



**CITY OF MONROVIA
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION
AGENDA REPORT**



DEPARTMENT: Community Services

MEETING DATE: July 14, 2015

PREPARED BY: Memo Chavez,
Assistant Recreation Coordinator

AGENDA LOCATION: AR-2

TITLE: 2014-15 Monrovia Reads and Plays Program Evaluation

OBJECTIVE: To provide the Community Services Commission with an evaluation of the 2014-15 Monrovia Reads and Plays Program Evaluation.

BACKGROUND: The Monrovia Reads and Plays (MRP) program was developed to provide literacy and recreation services to children in low socioeconomic neighborhoods in Monrovia where access to the Public Library and recreation programs is limited. The program initially began as a Mobile Literacy Van, with funding provided by the First 5 Grant, and was administered by the Monrovia Unified School District (MUSD). When the First 5 Grant funding ended, the program was financially supported by the Monrovia Adult School and the Monrovia Reads Foundation. In 2006, the Adult School could no longer financially support the Literacy Van. The Department of Community Services took over responsibility of the Literacy Van and partnered with the Monrovia Reads Foundation Board to create MRP, a mobile literacy and recreation program. MRP currently operates in the neighborhoods on Sherman Avenue, north of Los Angeles Avenue and on Monrovista Avenue, south of Duarte Road, in Monrovia.

ANALYSIS: MRP operates during the school year (September through June), Monday through Friday from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Sherman Avenue location operates on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and the Monrovista Avenue site operates on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The first 45 minutes at each site focuses on academics, including homework, reading and literacy. The last 45 minutes are spent on a variety of recreational activities such as sports, card/board games and crafts.

Attendance

There were 50 registered participants over the course of the year, compared to 42 in 2013-14. Daily attendance on Sherman Avenue averaged 25 participants which is slightly higher than the previous year. Daily attendance on Monrovista Avenue averaged about 8 youth, which is comparable to the previous year of 7 youth at the Ivy Avenue location.

The following is a breakdown of each age group:

Age Group	2013-2014 Totals	2014-2015 Totals
Youth 5 years and younger	6	7
Youth 6 – 12 years	27	29
Youth 13 – 18 years	9	14
Total Registered	42	50

Ethnicity

Statistics indicate that the demographic breakdown of participants has remained fairly consistent with the previous year. The following chart compares the 2010 census data with the demographic breakdown for the 2013-14 and 2014-15 programs.

Ethnicity	2010 Census (%)	2013-2014		2014-2015	
		Attendance	Percentage	Attendance	Percentage
Hispanic	38.4	29	69	33	66
African American	6.4	11	27	11	22
Caucasian	41.1	1	2	3	6
Asian	10.9	1	2	3	6
Other	3.2	0	0	0	0
Total	100	42	100	50	100

Academic Impact

Participants read 602 books during the 2014-15 program, compared to 575 the previous year. The increase in the number of books read is due to higher program attendance and the success of the reading incentive program which gave points to participants for reading books. The points were taken into account when deciding which participants can attend the end of the year excursion to Knott's Berry Farm. Parent feedback indicated that all participants improved their grades.

Once again, staff offered the Scholar Participant Program to reinforce the importance of education, and to encourage and acknowledge participants for their academic achievements. Staff coordinated with MUSD to identify the participants who had a 3.0 minimum grade point average. Staff identified 19 of the 50 registered youth as scholar participants in the program. Each scholar participant was given a certificate and a t-shirt acknowledging their achievements.

Staff also introduced the new Reading Incentive program. Staff gave out daily, weekly and monthly points to participants for reading during program hours. The points accumulate throughout the school year which helps participants receive monthly incentives.

Staff and volunteers offered alternative recreational activities including arts and crafts and board games, all of which had an educational or learning component. Based on survey results (see attachment A) these alternative activities increased participant's attendance and engagement in the program. Parent feedback, via the program survey, indicated their child's grades increased throughout the school year by as much as 25 percent.

Character Development

The Character Development program was offered to participants and was very well received by parents who noted improved behaviors. Character Development is a weekly program that reinforces the importance of making good choices. Each week staff would offer a lesson and plan an activity around the lesson which would also help with participant bonding and establish new friendships. Lessons included honesty, responsibility, diversity, leadership and empathy.

Recreation Impact

Staff stressed the values of good sportsmanship and physical activity, and taught participants the importance of teamwork and camaraderie. Weekly activities included:

Flag Football	Medic-Dodge-ball
Mingle	Capture the Flag
Soccer	Whiffle Ball
Blob Tag	Basketball
Topple Ball	

Soccer, basketball and medic-dodge-ball were the most popular recreational activities among participants.

Health and Wellness Impact

All participants engaged in physical activities for at least 30 minutes every day. Staff taught participants the importance of exercise and nutrition and informed them of healthy snack alternatives. Staff also continued to offer Zumba to participants which was a very popular activity the previous year. Staff noted the participant’s increased physical stamina over the course of the school year.

Special Events

Staff hosted five special events for participants and their parents from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The special events took place in October, November, December, March and the final event was in June. Event themes were Halloween, Thanksgiving, winter holiday, Valentines, spring and an end of the year event. Staff recognized improved participant behaviors, parent volunteers, scholar participants, character development lessons and included a variety of activities, raffles and tournaments.

Volunteer Support

Youth Commissioners volunteered daily at MRP. The City saved approximately \$2,906 in staff costs due to volunteer efforts. This amount was determined by using the following formula: 1 Youth Commissioner X 126 volunteer hours X \$23.07 (2015 National Volunteer rate).

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT: Staff and participants recycled many of the program supplies including crafts, board games, cards and sports supplies; in support of the City’s Green Accords. Staff also programmed monthly environmental activities to teach the participants the importance of water conservation and recycling.

MARKETING: Since MRP is a neighborhood program, publicity was limited but included:

1. Door to door flyer distribution in local neighborhoods
2. Monrovia Area Partnership (MAP) Newsletter articles
3. Flyer distribution at MAP Neighborhood Block parties and MAP Conference

FISCAL IMPACT: Annual expenditures are based on the program operating five days a week for 40 weeks. Part-time staff costs increased this year, due to the increased minimum wage and a Recreation Specialist assigned to monitor daily program operations for the entire year. Program expenses remained fairly consistent from last year to the current year. The Monrovia Reads Board continues to sponsor MRP on an annual basis. Sponsorship dollars are used for books and other educational supplies.

Although full-time salaries are built into Department budgets, the annual full-time cost to manage the MRP is \$9,532. This amount is calculated using the following formula:

- 15% of One Assistant Recreation Coordinator’s Base Salary= \$6,776
- 2% of Recreation Supervisor Base Salary = \$1,486
- 1% of Library & Recreation Manager Base Salary= \$990
- .25% of Director of Public Services Base Salary= \$280

Staff’s base salary does not include fully burdened rates or benefits.

STAFF COSTS		2013-14	STAFF COSTS		2014-15
Part Time Staffing		\$16,531	Part Time Staffing		\$21,830
Total		\$16,531	Total		\$21,830
SUPPLY COSTS			SUPPLY COSTS		
Program Supplies		\$8,500	Program Supplies		\$8,479
Total		\$8,500	Total		\$8,479
Expense Total		\$25,031	Expense Total		\$30,309
PROGRAM REVENUE			PROGRAM REVENUE		
Monrovia Reads Sponsorship		\$10,000	Monrovia Reads Sponsorship		\$10,000
Cost per participant 42 participants		\$357.88*	Cost per participant 50 participants		\$406.18*

*The cost per participant is determined by dividing the net cost of the program expenditures by the number of registered participants.

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The majority of MRP participants who registered at the Monrovia Avenue location also attended the program on Sherman Avenue. Only two participants attended MRP solely at the Monrovia location. MRP may experience increased participation if operated Monday through Friday on Sherman Avenue. Due to low enrollment, staff recommends suspending program operations at the Monrovia Avenue location, and will investigate other options including the expansion of Sherman Avenue program operations from three to five days a week.
2. There were ten participants who were able to attend the end of the year excursion to Knott's Berry Farm. The excursion was for those participants who earned enough incentive points and read the required amount of books.
3. Staff indicated that every participant improved their grades during the school year which is attributed to MRP staff and Youth Commission tutoring and assisting participants with their daily homework.
4. Staff will offer local excursions as part of the 2015-16 MRP program including trips to the Public Library and Canyon Park.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the Community Services Commission move to receive and file the 2014-15 Monrovia Reads and Plays Program Evaluation.

COMMISSION ACTION REQUIRED: If Community Services concurs, the appropriate action would be a motion to: Receive and file AR-2, the 2014-15 Monrovia Reads and Plays Program Evaluation