise Parks and Recreation opened two limited capacity emergency day shelters for youth. During this time, our youth team became known as 'essential workers' and the programming changed from helping families after-school to helping families during the day. Then during the summer, Playcamps needed to follow safety protocols of lower enrollment numbers so additional Playcamps sites were offered to try to accommodate as many families as possible. Once the school year started back up, the City of Boise continued the long-standing partnership with the Boise School District and opened five Kid City Camps which offered a supervised safe and fun place for students to complete their online education.

Even through a pandemic, Boise Parks and Recreation's youth programs did not miss a day of programming. However, programs changed from large and expansive programs to small programs which met COVID-19 safety precautions. As expected with the cancellation of 10 after-school programs and Mobile Recreation and with a reduction in Playcamp sizes, the yearly visits took a huge hit. However, there were still 104,294 visits in FY 2020.

## YEARLY VISITS





## EMERGENCY DAY SHELTER

When the COVID-19 pandemic took Idaho by storm in mid-March of 2020, the City of Boise opened emergency childcare centers at Morley Nelson and Whittier Community Centers. The free programs offered a safe day program for elementary age youth whose parents were considered 'essential workers' by the State of Idaho. The program operated during the week from 8 a.m.–5 p.m. and the Boise School District provided a nurse to help screen the children each morning for illness and to conduct temperature checks. Boise Parks and Recreation provided staff to lead enriching daily activities which included art projects, helping children log on to school time with their teachers, and indoor and outdoor games.

After the first month of the program, the numbers of youth who needed the service dwindled as many families lost their jobs. All CDC guidelines were followed including being socially distanced (as well as we could with children), frequent hand washing and starting in April, masks were worn by staff at all times and participant numbers were kept low (in the Spring it was groups of 10 or fewer). From Mid-March through May, the COVID-19 Emergency childcare centers provided 53 days of care and saw 360 total visits during those 11 weeks. One mother who was laid off from her job thanked us for "being there when we needed you most."

*"Unfortunately I found out this morning I'm being furloughed from my job. I am not sure how long it will last. So for now, my son will not be coming to daycare (Emergency Day Shelter). I know he will be very upset by this, he has been having a wonderful time and has made many friends. I just wanted to thank you for taking him in so quickly. As a single mother I was in a serious bind and would not have been able to work. I can't thank you enough."*



## TEEN PROGRAMMING

Teen City at South Junior High underwent changes in the 2019-2020 school year. The cafeteria still transformed to its traditional gaming, lounge-like atmosphere after school and offered hot meals. Yet this past year, students were encouraged to help plan organized activities and field trips. During monthly 'brain blast' sessions, the student shared with Boise Parks and Recreation staff where they'd like to go and what they would like to do. They loved trips downtown, any activity around food and friendly competition, and they were even interested in learning about careers and life beyond secondary education.

Teen Night too underwent changes this past year with the staff offering many organized activities and challenges, and occasional raffle nights for a chance to win treats and prizes. Teen Night continued to be a popu-

lar night out for teens, averaging 100+ teens per event. Like many recreational programs, Teen City and Teen Night was cut short in 2020 by the coronavirus pandemic.







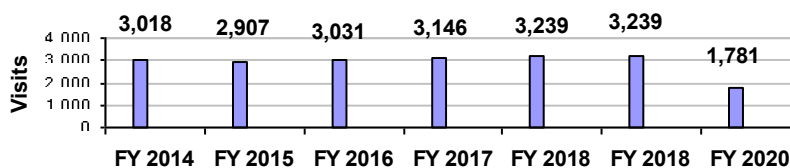
## PLAYCAMPS

On June 1, 2020, Boise Parks and Recreation opened eight Playcamps with a maximum of 22-30 youth/week/site depending upon the week and the number of COVID-19 cases in the community. Before the pandemic occurred, the original plan was to have seven Playcamps (Eagle Rock Park was going to be the only new permanent location in 2020), each with a maximum capacity of 60 youth, and to open on May 26. However, with COVID-19, the week of May 26 was canceled, and we felt it was safer to keep enrollment numbers lower so everyone could socially distance easier. To try to help as many families as possible, an 8<sup>th</sup> camp, located at Catalpa Park, opened. Over the 12 weeks of the summer, Playcamps had 1,781 visits. Even though this number is half of what we were used to having, due to following guidelines of drastically reducing camp size and closing some camps for a week or two due to a possible exposure, we were pleased that we were still able to offer this opportunity.

One parent said this about Playcamps, "Henry started Playcamp last week, and I couldn't be more pleased. The staff is amazing and he is having a wonderful time. I feel that he is safe, happy, and thriving there. So, thank you, so much, for making that happen this year in the midst of all that's going on! It is an incredible gift to us parents and our children. I can't tell you how many friends I've seen that have said the same."

Playcamps closed the season on August 15, and to our knowledge, no participants nor staff contracted COVID-19 while at Playcamp. There was a total of three staff and one youth (that we know of) who contracted the virus during the summer, but they all contracted it from someone on their own time who was not associated with the camp. As no one contracted the virus during camp, it showed that the safety precautions that were put in place (wearing masks, not going on field trips due to not being able to distance in the bus, daily temperature checks, increased cleaning, smaller group sizes, etc.) worked.

**Youth Playcamp Yearly Visits**



## ST. LUKE'S COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT FUND

This past year, some of the money that Boise Parks and Recreation was awarded from the St. Luke's Community Health Improvement Fund, went towards youth programming. Part of the money awarded went towards educational and fun STEM kits that can be used by the children who attend Boise Parks and Recreation's after-school programs. These STEM kits include step-by-step instructions and supplies for 15 different experiments that can be conducted four times each with 20 students each resulting in a total of 1,200 students reached. Examples of projects include building robots, creating different types of slime, building and exploring and creating reactions (i.e. volcano, motion sand, blobs in a bottle, etc.). This fall we were able to offer one of the STEM programs during the Kid City Camps.

Another part of the money from the St. Luke's Community Health Improvement Fund went towards providing daily nutritious snacks for the youth involved in the Mobile Recreation program. We were only able to offer two weeks of Mobile Recreation in the Spring of 2020 before COVID-19 cancelled all programs. During those two weeks of operation we had 859 youth visits. St. Luke's allowed us to carry the money over, so we hope to use the remaining funds in the Fall of 2021.



## KID CITY CAMPS

Due to the school year starting online for all students, on the first day of school, Boise Parks and Recreation opened five Kid City Camps at Morley Nelson, Whitney, Taft, Grace Jordan and Whittier Community Centers. As many parents could not work from home, the Kid City Camps provided a safe location for their children to engage in online learning. For safety con-

cerns surrounding COVID-19 and keeping enrollment numbers low, each site accommodated a maximum of 25 youth. Families registered for a Kid City Camp which operated Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Approximately 60% of the youth attending received a Boise Parks and Recreation Scholarship. From August through the end of December, the Kid City Camps had 8,220 visits.

Depending upon the week and where the current community COVID-19 cases were, school went from virtual all week to a hybrid schedule of students being able to go into school two days per week and being virtual the other days. Regardless if there were 25 students one day or 12 students another, we helped the students as much as possible with school work and provided recreation and quality programs during recess, lunch breaks and before and after school. For a few months, many full-time Recreation staff were redeployed to the Kid City Camps. Our staff wore many hats from recreation staff, to helping fix computers glitches, to assisting with schoolwork. It's been a learning year not only for the students but for our youth team as well!



## DRIVE UP THANKSGIVING



Since 2015, Morley Nelson Community Center, along with community organizations, have held a Thanksgiving dinner for families to sit and enjoy a meal together. For many families, this Thanksgiving meal is their only family dinner during the Holiday. Even though COVID-19 did not allow us to hold the meal onsite, this year a drive-up Thanksgiving Dinner was held. The Hidden Spring Community donated the food and volunteer support. For safety reasons associated with COVID-19, families were not allowed to get out of their vehicle but instead, volunteers came to each vehicle to take the order for the family. Food was then brought out to each family in to-go containers so families could enjoy their meal at home. Approximately 287 meals were served to the 70 cars that attended.

## LIFE SKILLS CLASS

This past year, the Idaho Out of School Network and the teen center at South Junior High provided a "Life Skills" class to a group of students from Whitney Elementary and South Junior High. Boise Parks and Recreation's full-time staff who led the program were trained through a workshop designed by a company called Botvin which promotes health and personal development. According to the Botvin LifeSkills website, this training is "backed by over 30 scientific studies and is recognized as a Model or Exemplary program by an array of government agencies including the U.S. Department of Education and the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention." Topics covered included decision making, drugs and alcohol, violence in media, coping with anxiety, etc. At Whitney, a group of eight 6th graders met twice a week to cover these topics. The training included activities, fieldtrips and guest speakers for each lesson. The informal, small group setting allowed youth to participate in meaningful, educational and supportive conversations. For many of the young teens, this forum gave them the opportunity to ask questions and have serious conversations in a safe environment.







## STEM PARTNERSHIPS

Boise Parks and Recreation's youth programs have been fortunate to have so many wonderful partners. In 2020, many partners provided STEM opportunities to the youth involved in our Kid City programs. STEM has become an increasingly vital element to Boise Parks and Recreation's after-school programs. Most of the opportunities

listed in this section took place before the Coronavirus pandemic put a stop to the after-school programs. However, this past fall, we were able to offer some virtual opportunities during the Kid City Camps.

Once again, Boise State University's Math 157 class, led by Mathematics professor Dr. Sasha Wang, provided captivating math education for the youth who attend Boise Parks and Recreation's after-school programs through a program called *Math Zone*. *Math Zone* provides games and other materials that encourage problem solving, critical thinking and demonstrate the abundance of math applications in our daily lives. Last winter after the BSU students visited the after-school programs, the youth were taken on a field trip to BSU so they could tour the College of Innovation and Design. While there, the youth were able to design, print and keep their own 3D printed figure. This fall, *Math Zone* offered after-school virtual science and math lessons for the Kid City Camp participants.

The University of Idaho 4-H program completed six weeks of science activities with fifteen 1st and 2nd grade student at Hawthorne Kid City. Once a week, the

youth participated in a variety of engaging hands-on STEM based projects at no cost. On the final day, students made box kites to fly on the school playground.

The Boise Urban Garden School and the Jim Hall Foot-hills Learning Center continued to provide enriching hands-on science lessons at a few of the after-school programs. Topics covered included insect symmetry, the importance of decomposers to the environment, as well as the diversity of animal adaptations and how to make recycled paper. Students gained valuable insight into local wildlife habitats and environment science.

In the fall, the Kid City Camp at Whitney partnered with Jack's Urban Meeting Place (JUMP) for weekly after school math and science activities. When the JUMP staff could no longer volunteer due to safety precautions surrounding the rising COVID numbers, JUMP continued to support Whitney's Kid City Camp by providing weekly after-school activities for Boise Parks and Recreation staff to lead.



## HOLIDAY SHOPPING



This year the annual Kids Holiday Shopping Spree took on a different form. Due to COVID-19, our after-school programs were not able to transport children to Target for their shopping. Instead, Boise Parks and Recreation Staff got online with each child who attended the Kid City camp and the children spent a \$40 gift card online. After all orders were in, Kid City staff picked up all items so the youth could take them home. Approximately 100 children got to go shopping! Many parents thanked staff for being able to provide a needed opportunity for their family.

## BOISE PARKS AND RECREATION YOUTH SERVICES PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

### Thank you for your support!

Bikes and Beans  
Big Brothers, Big Sisters  
Blue Cross Foundation  
Boise Bicycle Project  
Boise City Library!  
Boise Fire Department  
Boise Police Department  
Boise Rock School  
Boise School District  
Boise School District's Community Schools  
Boise State IEEE Society for Engineers (Institute  
for Electrical and Electronics Engineers)  
Boise State Service Learning  
Boise State University Mathematics Department  
Boise State University Music Department  
Boise State University Theater Department  
Boise State Women's Soccer Team  
Boise Urban Garden School  
Capital High School Wrestling Club  
College of Western Idaho  
Discovery Center of Idaho  
DTECH – Dennis Technical Center  
Dylan Haas  
Eat Smart Idaho  
Girl Scouts of America Silver Sage  
GoGo squeeZ  
Hidden Springs Community  
Idaho Botanical Garden  
Idaho Out-of-School Network  
Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic  
Violence  
Idaho Commission for Libraries  
Idaho Humane Society  
Idaho Pizza Company  
Idaho Potato Commission  
Jim Hall Foothills Learning Center  
JUMP  
Library! at Hillcrest  
Library! at Cole & Ustick  
Life's Kitchen  
Mint Salon & Spa  
National Science Foundation  
Safe Routes to School  
Sojourn Church  
St. Luke's Community Health Improvement Fund  
Target  
United Way of Idaho  
University of Idaho 4H Extension  
Urban Air  
Valley Regional Transit  
Vista Neighborhood Association  
West Ada School District  
Whitney United Methodist Church  
Women's and Children's Alliance

## RECREATION PARTNERSHIPS

Performing Arts is an important piece to Boise Parks and Recreation's after-school programs. For the second year, Boise Rock School partnered with the after-school programs by providing an exceptional music experience. Boise Rock School visited the after-school programs and brought a variety of musical instruments the students could play. Boise Rock School gave the students a musical demonstration and then the students played the instruments under the guidance of the Boise Rock School staff.

At Whittier, Boise School District's Community School program organized Boise State University's Theater Department to visit the after-school program for a program called, *Shake it Up After School*. *Shake it Up After School* visited the Community Center eight times and during those weeks the BSU students collaborated with 20 4<sup>th</sup> grade students to re-write Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet into 'kid language' and perform their new play.

As far as physical recreation, we are so fortunate to have such a strong partnership with the Boise Bicycle Project (BBP). Year after year, the BBP offers a mobile bike repair program where youth can bring their bikes to the community centers on certain days and the BBP will repair them for free. This past year not only did the mobile bike repair visit our community centers, but they also visited two Playcamps. This fall, during one of the repair days at Whitney, one bike was so damaged that it was not repairable. The teen who owned the bike was very upset when his parents had the BBP take the bike away to be salvaged into spare parts. However, by the time the community center was opened the next day, Boise City Councilmember and Executive Director/Co-Founder of the BBP, Jimmy Hallyburton, personally delivered a new/refurbished bike for the teen. Not only was the teen completely in shock about his new bike, but he was more than excited that the BBP took the time to take his favorite pedals off his old bike and put them on his new bike. In December during the BBP's Holiday Kids Bike Giveaway, Whitney Community Center was able to help coordinate bike giveaways for eight families.



In the winter of 2020, Morley Nelson Community Center recruited students to attend the Capital High School Wrestling Club. The Wrestling Club is open to 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade youth and occurred on Tuesday and

Thursday evenings. Boise Parks and Recreation staff transported 12 youth, primarily in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, from Morley Nelson Community Center to the practices. The wrestling coach provided students from the Community Center a discounted rate to join the club. As this was a new opportunity which had never been experienced by the students, they were enthusiastic and excited to learn a new sport. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, the youth were unable to finish the season.

