



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



**DEPARTMENT:** Community Services

**MEETING DATE:** July 8, 2014

**PREPARED BY:** Memo Chavez,  
Assistant Recreation Coordinator

**AGENDA LOCATION:** AR-1

**TITLE:** 2013-14 Monrovia Reads and Plays Program Evaluation

**OBJECTIVE:** To provide the Community Services Commission with an evaluation of the 2013-14 Monrovia Reads and Plays program.

**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. 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 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 the on Ivy Avenue, north of Fig Avenue, 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 at Ivy Avenue 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, games, and crafts.

**Attendance**

There were 42 registered participants over the course of the year, compared to 50 in 2012-13. Daily attendance on Sherman Avenue averaged 20 participants which is comparable to the previous year. Daily attendance on Ivy Avenue averaged approximately 7 youth, which is a decrease from the previous year of 11 youth. The decrease in attendance is due to older youth “aging out” of the program and participating in after school activities including sports.

The following is a breakdown of each age group:

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2012-13 Totals</b>	<b>2013-14 Totals</b>
Youth 5 years and younger	9	6
Youth 6 – 12 years	26	27
Youth 13 – 18 years	15	9
<b>Total Registered</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>42</b>

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### **Demographics**

Statistics indicate that the demographic breakdown of participants has remained somewhat consistent with the exception of the African American population. Participation declined as a result of declining numbers at the Ivy Avenue location. The following chart illustrates the demographic breakdown for the 2012-13 and 2013-14 program.

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>2012-13</b>		<b>2013-14</b>	
	Attendance	Percentage	Attendance	Percentage
Hispanic	28	65%	29	69%
African American	21	35%	11	27%
Caucasian	1	0%	1	2%
Other	0	0%	1	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Academic Impact**

Participants read approximately 575 books during the 2013-14 program, compared to 665 the previous year. The decrease in the number of books read is related to the reduced attendance at the program. There were approximately 12 participants who were academically struggling with one or more subjects, and Staff recruited Youth Commissioners to assist them. Parent feedback indicated that all participants improved their grades.

Once again, staff offered the Scholar Participant Program to reinforce the importance of education, and 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 15 of the 42 registered youth as scholar participants in the program. Each scholar participant was given a certificate and a gift card to a local Monrovia business.

Staff and volunteers offered alternative educational activities such as arts and crafts and board games which involved learning and strategic techniques. Based on survey results (see attachment A) these alternative activities increased participant's school work productivity and developed higher self-esteem. Parent feedback, via the program survey, indicated their child's grades improved throughout the school year by as much as 20 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 offers a lesson and plans an activity around the lesson which also helps with participant bonding and establishing 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, knockout, soccer, relays, dodge ball, tug of war, whiffle ball, basketball and freeze tag. Flag football, soccer and dodge-ball were the most popular recreational activities among participants

### **Health and Wellness Impact**

Staff ensured all in attendance participated 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 introduced Zumba to participants which was a very popular activity. Staff noted the participant's ability to display increased physical stamina over the course of the school year.

### **Special Events**

Staff hosted six 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, February, March and the final event was in June. The events had themes such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, winter holidays, 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.

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

**MARKETING:** The MRP program is available to families living in local neighborhoods therefore only the following publicity methods were used:

1. Door to door flyer distribution
2. 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. MPR is supported by a significant donation from the Monrovia Reads Board. The Staff costs are for part time Staff only. Part time salaries increased due to a Recreation Specialist vacancy that was filled, increasing part-time staff costs. Maintenance supplies also increased this year due to the purchase of new books, supplies and replacement of worn equipment.

<b>STAFF COSTS</b>		<b>2012-13</b>	<b>STAFF COSTS</b>		<b>2013-14</b>
Part Time Staffing		\$15,080	Part Time Staffing		\$16,531
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$15,080</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$16,531</b>
<b>SUPPLY COSTS</b>			<b>SUPPLY COSTS</b>		
Program Supplies		\$7,900	Program Supplies		\$8,500
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,900</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$8,500</b>
<b>Expense Total</b>		<b>\$22,980</b>	<b>Expense Total</b>		<b>\$25,031</b>
<b>PROGRAM REVENUE</b>			<b>PROGRAM REVENUE</b>		
<b>Monrovia Reads Sponsorship</b>		<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>Monrovia Reads Sponsorship</b>		<b>\$10,000</b>
<b>Cost per participant 50 participants</b>		<b>\$459*</b>	<b>Cost per participant 42 participants</b>		<b>\$596*</b>
<b>Net cost per participant</b>		<b>\$260</b>	<b>Net cost per participant</b>		<b>\$359</b>

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

**COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Ivy Avenue has struggled with attendance over the past two years due to participants either moving out of the area, participants “aging out” of the program or participants getting involved in other after school activities.
2. Community Services and Community Development staff surveyed other neighborhood areas to determine what locations MRP would better serve. Staff received positive comments from the Monrovista Avenue area who were excited to have the possibility of a program in their neighborhood. Staff indicated the age group at Monrovista will be more suitable for the MRP program. Staff recommends relocating MRP program from Ivy Avenue to the Monrovista Avenue location effective with the 2014-15 school year.
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 investigate the possibility of having an end of the year excursion for the MRP participants who have earned enough incentive points throughout the school.
5. Staff will investigate the possibility of having monthly guest speakers attend the program to inform participants on topics such as health, school, career, bullying and any other beneficial subjects.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends that the Community Services Commission move to accept the recommendations as outlined in this report; 2013-14 Monrovia Reads and Plays Program Evaluation.

**COMMISSION ACTION REQUIRED.** If Community Services Commission concurs, the appropriate action would be a motion to: Accept the recommendations as outlined in this report, 2013-14 Monrovia Reads and Plays Program Evaluation.