



PARKS AND RECREATION



2021 Youth Services Annual Report

YEAR IN REVIEW

In the fall of 2020, the school year started with online school as COVID-19 numbers soared. At that time, the City of Boise continued its long-standing partnership with the Boise School District (BSD) and opened five Kid City Camps at Morley Nelson, Whitney, Taft, Grace Jordan and Whittier Community Centers. The Kid City Camps offered a supervised, safe and fun place for students to complete their online education as many parents could not work from home. Families registered for a Kid City Camp operating Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Approximately 60% of the youth who attended received a Boise Parks and Recreation Scholarship. From August 2020-March 2021 the all-day Kid City Camps had 12,249 visits.

BSD's in-person school started back up on March 9, 2021 and we closed our doors to online school but were thrilled to re-open our doors to the after-school program. Initially, the after-school sites were located at Morley Nelson, Whitney, Whittier, Grace Jordan and Taft Elementary schools. By the end of March, a 6th after school site reopened at McMillan Elementary followed shortly thereafter with the reopening of Jefferson in early April. Due to safety surrounding Covid-19, all sites had reduced enrollment and for the first time, all participants had to register through Boise Parks and Recreation's enrollment software. Parents, school principals and staff said how much better they like the program because of the lower enrollment. The schools commented because of the lower enrollment, the quality of the program allows the children to have more individual attention leading to less behavior problems.

In the fall, we hoped to open back up all nine elementary after school sites, the teen after school site at South Junior High and the Mobile Recreation program. However, as with the rest of the nation, Boise Parks and Recreation was also hit with severe labor shortages. Despite months of recruiting, we did not have enough staff to open all of the past Kid City locations. Instead, the 2021-2022 school year started with the teen program at South Junior High and only five after school sites which were located at Morley Nelson, Whitney, Whittier, Jefferson and Taft elementaries. Once again, schools and families commented on how much better they liked the after-school programs with smaller enrollment numbers. Since the enrollment numbers are lower, our staff have been able to connect with the kids better to provide quality programming.



PLAYCAMPS

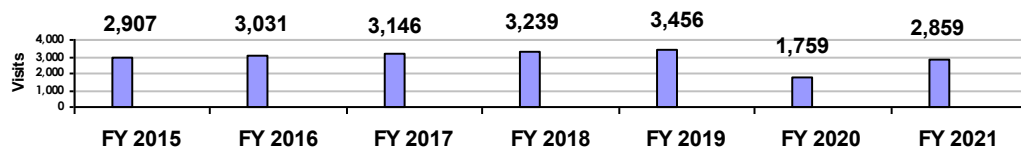
For the summer of 2021, eight Playcamps were originally scheduled to open. However, the Playcamps filled so fast that one month prior to opening, it was decided to open a 9th Playcamp at Borah Park. To continue to meet COVID-19 safety requirements, each camp enrolled a maximum of 30 kids per week, except for Borah Playcamp which allowed 40 daily participants. Aside from the daily fun activities at the park, we were also able to bring back two outings per week for each camp with one outing to a city pool and the other a field trip. Due to limited transportation, Borah Playcamp did not get to engage in field trips, however they did get to visit Borah pool twice a week. In addition to field trips, numerous partners provided onsite opportunities at the parks. These summer partners included the Boise Bicycle Project, University of Idaho Soccer for Success program, Boise Library!, University of Idaho Eat Smart program, Boise Parks and Recreation's tennis program and the Boise Police Department's K9 unit.

The summer of 2021 seemed to set a record for hot temperatures as many days saw temperatures above 100 degrees with poor air quality. In July, with these temperatures and poor air quality, we relocated our programs more days than not to indoor locations at city community centers

and Boise schools. Our staff performed at a high level and assured the quality of our programs continued even when the camps were relocated to indoor locations.

Over the 11 weeks of the summer, Playcamps had 2,859 visits. Even though this number is lower than what we were used to having, due to following guidelines of drastically reducing camp sizes and closing one camp for a week due to a possible exposure, we were pleased that we were still able to offer this opportunity that helps so many families.

Youth Playcamp Yearly Visits



"I just wanted to let you know what a great first week of camp my son had. He has never been to camp and was not willing to go for very long, but he had such a good time that he wanted to be there more and more each day. The counselors are so great with the kids and they welcomed and included my son in a way that made it easy for him to join in. Thank you for such a great introduction to summer camp!"

HOLIDAY SHOPPING

As was the case in 2020, the 2021 Annual Kids Holiday Shopping took on a different form. Due to COVID-19, our after-school programs were not able to transport children to Target for the annual holiday shopping event. Instead, every youth registered for one of our Kid City programs got a \$40 gift card to spend at Target. Some sites were able to 'shop' with the kids online and then pick up the gifts, while other sites gave away the gift cards so families could take them shopping. Approximately 225 youth received these cards thanks to generous donors in the community!



CYCLING OPPORTUNITIES



Cycling continues to be a very popular and accessible activity with our after school programs, thanks to the Boise Bicycle Project (BBP). Year after year, the BBP offers a free mobile bike repair program where youth bring their bikes to the community centers on certain days and the BBP tunes or provides repairs for free. This past year the BBP provided 10 days at the after school programs and one day at a Playcamp and approximately 330 bikes were fixed or tuned. In December during the BBP's Holiday Kids Bike Giveaway, Whitney Community Center was able to help coordinate bike giveaways for eight families.



In May, Morley Nelson and Whitney Community Centers both coordinated large "Bike to School Day" events. The Whitney Elementary students, along with many parents, Mayor Lauren McLean, Chief of Police Ryan Lee, Boise Parks and Recreation Director Doug Holloway, Safe Routes to School, community members and Whitney school staff, biked from Shoshone Park to Whitney Elementary. Over 100 individuals participated in the ride. Later that day Boise Parks and Recreation staff from Morley Nelson Community Center created and coordinated a bike course during lunch recess. Approximately 100 students road their bikes to school and participated in the bike course and received prizes from the Boise Bicycle Projects.



In the Spring of 2021, Whitney Community Center's bike club, "Wolverine on Wheels" started back up after being on pause due to COVID-19. *Wolverines on Wheels* meets weekly during the spring and fall and participants go on rides to different parks and other fun locations. Approximately 12 to 15 kids make up the *Wolverines on Wheels* and not only do they go for a ride each week, but they also learn about bike safety and basic maintenance. In the spring, the club celebrated their final day by riding five miles round trip to JUMP, where they got to tour the facility, ride the slides and eat ice cream. On the final day in the fall, the club rode to *Bikes and Beans* on Vista Avenue and celebrated with hot chocolate. *Wolverines on Wheels* is a partnership with Safe Route's to school and the BBP and facilitated by the Whitney Community Center.



STEM PROGRAMMING

STEM continues to be an increasingly vital element to Boise Parks and Recreation's after-school programs. Below are some of the wonderful partnerships we have been fortunate to have so that we can engage the youth at our after school programs with meaningful and educational STEM programs.



Dr. Sasha Wang with Boise State University's Math Department was awarded a \$2 million grant from the National Science Foundation which is aimed at increasing access to high-quality out-of-school STEM programming for elementary youth of all backgrounds. This grant enables BSU education students to bring a variety of science, technology, engi-

neering and math opportunities to our afterschool programs. The funding will last three years with BSU providing students to lead and supplies to conduct the planned projects. The money is distributed to four different colleges across the United States, with the model being our Boise Parks and Recreation afterschool programs. In the fall, our Kid City programs sent up to 15 kids from each site to BSU to learn about coding and print a 3D item of their choice. They learned about basic 3D principles and applied them in real times. Not only were the kids thrilled to be on the BSU campus but also to have the opportunity to engage in STEM programs onsite with college students.



A new BSU partner, Lucas Younger (Regional Mathematics Specialist), and his students visited Jefferson and Whittier's Kid City programs in the Spring to do a renewable energy demonstration and experiment for Earth Day 2021. Kids learned about three sources of renewable energy: wind, water, and solar. They watched large scale models demonstrate how each

type works. After, students built their very own wind and water turbines as well as solar ovens.

Taft Kid City had a visit from the new STEM trailer from 4-H, STEM Action Center, Idaho Workforce Council, and Idaho Out-of-School Network. This is a new statewide pilot program, but the City got to test two of the activities lead by 4H staff and AmeriCorps members ahead of time. It was also a learning opportunity on how to teach to science concepts with ELL youth.



In October, the afterschool programs received a \$5,000 grant from Suburban Propane to purchase equipment for our STEM programs along with sports equipment purchased for our afterschool sites. The equipment will be utilized in our new Drop-In STEM program that provides both in-school and out-of-school STEM experiences. We focused on purchasing supplies that are sustainable and reusable, so we chose to purchase Dash and Dot coding robots for elementary students and Lego Mindstorm coding robots for secondary students, along with supplies for other STEM activities. These will engage students in a variety of science, technology, engineering and math principles that will improve their skillsets and add to the other fun STEM opportunities we have occurring.

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 funded 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. volcanos, motion sand, elephant toothpaste, etc.).

PARTNERSHIPS



In 2021, many partners contributed to providing integral experiences to the youth who attend the Kid City programs.

The University of Idaho 4-H extension provided a program called 'Soccer for Success' at Whitney Community Center. This program met twice a week and

taught soccer drills and skills to the youth. The program also incorporated the 'Eat Smart Idaho' program where the youth learned about eating healthy and making sensible food choices. On the final day, the kids who participated in the 12-week program received soccer balls and shin guards.

The Boise Urban Garden School (BUGS) and the Jim Hall Foothills Learning Center continued to provide enriching hands-on science lessons at a few of the after-school programs. BUGS has also been instrumental in helping to spruce up the gardens at Morley Nelson and Whitney Community Centers.

The Whitney Community Center partnered with Jack's Urban Meeting Place (JUMP) for weekly hands-on activities the youth could do after school. Once the JUMP staff could no longer volunteer due to the rising COVID numbers, JUMP continued to support Whitney by providing weekly after-school activities for Boise Parks and Recreation staff to lead. Most of the projects were art and science enrich-

ment activities. One activity the students did was making Valentine cards for Heatherwood Senior Assisted Living. The manager at Heatherwood said the seniors loved the Valentine cards and they posted a picture of the kids on their dining room bulletin board.

Local toy store, Fantastic Games, donated over \$1,000 worth of games to the Idaho Botanical Garden to be used during Winter Garden aGlow for a scene with Santa. The IBG then donated those games, with Fantastic Game's permission, to Boise Parks and Recreation's Kid City Camps.

The Treasure Valley Children's Theatre came to Whitney Community Center and hosted theatre and drama activities for kids.

Tennis skills clinics were brought to our Summer Playcamp program by City tennis instructor Pete Peterson. Clinics led youth through drills that promoted eye-hand coordination, balance, kinesthetic awareness and demonstrated tennis fundamentals. The overarching goal was to expose youth to tennis in an attempt to encourage a new outlet. Moving forward, we're hoping to consistently bring tennis instruction to our school year and summer programs to further expand this opportunity.

Boise State's Service Learning (SL) program connects classroom learning with hands-on community engagement. For over ten years, this program provides valuable volunteer opportunities and internships which directly help our after school programs.

NEW BIKE REPAIR STATIONS

The Whitney Community Center worked with the Vista Neighborhood Association (VNA) to write a Neighborhood Investment Grant for bike repair stations at Whitney Community Center and Hawthorne Elementary. The VNA was awarded the grant and was able to purchase stations for each site. These permanent stations include all the tools necessary to perform basic bike repairs and maintenance, from changing a flat to adjusting brakes and derailleurs. The tools are securely attached to the stand with stainless steel cables and tamper-proof fasteners and it also includes an air pump to help keep the kids ready to roll. These stations benefit the kids in our programs as well as the people of the neighborhood who utilize them regularly. This spring (2022), Whitney's bike club, *Wolverines on Wheels* will use their station to check over their bikes before weekly rides.



BOISE PARKS AND RECREATION YOUTH SERVICE PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

Thank you for your support!

Ada County Libraries
Bikes and Beans
Big Brothers, Big Sisters
Boise Bicycle Project
Boise City Library!
Boise Parks and Recreation's Art Dept.
Boise Police Department
Boise School District
Boise School District's Community Schools
Boise State Service Learning
Boise State University Mathematics Department
Boise State University I Do Teach
Boise Urban Garden School
Book it Forward
Eat Smart Idaho
Fantastic Games
GoGo squeeZ
Hidden Springs Community
Idaho Botanical Garden
Idaho Out-of-School Network
Idaho Workforce Council
Jim Hall Foothills Learning Center
JUMP
Library! at Hillcrest
Library! at Cole & Ustick
National Science Foundation
Serving Love—Pete Peterson
Sojourn Church
St. Luke's Community Health Improvement Fund
STEM Action Center
Suburban Propane
Target
Treasure Valley Children's Theater
Treasure Valley Safe Routes to School
United Way of Idaho
University of Idaho 4H Extension
University of Idaho Soccer for Success Program
Vista Neighborhood Association
West Ada School District
Whitney United Methodist Church

OTHER WINS

LUNCH IN THE PARK

For the second summer, Boise Parks and Recreation coordinated the Lunch in the Park program. This was a partnership with Boise School District Food Services, the United Way, Ada County Libraries and the Boise Library! to serve lunch at five parks and four libraries throughout the summer. This partnership offers food security during a time when schools are closed. During the summer of 2021 we served 12,111 lunches.

THANKSGIVING

Whitney Community Center helped make Thanksgiving special for many families by hosting a drive-thru dessert takeout. Families were invited to visit the community center on the day before Thanksgiving to pick up a free dessert. The delicious desserts were donated by the Whitney PTO, families and community center staff. Community Center employees and volunteers delivered dessert to each car. In all, forty families visited Whitney to collect a dessert.

SCHOOL BREAK PLAYCAMPS

Over winter holiday break and spring break, the community centers at Whitney and Whittier held a new program called Winter Break/Spring Break Playcamps. These week-long camps were a spinoff of our summer Playcamps and offered the opportunity for a safe and active place for children to learn and play during the day. Parents commented on how helpful it was to have a fun place for their children to go while they worked when school was out. Each day the camps were filled with art projects, recreation games, science activities and other fun programs.



"First, I want to share what a great experience our family is having with Playcamp this year. Your team are fantastic! On day one, the staff gave my daughter a big welcome back after working with her last summer and let her know how happy they were she was back at camp again this year. It absolutely made her feel so welcome and safe. It's such a great group of counselors and they are managing this crazy heat so safely. We are very appreciative of all they, and you, are doing to make camp so awesome. Thank you."

