



Memorandum

TO: NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES AND
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

FROM: Jon Cicirelli

**SUBJECT: THERAPEUTIC PROGRAMS
AND SERVICES REPORT**

DATE: May 24, 2021

Approved

Date

6/3/21

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the 2020-2021 Therapeutic Programs and Services report.

OUTCOME

The Neighborhood Services and Education Committee will be informed about the current therapeutic recreation service delivery model during the COVID-19 pandemic, accomplishments of the Therapeutics team to transition programming to a virtual environment, and upcoming opportunities to serve participants in a new program model.

BACKGROUND

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

- 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 Jacinto Siquig Northside (Northside) Community Center.

After significant staffing reductions to the Therapeutics Recreation Services program during the recession, the Department adapted programming and consolidated services citywide. Resources for 14.0 FTEs are supported through the General Fund, a County Behavioral Health Services

Department 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 (AASR) programs. The Department does not expect to generate significant revenue from therapeutic programming with programs offered at minimal cost.

Based on the current service delivery model, the long-term outcomes for Therapeutic Recreation Services participants are:

- Enhance independence, self-esteem, and social skills for adults with disabilities;
- Support to maintain sober, stable, healthy participants;
- Increase contributions to the community by people with disabilities; and/or
- Integrate community and reduced social stigma.

ANALYSIS

Therapeutics Services continues to be a highly diverse and creative program that engages clients with empathetic approaches that are inclusive and supportive. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented many challenges and highlighted our most vulnerable populations, but also brought out the best in our staff and community. The Therapeutics Team was quickly shifted and supported its most vulnerable communities with resources including food, essential items such as diapers, childcare resources for essential workers, and many other efforts to help minimize the impacts of the pandemic. The Therapeutics Services team moved to an online virtual environment to continue engaging clients with opportunities to socialize and interact with other members, provided wellness checks, continued senior nutrition meals at Northside Community Center, and provided recreation in a new format by virtual programming via Zoom and YouTube, while still being inclusive to all participants. As the program continues, other municipalities have contacted our team to engage on their successes and best practices that they could utilize and implement into programming to support their clients.

Grace Art & Wellness (Grace)

To continue the effort to address ongoing mental health challenges in the community, especially during the pandemic, the Department shifted all of the Grace existing programming to a virtual platform to continue to provide services funded by the County's Behavioral Health Services Department and to maintain services to some of our most vulnerable residents. Since the start of the pandemic, Grace has supported our communities through:

- Grace Art & Wellness program participants served: 200 non-duplicated;
- Grace wellness-check calls: 2,262 calls made totaling 44,079 minutes;
- Continued daily groups in a virtual environment with 6-15 members daily;
- Grace continues to offer 25 virtual Zoom groups;
- 26 YouTube videos created to engage and provide recreation opportunities to our clients;

- Special events for Grace and All Access Sports and Recreation clients including Thanksgiving Dinner, Holiday Dinner and Gift Giveaway, Nami Gift Bag Giveaway, and Valentine's Day Candy Bag Giveaway; and
- \$20,000 Mercury News Wishbook funds awarded to Grace Art & Wellness program to assist with bridging the technology gap for its members and upgrading center technology.

The Grace Art & Wellness team is planning the transition to hybrid and in-person programming at the Northside Community Center. Efforts include designing groups that could be supported in person while also providing an exercise component to create healthy options for our clients. The team is also looking at creative ways to increase and simplify access to digital devices in collaboration with the Friends of Grace by using the Wishbook funds. The outcome of this effort will further support our clients' engagement currently, but also in the future as more programs become available.

All Access Sports & Recreation (AASR)

As with the Grace team, the All Access Sports & Recreation team is very creative and energetic in looking for new ways to program and engage clients to support their quality of life. This was especially challenging given that programs are typically in-person activities including sports, social gathering events, art classes, and specialty camps that in many cases had no alternative in a virtual environment. The team took this opportunity to develop new programs such as Tessa's Tasty Treats, a series of cooking classes with ingredient lists were provided to participants a week in advance so they could get the items and be ready to participate. The team also put together art supply bags that they mailed to clients prior to their art activity so that participants could do their art project while on Zoom. Since the start of the pandemic AASR has supported our communities through:

- All Access Sports and Recreation participants served: 55 non-duplicated;
- All Access Sports and Recreation wellness-check calls: 50 calls made for a total of 322 minutes;
- All Access Sports and Recreation averages 6 to 15 participants per group;
- Around the Town Club which runs every 2 weeks averages 25 to 35 participants;
- All Access Sports and Recreation is currently running 6 virtual Zoom groups; and
- Co-sponsored four virtual dances with the City of Sunnyvale in 2020 and 2021

The popular wheelchair basketball and soccer program, Wheels on Fire, offered at Bascom Community Center gym is currently looking to utilize the Roosevelt Community Center outdoor roller rink as a location to offer programs.

CONCLUSION

The Therapeutics Team continues to be an invaluable service for the community and even though the pandemic posed significant challenges, the team evolved and provided innovative digital programming opportunities to engage clients who live in group homes, present social-emotional and mental health behaviors, and represent some of the City's most vulnerable residents. The Therapeutics team will continue to develop new programs and services, augment existing programs, and continue to support inclusion in all our programs and services.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

Staff will continue to build partnerships with the community and the County of Santa Clara to strengthen the citywide therapeutic recreation service delivery model and adapt the program to current and future operating requirements related to COVID-19. To demonstrate the value and impact of therapeutic services, performance measures will continue to be refined and updated for collection and future reporting.

CLIMATE SMART SAN JOSE

The recommendation in this memorandum has no effect on Climate Smart San José energy, water, or mobility goals.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This memorandum will be posted on the City's website for the June 10, 2021 Neighborhood Services and Education Committee meeting.

COORDINATION

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

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION/INPUT

This memorandum is scheduled to be presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission on June 2, 2021. Staff will verbally update the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee regarding any recommendation or input.

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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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and Neighborhood Services

For questions, please contact Andrea Flores Shelton, Interim Deputy Director, at andrea.floresshelton@sanjoseca.gov.