



City of Lowell

Recreation Department

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TO: Eileen Donoghue, City Manager *EYD*
FROM: Peter Faticanti, Recreation Division Program Director/Planner
DATE: June 23, 2020
RE: Req. City Mgr. Provide A Report Regarding Available Summer Jobs,
Programs And/Activities For The Youth Of Lowell

This memorandum addresses the motion request from the City Council regarding available Summer Jobs, and activities for the youth of Lowell.

Since the decision was made to close summer programs, the Recreation division has started to plan some virtual programs, as well as some in park experiences to provide a variety of safe activities for residents this summer. This decision has also lead to reduced staffing needs for the Recreation Division as well. Details of both aspects of the summer 2020 plan is as follows.

Virtual programming

This summer the Recreation office will be partnering with our vendors to bring the normal camp enrichment activities to the virtual format, as well as add in some new experiences for our participants. The library usually brings a story time activity to our 3-4 year old program each summer. This year Molly Hancock will deliver these activities through YouTube videos that we can link to our website. It will include "flannel stories", as well as music and rhymes like Mother Goose. This program will be offered through website links on our website and can begin as early as July 6.

We intend to bring back a performer named Jeannie Mack. Jeannie Mack performs all kinds of fun, bounce-around songs geared for kids 3 - 4 years old. The kids will be able to clap along, sing along, dance like no one's watching, and act out stories using your hands and fingers. We have Jeannie Mack scheduled for these video programs on July 10th, July 20th and August 3rd.

Our Tae Kwon Do Vendor is going to record YouTube videos for our programs. We will be filming twelve videos that progress in skill, just like our summer classes would. We would be able to put them up either all at once, or weekly for kids to do throughout the summer. These lessons would also be able to begin on July 6.

A new program would be Virtual Irish Step Dancing. A former department employee teaches lessons on the Cape and is willing to offer pre-recorded weekly classes of herself dancing and

instructing the kids on how to perform the steps right along with the video. These will be shared through a private YouTube page to the participants and can begin on July 6.

Another new program we are looking to offer is the Art Sherpa. This website offers paint instruction videos and teaches participants how to paint by using demonstration and instruction. They will show how to mix paints correctly, proper brush usage, and also what the different types of brushes are used for and how to get the most out of your supplies. This program is able to begin mid-July, but no hard date has been set by the vendor.

We plan to offer an online arts and crafts program through recorded videos. We would have participants register and then send them the link to the website. Registered participants would be able to get supplies provided by the recreation office in pre-bagged kits that would include all the supplies needed for each activity. Anyone who does not need the supplies would still be able to view the videos and provide their own supplies for this program. This could begin July 6.

Science Tellers is another new vendor we would be working with. They provide children and families with fun, experiential science education through art and interactive storytelling. We plan to use three of their programs beginning July 6:

- 1.) Dragons: Return of the Ice Sorceress (grades K-5)
- 2.) Dragons Jr. (Pre-K)
- 3.) Aliens: Escape from Earth (grades K-5)

Summer experiences

We also plan to offer different summer experiences and contest using social media. First would be a sidewalk chalk competition. We plan to have different themes and participants would use sidewalk chalk to create a picture relating to the theme each week. Then using on line poll to decide the winner, we would announce the contest winner and award a small prize. We plan to use this same format to have baking challenges/re-creations. Again we plan this to be a weekly contest with online polls to determine the winners. These challenges would begin the week of July 6.

Scavenger hunts are planned in the parks. The Recreation office has reached out to Steve Stowell to get some interesting locations in the City parks. The participants will then try to locate them and send us pictures of themselves at the various locations throughout the City parks. The family who gets to the most locations over the course of the summer would win a small prize as a family. This would also try to get people into the parks for some of the outdoor activities and fun that they would normally get through our camp programs. This could begin July 6.

Another program is one that we came across in Chelmsford as we were looking for ways to get park interaction, but not in group settings. It is a painted rock program. We would buy and paint several rocks to be put at various parks throughout the summer. The public would then paint their own rocks and either add to our “Rock garden” or opt to take a rock they like in exchange for leaving one that they had painted. The idea would be to get kids and families into the park and find the “rock garden” we have and hopefully get them to participate by adding to the area with their own sense of expression and art. This could begin by July 13.

We plan to continue our free lunch program through both the Lowell School Department meals vendor Aramark and also the Merrimack Valley Food Bank. They would provide meals for our sites and we would deliver them to the families who are interested in coming to the park for lunch. We would provide meals with Aramark at our typical summer sites of Shedd, Daley, Gage, Wang and Reilly. Merrimack Valley Food Bank locations are typically the O’Donnell Splash Pad, McPherson Park, and Eagle Park. We will be firming up locations with both Aramark and Merrimack Valley Food Bank based on expected attendance. Free lunch programs could start July 6.

We plan to help some community partners advertise their programs in order to let the public know about programs offered at other facilities. For instance Middlesex Community College summer programs. These run all summer and are for ages 8-17. They are all being offered virtually this year. Also we plan to advertise the Lowell Conservation and Trust summer programs as well. We can put a link directly from our page to their information for the public to easily find.

The South Common Pool, located at 272 South St., will be opened for swimming with a possibility of swim lessons if Phase III begins early enough, and guidelines are conducive to having swim lessons. Only the South Common pool will be opened this summer due to the lack of lifeguards to safely staff the McPherson pool and the Waterfront. The pool would be open early July – mid August from 12 noon - 6pm daily. The City plans to operate, but not staff, the splash pads at O’Donnell Park (1170 Gorham St.), Shedd Park (453 Rogers St.), and Mulligan Park (89 Plain St.). The splash pads are usually open starting in early July from 12 noon - 6pm seven days a week, and close on Labor Day. The opening dates for the pool and splash pads are dependent on the ability for DPW to make repairs and get the water running at these locations.

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is planning on opening the North Common Pool as well. Their planned dates and hours of operation are currently undecided.

As usual the City run programs would be free of cost to all interested participants. Some of the partner programs may have fees.

Employment

In order to fulfill these programs we will need to hire about 12-14 lifeguards and an additional 6-10 summer program managers to oversee and facilitate the programming. This staffing number would be a significant decrease from the 185 positions that we filled during the summer of 2019. We understand the impact of the loss of summer jobs to the community and anticipate returning to full programming next summer.