



# Memorandum

**TO:** NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES AND  
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Jon Cicirelli

**SUBJECT:** REPORT ON THERAPEUTIC  
SERVICES

**DATE:** May 28, 2019

Approved

Date

6-6-2019

**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** Citywide

## RECOMMENDATION

Accept the 2018-2019 Report on Therapeutic Services.

## OUTCOME

The Neighborhood Services and Education Committee will be informed about the current therapeutic recreation service delivery model, accomplishments, upcoming opportunities, and advancements to serve residents with differing levels of cognition, physical abilities, and/or mental health challenges.

## BACKGROUND

Since 1971, the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhoods Services (Department) has provided therapeutic recreation services and opportunities to enrich the lives of individuals with disabilities and support their families. The Department operates both citywide and center-specific programming through three avenues that include:

- citywide inclusion services;
- sports and recreation center-specific services; and
- specialized recreational therapy programs for adults with cognitive disorders and mental health needs at the Grace Art & Wellness Program at Northside Community Center.

Together, therapeutic staff plan, develop, and coordinate citywide events and services. The Department's principles of equity, access, and inclusion are demonstrated by the City's commitment to providing high-quality therapeutic recreation services for all abilities and ages.

After significant staffing reductions to the Therapeutics Recreation Services program during the recession, the Department adapted programming and consolidated services citywide. Resources for staffing are supported through the General Fund, a County grant (\$309,000), and program revenues. Grace Art & Wellness maintains a non-personnel budget (\$60,000), which supports the four other center-based All Access Sports & Recreation programs. The Department does not expect to generate significant revenue from therapeutic programming, with programs priced at minimal cost for those in need.

The long-term outcomes for participants receiving Therapeutic Recreation Services are:

- Enhanced independence, self-esteem, and social skills for adults with disabilities;
- Sober, stable, healthy participants;
- Increased contributions to the community by people with disabilities; and/or
- Integrated community and reduced social stigma

**Grace Art & Wellness** is a drop-in center located at Northside Community Center in downtown San José and serves between 80 to 105 participants each day. It is the only community-based recreation, therapeutic, educational, and social program of its kind in Santa Clara County. Grace members include any adult with mental health needs, chemical dependence, developmental and cognitive disorders, and those seeking community and safety. Six days a week, Grace offers all-abilities recreation, gentle therapeutic interventions, an art and wellness studio, a social environment, meals, resources, and community outings. Grace Art & Wellness shares the Northside Community Center with the Community Child Care Council, and the Santa Clara County Senior Nutrition Program.

**All Access Sports & Recreation** provides camps, sports leagues, and classes, as well as coordinating social outings and special events for individuals with physical impairments and chronic conditions. Specialized activities include FIT Camp (Fundamentals in Training) for children with diabetes, wheelchair sports, and programs for those with brain injuries. Therapeutic recreation specialists coordinate classes and activities at four community centers: Bascom, Camden, Mayfair, and Seven Trees, which are geographically distributed throughout the City.

**Inclusion Support Services** are a citywide function across all PRNS programs, facilities, and parks. In addition to ensuring compliance with the PRNS Inclusion Policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, inclusion services staff identify and support preschoolers and their families with behavioral accommodations and referrals, and facilitate opportunities for all individuals to participate and feel welcome in recreation, educational and social programs.

The current 2018-2019 Adopted Budget for Therapeutic Recreation Services includes 14.0 FTEs:

- 1.0 Recreation Supervisor for Grace and All Access Sports & Recreation
- 1.0 Senior Therapeutic Treatment Specialist
- 6.0 Therapeutic Specialists at Grace Art & Wellness
- 4.0 Therapeutic Specialists at Bascom, Camden, Mayfair, Seven Trees
- 1.0 citywide Therapeutic Specialist dedicated to inclusion and accommodations
- 1.0 Therapeutic Services Manager

The 2019-20 Proposed Operating Budget converts the 1.0 Therapeutic Services Manager into a 1.0 Recreation Superintendent to coordinate therapeutics and older adult programming citywide.

## **ANALYSIS**

The Department is strategically identifying areas of growth and opportunity. The 2019-2020 Proposed Operating Budget recommends the addition of a Recreation Superintendent to manage citywide Therapeutic Recreation Services and Older Adults/Seniors Services offset by the deletion of a Therapeutic Services Manager. This position will focus on these high-need communities to build community partnerships for a robust citywide system of care, creating efficiency within the older adults/senior services system, developing and managing ongoing evaluation and impact reports, and leveraging other recreation areas such as aquatics for enhanced programs and services for the therapeutics community.

To address ongoing mental health challenges in the community, the Department is strengthening its relationships with the County's Behavioral Health Services Department. The County will provide de-escalation training for key field staff in September 2019. In addition, the existing contract with the County that provides \$309,000 for therapeutics staffing will be reviewed for increased funding.

The services provided by the Department's Therapeutic Recreation Services team are vital to the overall system of care for people with disabilities, their families, as well as those with mental health and substance abuse challenges. Participants report significant impacts from the programs with 97 percent indicating services positively impacted their quality of life. Since Winter 2018, Grace Art & Wellness at Northside reported increased drop-ins from approximately 60 per day to over 85 participants on average. This increase reflects the community's needs and challenges and indicates that the types of programming offered are meaningful and the center is a safe, welcoming environment. The Department is a regional leader in therapeutic services and looks forward to expanding its reach to meet the needs of this vulnerable community.

### Accomplishments and Plans

	Accomplishments 2018-2019	Looking Ahead 2019-2020
<b>Grace Art &amp; Wellness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Increased daily drop-ins from 55-70 to 85-100</li> <li>✓ Provided Mental Health 101 training to Department of Transportation</li> <li>✓ Awarded Outstanding Community Resource of the Year by San Andreas Regional Center</li> <li>✓ Held first Autism Awareness Day with 120 participants</li> <li>✓ Provided weekly shower partnership with Dignity on Wheels</li> <li>✓ Improved linkage between Mental Health Court/Probation Wellness clients and Grace membership</li> <li>✓ Participated in Viva Parks St. James</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Explore building capacity for delivering mental health training to PRNS and other City departments</li> <li>✓ Continue providing a safe, welcoming, inclusive environment</li> </ul>
<b>All Access Sports &amp; Recreation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Completed new contract with KIPP middle and high schools to provide art and cooking classes for special needs students</li> <li>✓ Coordinated and hosted several wheelchair sports leagues and tournaments</li> <li>✓ Provided activities at annual Disability Awareness Day at City Hall</li> <li>✓ Partnered with Far West Wheelchair Athletic Association on Junior Sports Camp</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Develop comprehensive therapeutic aquatics plan</li> <li>✓ Update the Far West Wheelchair Athletic Association contract</li> <li>✓ Continue growth in partnerships and opportunities for creative programming</li> </ul>
<b>Inclusion Support Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Trained and Implemented the <i>Ages and Stages Questionnaire</i> in the San José Recreation Preschool program in partnership with First Five of Santa Clara County</li> <li>✓ Developed Viva CalleSJ sensory stories in English and Spanish to provide anticipatory guidance to children with autism; Viva CalleSJ Sensory Tent pop-up to help manage stimulation and provide calming environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Assess park, community center facilities and develop a Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgender, Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ) Inclusion Plan of Action for ensuring safe and welcoming environments for the transgender and gender-fluid community</li> <li>✓ Continue support to San José Recreation Preschool with additional focus on implementation of Early Education Quality Standards</li> </ul>

The Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services will continue to evaluate community center staffing and non-personnel budgets in preparation for partnership opportunities to generate revenue and recommend additions or changes in the coming years.

### **EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

Staff will continue to build partnerships with community and Santa Clara County partners to strengthen the citywide therapeutic service delivery model. To demonstrate the value and impact of therapeutic services, performance measures will be refined and updated by the end of 2019 for collection and future reporting.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

This memorandum will be posted on the City's website for the June 13, 2019 Neighborhood Services and Education Committee meeting.

### **COORDINATION**

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office and the City Manager's Budget Office.

### **CEQA**

Not a Project, File No. PP17-009, Staff Reports, Assessments, Annual Reports, and Informational Memos that involve no approvals of any City action.

/s/

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