CITY of BOISE







BOISE PARKS AND RECREATION

YOUTH SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT

FY2025

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AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

MORE PROGRAMMING OFFERED FOR YOUTH AND TEENS IN BOISE



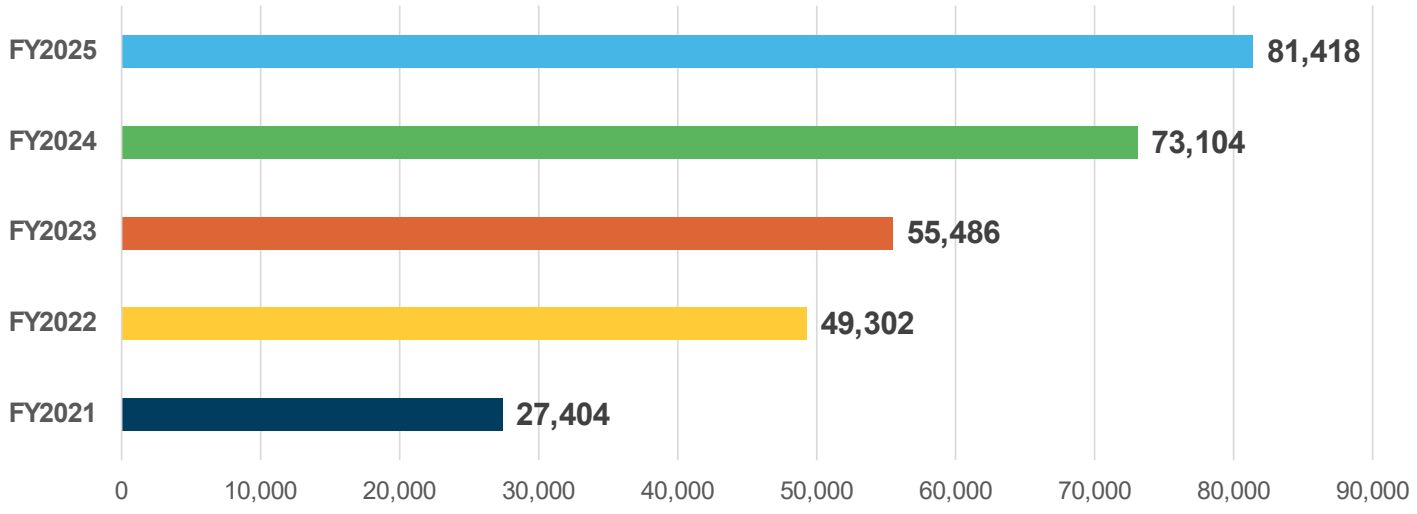
In 2008, the City of Boise and the Boise School District formed an important partnership that would have a lasting impact on local families with the opening of two after-school programs at Morley Nelson and Grace Jordan elementary schools. This momentum continued in fall 2019, when the City of Boise partnered with the West Ada School District to open its first after-school site in that district at McMillan Elementary.

Over the past 17 years, Boise Parks and Recreation's after-school programs have grown significantly. Today, the program includes **eight Kid City elementary after-school locations**, **a teen program at South Junior High**, and in 2025, the addition of a second teen site at **Hillside Junior High**. This growth reflects not only the increasing need for safe, fun and engaging after-school options for youth and teens, but also the strength of Boise Parks and Recreation's partnerships with local school districts.

From providing enriching after-school care to building meaningful connections with kids, these programs have had a tremendous impact on youth and families. With more than 81,000 visits, it's clear that these programs are well attended and play an integral role in the lives of the children, teens, and families we serve. Each Kid City elementary site offers a free, safe, engaging, and supportive environment where children receive help with schoolwork, build social skills, stay physically active, participate in STEM programming, and explore unique enrichment opportunities. The teen sites similarly provide free, safe, and welcoming spaces with teen-driven fun and meaningful activities that help young people thrive.

Parents consistently highlight the value of these programs, sharing comments such as, *"We use Kid City! It's helped me get back into the workforce and my kids love it!"* and *"I love that these locations provide a safe space for our school-age children. Thank you!"*

YOUTH + TEEN YEARLY VISITS



PLAYCAMPS

For two and a half months each summer, our full-time youth team and approximately 75 part-time staff provide fun, outdoor Playcamps at local parks throughout the city. Due to their continued popularity, the program expanded in 2025 from nine park locations to ten.

PLAYCAMP LOCATIONS

- Cassia
- Catalpa
- Eagle Rock
- Elm Grove
- Ivywild
- Jullion
- Manitou
- Phillippi
- Sunset
- Winstead

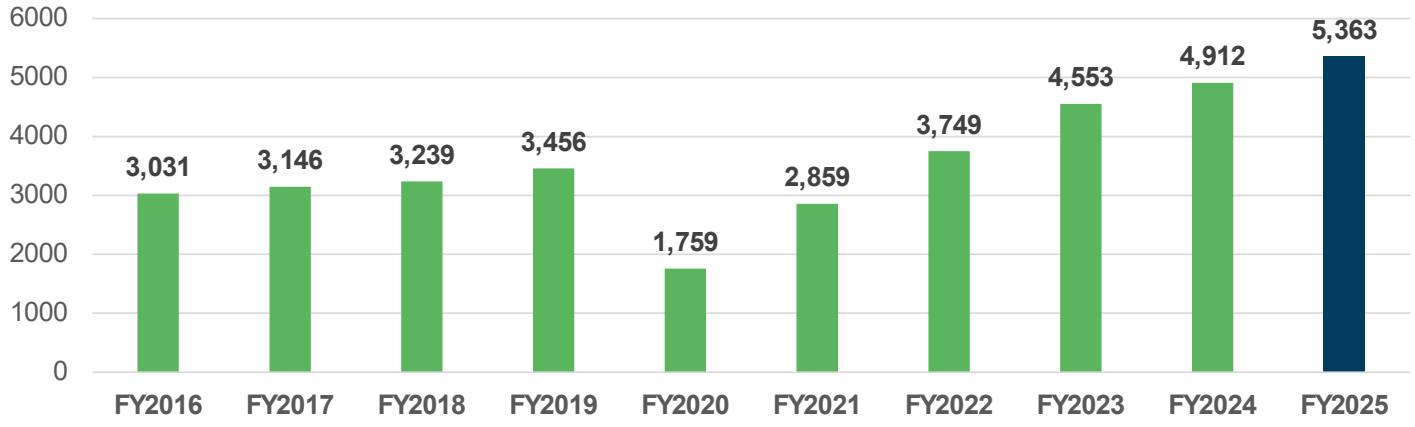
Each site serves approximately 50–54 youth, and this year the program reached an all-time high of 5,363 participants. Playcamps have become a staple for many families, offering a safe, engaging place for children during the summer months. Each week, campers participated in field trips and swimming outings at one of the city's pools. In addition, numerous community partners provided on-site enrichment opportunities at the parks. Partners included Boise State's Microelectronics Education and Research (MER) Institute, Boise Bicycle Project, BSU's OnRamp, Treasure Valley Youth Lacrosse League and Boise Parks and Recreation's Art program and Teen STEM Program.



ONE PARENT SHARED:

"*I just wanted to tell you how incredible the team and program was at my daughter's Playcamp. I was a little worried about city Playcamps, but after hearing the good experiences of other mom friends we decided to enroll her for three weeks at our local Playcamp....She LOVED it and I felt so comfortable and relieved dropping her off each day to such an attentive and caring team. Big shout outs to your staff; each of the staff members we met were great. Each themed week was so much fun to look forward to, the swim days were huge for helping her feel comfortable in the water, and I loved hearing about the field trips - especially about 42 kiddos singing along to the Minecraft song in the theater! I know these will be childhood summer memories that she will cherish forever. Thanks again - looking forward to next summer with two kiddos in the camps!*"

YOUTH PLAYCAMP REGISTERED



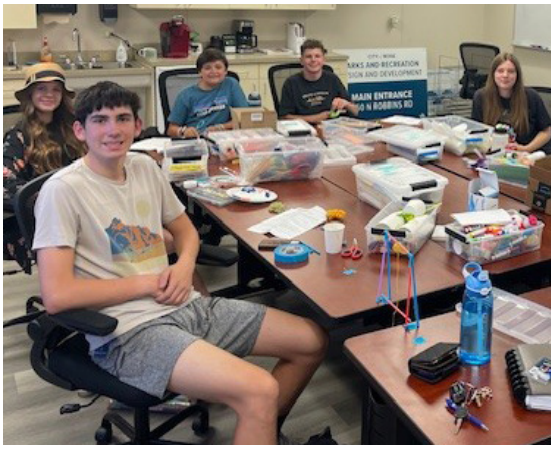
HIRING YOUTH

Our Kid City programs, Playcamps and aquatics programs proudly provide meaningful employment opportunities for teens in our community, many of whom are entering the workforce for the first time. These teens bring great energy, optimism, and a strong connection to the youth in the program. Throughout the year, we focus not only on mentoring the youth we serve, but also on developing leadership skills in our staff such as basic job skills including communication, accountability, team work, and problem-solving. Last year alone, approximately 32 teens worked across our after-school programs and Playcamps. **Many chose to return as staff** after previously participating in the programs themselves, demonstrating the lasting impact of these programs.

A mother of one of our employees who started working for us when he was a teen said:

> *"The Kid City program helped me as a young mom. I was working and in school and my husband was finishing his bachelor's. Now my son is able to give back and work for the program. Talk about success! This program changed his life!"*





YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Boise Parks and Recreation partnered with the **Idaho Out-of-School Network** this summer to employ teens ages 14 and older as STEM Ambassadors through the Youth Employment Program. Six teens spent 600+ hours this summer exploring STEM concepts, experiments and careers. They then shared their learning by teaching K–6 youth STEM experiments at other summer camps and local libraries.

STEM OPPORTUNITIES



The **Idaho STEM Ecosystem**, a part of Idaho Business for Education, awarded our youth programs a $2,500 grant to support the implementation of a Think Make Create (TMC) Lab in partnership with the Idaho Out of School Network. Grant funds were used to purchase materials and equipment needed to launch the lab, which provides a wide range of STEM activities, lesson plans, and training opportunities. This support has strengthened our ability to offer consistent STEM programming across eight after-school sites and ten summer Playcamps, delivering two to three engaging STEM experiences per month at each location. We thank Idaho EcoSTEM and the Idaho Out of School Network for their partnership and commitment to expanding STEM learning opportunities for youth.

PICNIC IN THE PARK



Boise Parks and Recreation partnered with the **Boise School District Food and Nutrition Services** to offer free lunches to youth ages 1–18 during the summer of 2025. Lunches were served at five city parks: Cassia, Ivywild, Phillippi, Sunset, and Winstead.

Over 10 weeks 6,776 lunches were provided. We enrolled 166 individual volunteers with the support of ten businesses and community organizations, including Bank of America/Merrill Lynch, Idaho Realtors, Idaho Trust Bank, Meadow Gold Dairy, Boise Metro Rotary, Boise Navy Reserve Center, Boise State Athletics, Freeform Spaces, Micron, and Horizon Credit Union.

YOUTH SPORTS

Boise Parks and Recreation's **Kid City Youth Sports** program returned after a hiatus following the COVID-19 pandemic. Originally launched in fall 2016, the program was created to offer friendly competition, organized sports, and skill development among Kid City sites.

In the spring of 2025, Grace Jordan, Morley Nelson, and Whitney each fielded a soccer team coached by Kid City staff. The teams competed against one another during the season. All youth who played in this mini soccer league received a T-shirt donated by Justine Levine with InspireKidz.

In the fall, the program expanded to all eight Kid City sites by hosting 'Soccer Skills Days'. During these events, the youth practiced fundamental soccer skills and learned what to expect from a Kid City Youth Sports practice that will take place in the Spring, helping build interest and confidence in organized sports.





PARTNERSHIPS

BOISE BIKE PROJECT

We've developed a lasting partnership with the **Boise Bicycle Project (BBP)** that spans at least 12 years. The BBP provides a mobile bike repair program where youth can bring their bikes to our after school programs on certain days and the BBP will repair them at no cost. This past year, they held free mobile repairs at each of our locations fixing hundreds of bikes.



BOISE SCHOOL DISTRICT'S COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

All of our Kid City locations partner closely with the **Boise School District's Community Schools** at each site. Community School liaisons play a vital role within the Boise School District and are deeply connected to the school communities they serve. They provide resources such as food pantries, coat closets and school supplies. Our partnership also includes supporting one another at community events and intentionally reaching families who may benefit from our programs during the school year or summer. A meaningful highlight of this collaboration includes inviting Kid City participants into Community School spaces for tours, helping them feel comfortable and aware of the resources available to them when needed.

BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS

In fall 2024, we concluded a four-year partnership with the **Boise State University Mathematics Department**, led by Professor Dr. Sasha Wang. The partnership was supported by a **National Science Foundation Grant** designed to provide Boise State education students with opportunities to bring science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) learning into our after-school programs.

Approximately 245 Boise State elementary teaching students engaged around 367 youth from our after-school programs in hands-on STEM projects. Through these projects, Kid City participants gained learning opportunities, interacted with college students, developed positive attitudes toward STEM, and visited the Boise State University campus. In return, the college students had invaluable opportunities to practice teaching mathematics and STEM to youth involved in the after-school programs.

After working with the youth, one BSU student told Dr. Wang, *"I grew close with the kids in a short amount of time, and in that moment I knew I really wanted to be a teacher."*

BSU MICROELECTRONICS EDUCATION AND RESEARCH (M.E.R.) INSTITUTE

The **BSU Microelectronics Education and Research (MER) Institute** continued bringing a high-quality coding and engineering experiences to our Kid City and Playcamp Locations. MER's primary mission revolves around educating youth and the future work force on semiconductors and provide exposure to the microelectronics field. MER students from BSU visited each of our Kid City & Playcamp locations and led

PARTNERSHIPS, CONTINUED

STEM engineering activities using Sphero Bolt robots and brought semiconductors to teach youth how they work. MER's visit demonstrates how our programs connect youth to valuable STEM opportunities they wouldn't otherwise access. MER visited our elementary youth programs 20 times this past year.

BOISE URBAN GARDEN SCHOOL (BUGS) CULINARY CLUB



In addition to teaching practical gardening skills including growing food and healthy eating options, **Boise Urban Garden School (BUGS)** partnered with the Morley Nelson and Whitney Kid City programs to offer a **Culinary Club** for students in grades 1–6. Over a three-week session, participants learned how to prepare simple, healthy recipes. The program concluded with a visit to the BUGS facility, where students used a commercial-grade kitchen to make chocolate zucchini muffins.

COLLEGE OF WESTERN IDAHO (CWI) SERVICE LEARNING

In 2025, Kid City began a new partnership with the **College of Western Idaho** through its Service Learning program. CWI students volunteered at Kid City after-school sites, providing support with supervision, youth engagement, and positive role modeling. This partnership offered valuable hands-on experience for CWI students while strengthening support for youth in Kid City programs.

GIRL SCOUTS OF SILVER SAGE

In FY 2025, Whitney Kid City entered its third year of a strong partnership with the **Girl Scouts of Silver Sage Community Troop** program. Approximately 40 girls in grades 2-5 met weekly during lunch in the Community Center and engaged in activities focused on building self-confidence and learning the values and principles of Girl Scouts. The year concluded with a cookie booth at Whitney Elementary and a celebratory end-of-year party. This successful collaboration between the Community Center, Girl Scouts of Silver Sage, and Whitney Elementary provided meaningful leadership, entrepreneurship, and confidence-building opportunities for participating students.

JIM HALL FOOTHILLS LEARNING CENTER

In the spring of 2025, Kid City launched **Tuesday Treks**, a new program in partnership with Boise Parks and Recreation's **Jim Hall Foothills Learning Center**. Over two months, 10–12 students from the Whittier and Taft Kid City sites alternated weekly in guided explorations of the Boise Foothills, gaining hands-on experience in outdoor learning, physical activity, and environmental education.



NATIONS UNITED

The partnership with the local nonprofit **Nations United** continues strong! Nations United connects youth with immigrant and refugee backgrounds to organized soccer. Through this partnership, our buses run three days a week in the fall and spring, transporting players to practices and games. This service provided 1,925 trips this year.

PARTNERSHIPS, CONTINUED

ST. LUKE'S COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT FUND

Funding from the **St. Luke's Community Health Improvement Fund** allowed us to provide supplemental snacks for all Kid City locations and select Playcamps. These snacks supported participants who missed mealtime due to field trips or after-school sports and provided an option for children who needed extra food. In addition, the Fund also continued to support our program enrichment by providing grant funding for STEM kits.

USTICK LIBRARY

Ustick Library visited Morley Nelson Community Center twice a month throughout the school year. Now in its third year, this partnership supports 1st and 2nd grade students in building reading fluency while highlighting the power and joy of reading. Two librarians bring engaging activities, celebrate reading accomplishments with prizes, and help connect young readers to the many benefits of our public library.



VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT'S SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Our strong partnership with continued this past school year through the **Whitney Kid City Wolverines on Wheels bike club**. The Safe Routes to School team led students on fun neighborhood park rides while teaching the importance of safe and predictable biking. We are grateful for this valuable partnership.

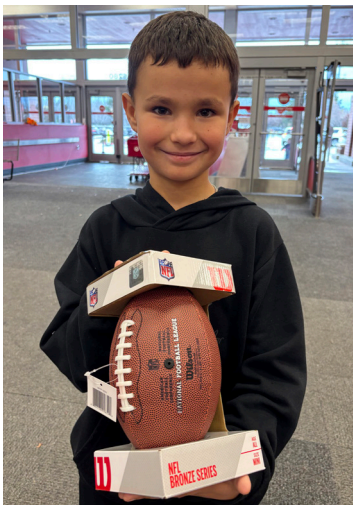
EVENTS

BIKE TO SCHOOL DAY

Morley Nelson and Whitney Community Centers hosted **National Bike to School Day** events in May partnering with local schools, community members, and the Boise Bicycle Project. The day began with more than 100 Whitney students and their families riding bikes from Shoshone Park to the school alongside Mayor McLean, City Council members, the Boise Bicycle Project, Valley Regional Transit's Safe Routes to School program, and neighborhood police. Later in the afternoon, more than 300 students from Morley Elementary participated in a bike obstacle course set up by the Morley Nelson Community Center.



EVENTS, CONTINUED



HOLIDAY SHOPPING SPREE

Thanks to the generosity of **donors in our community** and the **Howell Family Foundation**, we were able to take 135 students from two of our after-school sites, along with 20 teens, on a holiday shopping trip to the Target on Eagle Road on December 19, 2025.

This marked the 18th year the City of Boise has hosted the Holiday Shopping Spree which is an event that has given thousands of children in grades 1–6 from our after-school programs the opportunity to shop for the holidays. Each child received a $40 gift card and was paired with a volunteer to help them stay within their budget. This experience wouldn't be possible without the support of our donors and the **dozens of volunteers** who spent the day shopping alongside the students.

JEFFERSON ELEMENTARY FAMILY STEM NIGHT

In the winter of 2025, Jefferson Kid City participated in the school's **Family STEM Night**. Kid City staff, alongside Borah Student Council members, facilitated engaging STEM activities for students and families, including elephant toothpaste and lemon volcano experiments. The event provided a fun, interactive opportunity to explore STEM concepts as a community.

THANKSGIVING FEASTS

Morley Nelson and Whitney after-school programs helped provide **free Thanksgiving meals** to members of their communities. This marked the 11th year of the Morley Nelson meal and the 13th year of the Whitney meal.

The events were sponsored by Boise Parks and Recreation's after-school programs and local elementary schools. The Hidden Springs Community provided food and volunteers for the Morley Nelson meal, with Tuuti Agency contributing photos and decorations. For the Whitney meal, food and volunteers were provided by Sojourn Church, with additional support from Whitney United Methodist Church.

Both meals were a huge success, with more than 450 meals served combined. These events offered a warm and welcoming opportunity for families and friends to gather and celebrate the season together.

WHITNEY BLOCK PARTY

The Whitney Community Center, in partnership with **Whitney Elementary**, held their annual Block Party in early September 2025. The Block Party has been around since 2010 and brings neighbors together. Once again, neighborhood churches were dishing up free hot dogs and desserts for all the families attending. A big thank you to the Sojourn Church and the Whitney United Methodist Church for their years of dedication to the Block Party. We were also joined by some of our close community partners including Girl Scouts of Silver Sage, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and the Boise Bicycle Project. Families were able to get their bikes fixed for free, play fun games, and learn about community resources thanks to these amazing partners!

WINTER + SPRING BREAK CAMPS



Whittier and Whitney Community Centers both hosted Winter Break and a Spring Break Camps. For a total of three weeks, these camps provide outlets for over 210 children during their school break. In addition to active games and art projects, students were transported to field trips that included swimming, ice skating and the movies. Community partners included **Foothills Learning Center and Parks and Recreation's Art Department**.

TEEN PROGRAMMING

Boise's teens have access to **free after-school programming** during the school year at the **Fort Boise Teen Activity Center** (7th – 12th grade) and "**Teen City**" offered at South Junior High and Hillside Junior High (new September 2025). From October 2024 – September 2025, there were 906 visits to Teen City and 312 visits to the Teen Activity Center and/or Teen Gym Time at Fort Boise Community Center.

During the summer of 2025, Boise Parks and Recreation again offered the **Out & About Camp** for eight weeks. The camp recorded 712 visits from teens entering 7th–9th grades. This program takes teens "out and about" across the valley to experience activities such as cooking, STEM, art, history, kayaking, paddleboarding, and more.

A variety of teen-focused events were offered, serving an additional 354 visits. Events included **teen pool parties** at Ivywild and Borah Pools, "**Best Bus Day Ever**," a citywide scavenger hunt using the Valley Ride Transit system, and "**Fort Fridays**," a relaxed hangout for teens centered around food and fun.









OUR PARTNERS

Thank you for helping make our programs so impactful!

Bank of America/Merrill Lynch

Boise Bicycle Project

Boise City Library!

Boise Metro Rotary

Boise Navy Reserve Center

Boise Police Department

Boise Rock School

Boise School District

Boise School District's Community Schools

Boise School District Food & Nutrition Services

Boise State Athletics

Boise State Geosciences

Boise State's Microelectronics Education and Research (MER) Institute

Boise State OnRamp

Boise State TRIO Program

Boise State University Mathematics Dept.

Boise Urban Garden School

College of Western Idaho Service Learning

Freeform Spaces

Girl Scouts of Silver Sage

Hidden Springs Community

Horizon Credit Union

Howell Family Foundation

Idaho Botanical Garden

Idaho Business for Education

Idaho EcoSTEM

Idaho Out-of-School Network

Idaho Relators

Idaho Trust Bank

InspireKidz

International Refugee Committee

Jim Hall Foothills Learning Center

JUMP

Library! at Hillcrest

Library! at Cole & Ustick

Meadow Gold Dairy

Micron

National Science Foundation

Nations United

Sojourn Church

St. Luke's Community Health Improvement Fund

Treasure Valley Youth Lacrosse League

Tuuti Agency

University of Idaho 4-H Extension Program

Valley Regional Transit's Safe Routes to School

Vista Neighborhood Association

West Ada School District

Whitney United Methodist Church

BOISE
CITY OF TREES

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