

**Minutes of the Waukegan Park District
Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners
Special Recreation Program Advisory Committee
April 7, 2014**

The Board of Commissioners of the Waukegan Park District met in a Special Meeting of the Special Recreation Program Advisory Committee on April 7, 2014 at the Douglas House, 732 North Genesee Street, Waukegan, Illinois.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm by Commissioner Bill Sarocka who directed a call of the roll.

II. Roll Call

Present: Commissioner Bill Sarocka

Also Present: Julie Schneider, Manager of Special Recreation; Maria Owens, Specialist of Special Recreation; Devin Minor, Special Recreation intern; Melissa Juarez-Ehlers; Chris Pace; Mercedes Rivera; Janalle Roth and Tina Yurik.

Absent: Executive Director Greg Petry, Supervisor of Special Recreation Kari Robinson, Superintendent of Recreation Jay Lerner, Dane Cruz, Deanna Guidry, Sharon Lambert, Susan Johnson, and Christian Torres.

Due to lack of a quorum, no official board business was conducted.

III. Review, Discuss, Decide

A. SRSNLC Resource Fair

Schneider reported that hosting of any future SRSNLC Resource Fairs has been cancelled due to poor attendance by community members. Attendance has dropped dramatically each year with only 5 people total attending the 2013 fair. There was good variety of vendors that provide services to the disabled, but too few interested individuals from the community to make it worth any vendor's efforts. Committee Member, Roth, is interested in being a parent representative to assist with promotion at future fairs and similar events that Special Recreation staff may attend. SRSNLC-Waukegan staff has started to attend Parent University meetings hosted by the Waukegan Public School District and have found success in that outreach initiative. In addition, Schneider noted that she has been attending the Options Fair held at the College of Lake County each April for the past four years. This particular fair has great attendance by individuals from the SRSNLC service area.

B. Programming Updates

Schneider reported on behalf of staff Kari Robinson that the HEART Day Program was not able to start this past season due to low participant interest. It was noted that new participant interest, especially related to the program, has been received. Robinson is keeping a list of interested and potential participants. The program is now slotted to start in the fall of 2014. Committee Member Juarez-Ehlers offered to share resources from The Center for Enriched Living. Robinson will work with a Special Recreation summer intern to finalize vital elements in the documents needed to implement the program, continue to market to potential participants, and develop additional lesson plans for the Day Program as a major project. There was discussion of participants completing an essay to earn a scholarship to the program. The essay would be why they want to be a part of the program, what they want to learn, and their goals if involved in the program.

Committee member Roth stated that it would be important to place a bilingual staff to work this program due to the demographics of Waukegan. Schneider reported that it is wonderful to have a bilingual staff but that is not always possible if there are not any interested bilingual staff applicants. Roth also commented that Bill Kintz of the Waukegan Public School's Transition Program would be an excellent referral connection. Schneider informed Roth that she and Robinson have been in contact with Kintz regarding the program and are looking to set an official meeting to discuss the program in more detail.

SRSNLC-Waukegan has been working with the Welcome Center to increase visibility to families. Roth clarified that the Welcome Center is now strictly visited by families who are new to the area and the school district. Registration is done through individual schools and not the Welcome Center as it used to be. It was suggested Special Recreation staff look to have approval to man an information table to flier programs and services and to meet and develop a relationship with parents at teacher conference, curriculum night or IEP meeting days. SRSNLC-Waukegan is working to build family programming that is free or has a low cost to families. Current family programs include a movie night, Zumba, and Family Frames bowling event.

C. Strategic Plan Goals related to Special Recreation

Market Retention Plan

Special Recreation intern Devin Minor has been working to create a market retention plan to compliment the current Special Recreation Marketing Plan. Financial incentives are being discussed including using scholarships more widely to promote registration in specific programs.

Schneider noted that staff has noticed more participants are registering after being involved in Leisure Education programs as well as the P2K2 Afterschool program that is in its third successful year now.

Committee Member Juarez-Ehlers informed Schneider that she will share the names and contacts of individuals in the service area. These individuals may be a good resource to develop referral relationships with.

D. Fundraising Effort

Polar Bear Plunge Planning

Schneider informed the Committee that \$10,600 in proceeds was raised through Polar Bear Plunge Special Event. Pledge Plunge Participants seemed excited about the sweatshirt incentive so this will be planned to continue next year. All participants who donated at least \$50 were given a sweatshirt and the registration fee for free. The tents utilized for registration/warming and refreshments were donated by AAA Tent Masters for the day at a cost savings of \$4,000. Sponsors of \$250+ were recognized with polar bear cookie jar, sweatshirt and event t-shirt. It was noted that this year the event had been advertised on Latino radio station and this appears to have boosted participation from this demographic.

E. Priorities for Next Meeting

- **Date:** November 3, 2014.
- **Priorities:** Polar Bear Plunge planning, review of HEART program, and review of implementation of the retention plan including utilizing the Hispanic radio station and newspaper for more promotions.

IV. Closed Session

There was no closed session

V. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 6:55pm

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Schneider
Manager of Special Recreation