



CHAPTER 6 - RECREATION DEPARTMENT, COMMUNITY RESOURCES DEPARTMENT AND OTHER PROVIDER ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the existing recreation program managed by the BREC Recreation Department, the Community Resources Department and other program and service providers in the Parish with whom BREC either partners, or considers, as it selects its programs to offer the citizens of East Baton Rouge.

EXISTING PROGRAM ANALYSIS OF THE RECREATION AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES DEPARTMENTS

Our analysis of the existing program through the Recreation Department includes: a) its strengths and weaknesses; b) the identification of the basic, or core services, the Recreation Department should focus on in the future; c) recommendations for new programs that should be offered; d) recommendations for program standards that should be followed; and, e) recommendations for staff training guidelines as the Department moves toward implementation of the strategic master plan.

The recreation program has been identified by senior management, Commissioners and citizens as a critical component of the Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan. First, it is critical because citizens enjoy activities and facilities managed by the Division and expectations are that our leisure time pursuits must be worthy of the investment we make in them of money and time. Second, BREC invests substantial resources into the Recreation Division each year which warrants the confidence of senior management and the Parks and Recreation Commission that the Recreation Division is successful.

It is generally understood in the parks and recreation profession that a successful recreation program is one that is efficient – which is accomplished by doing the right things and one that is effective – which is accomplished by doing things right.

To analyze the success of the BREC program; i.e. efficiency and effectiveness, several steps were taken as follows:

- several recreation programs were analyzed in-depth for their strengths and weaknesses;
- seven core programs (market segments) were identified by the consultant which are intended to be the major focus of the Recreation Division in the future; and,
- program life cycles were reviewed to determine if core programs are in a growth stage, maturation stage or declining stage.

To analyze the effectiveness of the recreation program, the consultant provided performance measures to guide staff as it benchmarks itself against industry standards. Those performance measures include:

- Percentage of repeat customers the Division needs to be successful



- Percentage of old programs offered which determines if the Division is conservative and traditional
- Percentage of old programs offered which determines if the Division is innovative and on the creative edge
- Percentage of programs offered versus percentage of programs held (cancellation rate)

Outcomes of the consultant's analysis for efficiency and effectiveness are recommendations for:

- new program ideas
- staff training guidelines
- program standards
- the role the Recreation Division should play in the Parish to provide services (direct provider, a facilitator, or in an outreach capacity)

COMMUNITY RESOURCES DEPARTMENT ANALYSIS

Analysis of the Community Resources Department included interviews with the Director, outside agencies who provide similar services, review of the professional literature and best practices within the profession for providers who focus on at-risk youth issues, review of several reports authored by the Department and review of the Department's self-assessment of its program and activities.

OTHER PROVIDER ANALYSIS

Our analysis of other providers includes: a) the identification of who the other providers are; b) the program or services for which they are best known; c) the segment of the market which they are serving for their core programs or services; and, d) their market positioning relative to pricing, facility hours of operation, program participation levels and condition of facilities from a programming perspective.

MOST SIGNIFICANT OTHER PROVIDERS

Other providers who offer programs and services similar to BREC include: a) the YMCA, b) sports associations; c) United Way Agencies; d) churches; and, e) schools.

MARKET CONTROL

BREC controls the market for special events and specialty facilities.

HOURS OF OPERATION

BREC recreation centers are open about 40 hours per week, whereas, other indoor providers are open approximately 90 hours per week.



FEES AND CHARGES

BREC fees recover approximately 33% of their actual costs. The recovery rate of approximately 33% is primarily due to the philosophy that citizen support for the 10 year tax plan offsets the need to charge market prices for programs and services.

From a national perspective, the range for cost recovery is typically between 50% and 65%. There are a few agencies such as Johnson County in the Kansas City Area which recover 100% of their costs.

Fees charged by Other Providers in the Parish range from 0 by the Boys and Girls Club, when they utilize grants, to market prices. As an indication of the philosophy for the assessment of fees by other providers, Day Camps were selected for review. As indicated in **Table 6.1**, United Way Agencies offer programs less expensively than others due to their use of grants and donations, whereas, the YMCA assesses a membership fee in addition to a program fee.

Table 6.1: – Day Camp Comparison with Other Providers

| Provider | Program | Fee |
|-------------------|----------|---------------------------------------|
| BREC | Day Camp | \$45 |
| Boys & Girls Club | Day Camp | \$0 to \$30 |
| YMCA | Day Camp | \$65 members and \$85 for non members |

PARTICIPATION LEVELS

Programs that are popular in the Parish, thus a lot of providers, include day camps, programs for youth and teens, sports and programs for seniors.

Sports – national trends are declining for recreational sports, whereas, youth sports are stable or increasing due to the availability of competitive leagues and national playoffs. This national trend is similar to sports participation in the Parish.

Youth and Teens – Participation is stable or growing at the YMCA and United Way Agency providers.

Seniors – Participation is stable or growing at the Council on Aging, Housing Authority and other providers. Demographically, we are an aging society, thus the growth is predictable.

Day Camps – Participation is stable or growing by the other providers and stable at BREC. **Table 6.2** gives current data for this important program.

Table 6.2: – Day Camp Participation

| Provider | Program | 2003 Participants | 2004 Participants | Trend |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|-------------------|---------|
| BREC | Day Camp | 9711 | 8624 | Stable |
| Boys & Girls Club | Day Camp | 195 | 390 | Growing |
| YMCA | Day Camp | 720 | 720 | Stable |



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The department must be reorganized to: a) consolidate the Community Resources Department and Recreation Department; b) reduce the number of area supervisors from six to three; and, c) make the three area supervisors accountable for various functions such as new program development, marketing, performance measures, registration process and program standards and guidelines.

BREC should continue its direct provider role for all of its core services with the exception of youth sports. Other core services which it should continue to be a direct provider for include: day camps, special events, senior programs, adult sports, after school programs, special facilities and youth and teens.

Regarding youth sports, BREC should work with sports associations to form a youth sports association committee which organizes and manages all youth sports. Currently, there are a number of other providers who are involved with youth sports, thus different philosophies permeate the youth sports environment in the Parish relative to the level of competition versus recreation, coach's training, fees, etc.

Emphasize core services of youth and adult sports, day camps, special events, specialty facilities, senior programs and after school programs. All effort should be placed on doing these programs at the highest level.

Must have a programming vision and programming approach. The Vision must relate to BREC's desire to provide quality programs which are primarily within its core service categories. Its programming approach must include the eight step process detailed later in this report in the Program Guidelines Section.

Other providers offer valuable services in the Parish. The market niche for other providers includes: a) services for members; b) services for low income; or, c) services for those who seek competition. BREC, provides services for all members of the Parish and cooperates with other providers as need be. The



recommendation is for BREC and other providers to meet annually to discuss opportunities to partner and/or meet as many program needs as possible in the Parish.

Improve registration process by allowing citizens to register by: a) mail; b) phone; c) fax; and, d) e-mail in addition to the existing walk-in option.

Improve marketing effort and increase the number of registrations by: a) publishing the program guide four times each year; b) by inserting two registration forms into the guide rather than one, thus allowing one household the opportunity to promote the program by giving a form to a friend; c) by eliminating late fees and utilizing early registration discounts; d) by providing a diverse pricing system which offers higher priced programs for those who can afford it; and, e) by consistently offering new programs and eliminating unpopular programs from the schedule.

A cost recovery policy must be developed to provide staff with the guidance it needs to set fees. The policy will also provide citizens with a better understanding of the business side of recreation programming and, in that sense, set expectations about the financial constraints and requirements of the agency.

Staff training opportunities must be planned and provided on a consistent basis. Training should include: a) customer service; b) activity based costing; c) performance measures; d) creative thinking; e) establishment of standards; f) secret shopper program; g) conflict resolution; h) team work; personal development; and, i) communication.

Performance Measures must be established to provide senior staff with information it can use to manage the department. In addition to the Table 6.3, measures should include: a) the number of repeat customers; b) customer satisfaction rate; c) capacity of each facility and program; d) most effective forms of marketing per program; e) maintenance standards.

Table 6.3: – Performance Measures

| Item | Description | Measure |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Promotion Costs | Brochure, printing, postage, advertising and posters | 10% to 15% |
| Production Costs | Instructors, handouts, and materials | 45% to 50% |
| Administrative Costs | Administrative salaries and benefits, staff travel and training, computers and office expenses | 35% to 40% |
| Old Programs | One that has been offered successfully in previous years | 70% to 90% of total programs offered by the Department |
| New Programs | New programs keep the Department on the cutting edge | 10% to 30% of the total programs offered by the |



| | | |
|---------------------------|--|------------|
| | and will promote the Department as one with new interests and people will read the brochure more often to fine out about what new activities are being offered | Department |
| Return Participation Rate | The number of participants from previous sessions who attend new sessions | 60% to 70% |

Recreation Centers must be improved to provide improved environments within which quality programs can occur. Improvements should include air conditioning and modernization with “curb appeal” so the external and internal environment is enticing to users.

Marketing initiatives must include: a) the printing of four program guides each year (spring, summer, fall and winter); b) program guides should be mailed to current participants; c) program guides should include two registration forms – one for the household and one for a friend; d) it helps to put an adult on the cover as many adults assume the program is for youth and teens but may overlook the fact that adult programs are offered, too; e) change the cover and color scheme on each of the four guides; f) eliminate late fees and switch to early registration discounts; g) limit the content in the program guide to program-related information – do not confuse the reader with other information; and, h) do not set limits for class size – add another class if there is sufficient interest.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

1. BREC resources need to be allocated in an efficient and effective manner. Three examples of how that can be done are:
 - Eliminate duplication of effort within the BREC Organization between the Community Resources Department and Recreation Department.
 - Eliminate duplication of effort between BREC programs and outside agencies.
 - Discontinue the direct provision of the food bank program and find a partner to assume that responsibility.
2. BREC’s organizational structure should be re-aligned to eliminate the duplicative effort between the Community Services Department and the Recreation Department. These two departments should be consolidated.
3. BREC should meet with the Baton Rouge Police Department to see if its Crime Statistics Division can alter its reporting mechanism to provide BREC and others with the information it needs to acquire and analyze data surroundings its major facilities which attract youth.



RECREATION PROGRAM AND OTHER PROVIDER ANALYSIS

Program and Other Provider Analysis included the following:

Evaluation of selected programs for their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT), participation levels, revenue, fee structure, program features, advantages and benefits, competitors, market research and policies.

- ❖ Market Segmentation Analysis.
- ❖ Core Program Analysis.
- ❖ Program Life Cycle Analysis.
- ❖ Other Provider Analysis.
- ❖ Key Findings.
- ❖ Program Standards and Staff Training Guidelines
- ❖ New Program Philosophy and Examples
- ❖ Recommendations

PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

Program: Short Courses

Strengths

- Programs reach a large group of participants.
- There are a wide variety of programs offered.
- Programs are goal oriented. Participants have the satisfaction of accomplishing a goal.
- Programs appear to have a good retention rate.
- Senior participation numbers have increased for short courses.
- Programs are offered at a variety of locations.

Weaknesses

- Promotions for this program are very limited.
- Expenses appear to exceed revenue.
- Finding and keeping qualified instructors is a challenge.
- Program length can be an issue.



- There are no set curriculums for short courses.
- Programs are not evaluated on a consistent basis.
- Program participation numbers are not consistent.
- There is little or no joint programming effort in place for short courses.
- Tracking of participation is not very precise.

Key Findings/ Recommendations

The short courses are a program area where there is the opportunity to offer a wide variety of opportunities. However, there appears to be little consistency in the approach to short courses. Programs are offered randomly throughout the parish. Programs do not have set curriculums or standards in place. These need to be put in place to ensure quality and consistency. Programs are generally 4-8 weeks in length. The length of the programs need to be shortened and redirected to have high energy short programs to achieve the same result as the longer programs. People have less time to dedicate to programs and are generally willing to commit 1 or 2 weeks versus 4-8 weeks. Programs need to be tailored to match the demographics of the areas where they are offered. The fee structure for short courses does not allow for the program to recover much of the cost for the program. While the short courses are a good way to keep up with trends in recreation and offers a variety of opportunity it does not appear that these programs should be a part of the core services offered by BREC.

Program: Playgroup

Strengths

- The program is an excellent tool for children to develop social skills.
- Prepares preschoolers for school.
- Offered at a variety of locations.
- Program has a long history.

Weaknesses

- There are no set curriculums in place.
- Participation numbers have steadily declined in recent sessions.
- Expenses out weigh the revenues.
- Qualified instructors are hard to recruit and retain.
- There is no dedicated space for this program.
- Marketing for the program is not adequate.
- Training for instructors is limited or non-existent.
- There are no partnerships with this program in place.
- The program name seems tired, not exciting.
- Some view program as day care or school instead of a recreation program.
- Program evaluations are not done on a consistent basis.

Key Findings/ Recommendations

While the Playgroup program has a long history within BREC it appears to be at the end of its life cycle. Participation numbers have declined at a fairly steady pace. Some of the reasons for this could be that the school district offers a pre-kindergarten program which has some of the same goals and objectives as Playgroup and the need for all day types of programs is higher than in recent years. However at the same



time the number of grandparents that are raising grand children is increasing. So there is still some need for this type of program. If the program is to continue it needs to be restructured or contracted out. The name needs to be changed to something that has creativity and excitement. There needs to be a set curriculum in place and the program should be consistent throughout the system. A training program for instructors needs to be established. There needs to be a policy and procedures manual in place. Fees need to be restructured to help better offset expenses or a decision needs to be made that this program will continue to be subsidized by BREC. With current status it should not be considered as one of the core services of BREC.

Program: Day Camp

Strengths

- Wide variety of locations offered for this program.
- Campers have the opportunity for field trips.
- Good variety of activities offered.
- Camps have a good solid history in the BREC system.
- There is a 1/12 ratio maintained.
- Specialty camps appear to have good participation numbers.
- Program is a good alternative to the typical child care center for parents who need all day care.

Weaknesses

- Overall participation numbers have decreased.
- There is no consistent training program in place for staff.
- Transportation is an issue. Bus drivers are not always available.
- There are camps located in close proximity to each other, which creates an over saturation of the market and creates competition between sites.
- Facilities are not conducive in many areas for the program and limit program growth.
- There are no joint programming efforts in place for the camp program.
- Evaluations are not done on a consistent basis.
- Program fees are not in line with market value.
- There is no written policy and procedures manual in place.
- Recruiting and maintaining qualified staff is an issue.
- Standards are not in place at this time.

Key Findings/ Recommendations

The day camp program is a good example of a program that should be considered one of BREC's core programs. The program has a good solid foundation and history within the BREC system. There does need to be some restructuring of the program to provide a better quality of service. There needs to be joint programming across the system to assure consistency in all areas. This can also help to maximize resources for the camps. Themes should be added to each session of camp. Adding themes to each week and offering activities that relate to those themes this would help add excitement to the program's daily activities. This would also help in creating a more consistent program. The specialty camps should be



continued and built on. Participants crave a different or new type of experience and these programs provide that opportunity. Standards need to be written and put in place to ensure quality in all the camp programs. These standards would include customer services standards as well as program standards for camps. A staff training program needs to be put in place and staff should be trained as a group. A policy and procedures manual also needs to be written and put in place for staff to follow. The number of camps should be scaled back. There appears to be a large number of camps with low participation numbers. Reducing the number of camps actually offered would help create more of a demand for the service being offered. Program fees need to be adjusted to meet market rate. This would help in making the program more cost effective. More needs to be done in the way of marketing for camps. A camp brochure needs to be developed for the program. A logo should be developed each summer for the camp and used in all marketing materials and on camp shirts for the summer. This helps in creating an identity for the program.

Program: Dance

Strengths

- The program offers a variety of dance mediums and a variety of levels.
- Programs are offered at a variety of facilities.
- According to staff this program is highly anticipated by the public.
- The program has deep history in the BREC system.
- The program offers a recital at the end of the session.
- Provides a good alternative to a dance studio.
- The program has a good retention rate of participants.
- Programs are designed to meet demographic need.

Weaknesses

- Participation numbers have decreased.
- Hiring and keeping qualified instructors.
- Fees are below market rate.
- Facilities limit program capabilities.
- No set curriculums in place for dance program.
- Records are not kept accurately.
- Programs are provided at facilities that are in close proximity to each other, creating competition with each other.
- Other service providers in the area offer the same programs.

Key Issues/ Recommendations

The Dance Program has a good solid foundation in the BREC system. It could be considered one of BREC's core programs. While the program has some very solid strengths there are some areas that need to be restructured. There needs to be a set curriculum in place to insure consistency and quality. The department needs to focus on offering quality versus quantity in the approach to programming. The programs are offered at a large number of facilities that are close in proximity to each other. This creates a competition with in the department. The number of classes offered needs to be scaled back to help



create more of a demand for the program and to help alleviate some of the interdepartmental competition. The program needs to have dedicated space. At least one site should be turned into a specialty facility and focus on dance if the program is to continue. Dance in general appears to have a large number of other service providers in the area. There needs to be a commitment to do the program and do it right or get out of the business.

Program: Gymnastics

Strengths

- Program is offered at a variety of locations.
- A variety of levels of gymnastics are offered.
- Keeps participants active and provides fitness.
- Participant numbers have increased in areas where consistent instructors are in place.

Weaknesses

- Equipment is outdated.
- Space is limited for program.
- Does not provide for participation beyond an instructional level. There is not opportunity for competition.
- Recruiting and retaining qualified instructors.
- There are no set curriculums in place.
- Participation numbers are down at some of the facilities.
- Fees are not in line with market rate.

Key Issues/ Recommendations

Gymnastics is a program that to be successful requires dedicated space and the opportunity for competitive levels. At this point it is recommended that gymnastics not be considered one of BREC's core programs. The department would be better served to offer beginning tumbling classes or cheer classes as one of the short course programs.

Program: Martial Arts

Strengths

- Programs are offered at a variety of locations.
- Helps build discipline and self-confidence in participants.
- Participant numbers have remained steady.
- There are levels for any ability offered.
- There are a variety of styles offered.
- Martial arts is a good example of a social impact program because of the discipline and respect that is taught in martial arts.

Weaknesses



- Recruiting and retaining qualified instructors.
- Tournaments are not pre-scheduled.
- There are no standards or curriculums in place.
- Centers compete with each other for the same market.
- Program fees are below market rate.
- Space in facilities is not always conducive for the program.
- There appears to be a large number of other service providers in the parish.
- Program evaluations are not done on a consistent basis.

Key Issues/ Recommendations

Martial arts is an excellent outlet for participants. This program while it has fairly good participant base should not be considered one of BREC's core programs. This is a program that would be better contracted out or outsourced. This is a very specialized activity and requires dedicated space and highly qualified instructors.

Program: Home School Physical Education and After School Programs

Strengths

- Home School PE provides a unique service to a specific market.
- Makes use of facilities at times when programs are not typically provided.
- Helps increase socialization in children.
- After School program provides a healthy, fun learning environment that may be lacking at home.
- Good potential for growth.
- Both of these programs provide positive social impact.

Weaknesses

- Lack of transportation.
- The threat of having to be licensed.
- No set curriculums in place.
- Recruiting and retaining qualified instructors.
- Lack of training for staff.
- Limited resources for program equipment and supplies.
- Some programs are located in high crime areas and children are walking from school to the program.
- Partnerships not utilized for this program.

Key Issues/ Recommendations

This program area should be considered one of BREC's core program areas. This program has great potential for growth. Partnerships need to be utilized for this program. For the home school program a partnership with the home school associations needs to be formed. Get them involved in every aspect from helping to plan the curriculum to hiring instructors. Expand the program by offering other types of home school programs such as field trips and dances. The school district is an obvious partner for the after school program. An alliance should be formed with the district to provide a better service and to



help maximize resources. Research needs to be done on more grant opportunities for funding of these programs. Standard curriculums need to be set and in place for both programs. A Standards of Care also needs to be in place to insure that procedures and guidelines are being followed. These types of programs have such a positive social impact that a commitment needs to be made to assure quality in this program area.

Program: Adult Sports

Strengths

- Offer a good variety of leagues.
- Promotes physical activity and leisure opportunities for adults.
- Awards are given for each sport.
- There are end of season tournaments held in each sport.
- Offered at a variety of facilities.

Weaknesses

- Other providers in the parish.
- Teams have to travel far for games.
- Lack of lighted fields.
- Gyms are not adequate for leagues.
- Participation numbers have decreased.
- Maintenance of the fields is an issue.
- Outside groups using fields limits BREC use.
- Facilities are not updated and not attractive.

Key Issues/ Recommendations

The adult sport leagues are a core program for BREC at this time. The program generates sufficient revenue to offset its costs to the Department. The skills required to manage this program are consistent with the capabilities of BREC staff. It is our recommendation that BREC continue to run the adult sports leagues.

Program: Youth Sports

Strengths

- BREC offers a variety of programs.
- Participation numbers have remained flat or increased in sports.
- The program gives the opportunity for youth to experience new sports.
- The program has a strong history.
- Participants learn teamwork.
- Basic skills are taught.

Weaknesses



- Facilities appear to be an issue.
- Field rentals limit programming.
- Participation in girls sports has dropped.
- Program expenses exceed program revenues.
- Difficulty in finding and keeping qualified and sufficient coaches and officials.

Key Issues/ Recommendations

The program is an excellent alternative to school athletics. The creation of an athletic advisory board to help manage youth sports could be a good way to enhance quality of programs. There needs to be more partners established for these programs. Other youth sports organizations could be good partners for programs. Sponsors would be a good way of helping offset some of the program costs. Youth sports with some adjustments could be considered one of BREC's core programs. It is our recommendation that youth sports be outsourced to be managed by partners outside BREC administration.

Program: Special Events

Strengths

- Reach a large number of participants.
- Offers family oriented activities.
- Creates good partnerships.
- Participation numbers at events are up.
- Create positive community support.
- Offers unique activities.
- Has good growth potential.
- Positive economic impact to the parish.

Weaknesses

- Limited amount of advertising dollars.
- Expenses exceed revenue for events.
- Lack of volunteers.
- Some programs are at capacity and are limited in growth due to facility size.

Key Issues/ Recommendations

Special events should be considered one of BREC's core programs. The events create positive economic impact in the parish. The events offer high activity levels in short span of time. Special events are a positive way to reach a large number of participants at one time. Some activities at events could have fees attached to them to help offset some of the expense of programs. Vendor booth fees could be offered in a menu format to help with expenses of events. For example there is a flat fee that all pay and then there would be a fee attached to the extras like electricity. To help with volunteers service organizations could be utilized. To help with staff cost part of the set up of the events could be contracted. A marketing plan for each program would help in streamlining marketing efforts.



Program: Fitness

Strengths

- Good variety of programs offered.
- Classes offered to adults while children are in other programs.
- Programs create opportunity for socialization.
- Membership fees are affordable.
- Offers opportunity to participate in programs without having to have a membership.
- Pilates and Yoga are not offered at very many sites and this helps in creating a demand for the program.

Weaknesses

- Some programs have low participation numbers.
- Programs are offered in close proximity to each other. This creates a competition between centers.
- Recruiting and maintaining qualified instructors is an issue.
- Facilities are not conducive to programs.
- Some equipment is outdated.
- There are a large number of other service providers.
- In some programs the expense exceed the revenue.

Key Issues/ Recommendations

While the fitness programs offer a good service they are not one of BREC's core services at this time. Fitness programs could be contracted out or partnerships could be utilized. BREC is doing well in this area in keeping up with program trends. There needs to be a review of the program fees, they are not a market rate. The number of programs offered needs to be scaled back to help with the low numbers.

Program: Therapeutic Recreation

Strengths

- New program area.
- Offering a good variety of programs.
- Participation levels are good.
- Programs are offered at a variety of locations.
- Good opportunity for growth.
- Provides opportunity for socialization.
- Good opportunity for partnerships.

Weaknesses

- Not all facilities can accommodate programs.
- Lack of qualified staff for program.
- Promotion and awareness of the program needs to be improved.



- Set curriculums not in place at this time.
- Program evaluations have not been done at the time data was collected.

Key Issues/ Recommendations

This program area has the potential to be one of BREC's core program areas. This is a new program area to BREC so there is not a lot of history to evaluate. At this point the key issue is getting the program established and creating awareness within the community. A marketing plan for the therapeutic program needs to be written. There is good opportunity for partnerships for these programs. There should be facilities dedicated to these programs. This would also help in creating an identity for the program.

Program: Senior Programs

Strengths

- There are an excellent variety of activities offered.
- Programs offer seniors opportunity for socialization.
- Some programs offered are only offered by BREC.
- Participation numbers for programs vary but are up for the most part.
- Programs help increase mobility, teach new skills, offer exercise and an overall positive experience.
- Staff has done a good job at evaluating programs.
- There is a good understanding of the benefit of the program.

Weaknesses

- Programs are heavily subsidized.
- Resources for the programs are spread thin.
- Facilities for programs are shared which limit program hours.
- There is only one facility dedicated to senior programs.
- Marketing and awareness of programs is an issue.
- Programs are spread out throughout the parish.
- There are some senior programs that are offered outside of the senior program services.

Key Issues/ Recommendations

Senior programs should be considered one of BREC's core program areas. The programs offer an invaluable service for the seniors in the parish. There are however some things that need to be restructured in the program area. There needs to be stand alone senior facilities. Facilities and programs should be consolidated. This would allow staff to focus better on programs. All senior programs need to be managed by senior services. This would help in creating better program consistency. There is great opportunity for partnerships for this program area. The department is doing a good job at meeting trends in senior programs. Some programs should be offered in age segments to entice younger seniors to participate in programs. More needs to be done in the way of marketing for the senior programs. The



establishment of a marketing plan could help in this effort. Senior services need to be considered an essential service for BREC.



Program: Independence Park Theater Programs and Sundays at 4

Strengths

- Creates an opportunity for community involvement.
- Provides an opportunity to educate community about the arts.
- The theater facility is a great venue.
- Good opportunity for partnerships.
- Programs have a dedicated following.
- Sunday's series provides exposure to the Gallery.
- Sole service provider for some of the programs.
- Program fees appear to be in line with market rate.

Weaknesses

- Lack of public awareness.
- The potential for the theater is not realized.
- Marketing in general is an issue.
- High turn over rate of some staff positions.
- Other service providers in the area.
- Space is limited for productions in the theater.

Key Issues/ Recommendations

The Theater and Gallery, like other specialty facilities in the BREC system should be considered core programs. These are exceptional venues and should be utilized to their potential. Space is limited at the theater for example for dressing for productions. Marketing is an issue. These types of programs should be marketed differently than general programs. The theater should have control over the marketing while following department guidelines. The children's theater program is a good program however there are other service providers in the area offering the same program. This is creating unnecessary competition in this specific program. If the program is being offered and the market demand is being met by other agencies it is not necessary for BREC to offer the program. The theater should focus on programs that unique to BREC. The art guild that is located at the theater does not seem to be a good fit. They could be



relocated to a facility that would be more conducive for the purpose. In general the programs offered at these facilities offer a unique and good service for the community and should be a focus for BREC.

Program: Youth and Teens

Strengths

- Provide a positive environment for teens.
- Creates better self-confidence in teens.
- Provides opportunity for positive role models for teens.
- Teaches life skills.
- Helps in job readiness for teens.
- There are a good variety of programs offered.
- Program evaluations are done fairly consistently.

Weaknesses

- There needs to be more partnerships for the programs.
- There are safety and security issues in some areas.
- Other service providers in the parish offering the same programs.
- Department does not have a clear approach or commitment to youth at risk programs.
- Parent participation is lacking in programs.

Key Issues/ Recommendations

Youth at Risk programs should be considered as one of BREC's core program areas. Currently there is not enough emphasis placed on these programs in the BREC system. The demographics of the parish indicate that this should be a core business. These programs have a great social impact on the community. They teach life skills, provide positive role models, and help in better self- confidence of the teens. Research shows that these types of programs help reduce crime rates, drug use and incidents of teen pregnancy. There is tremendous opportunity for partnerships for these programs. BREC should create an At Risk program division within the Recreation Department to focus more on this program area and to mitigate current issues with program duplication.

MARKET SEGMENTATION

Selection of the groups that we are most capable of serving with our resources is one of our most important and difficult decisions. As staff works within the Parish with citizens to determine a wide array of programs and services that they are interested in, the realization sets in that our resources are limited and that we cannot meet everyone's needs. As a result, we must set priorities and determine what our core services will be. Again, a critical decision as this determination of the groups we will serve establishes our marketing program, allocation of resources, requirements for staff capabilities and coordination with other providers in the Parish.



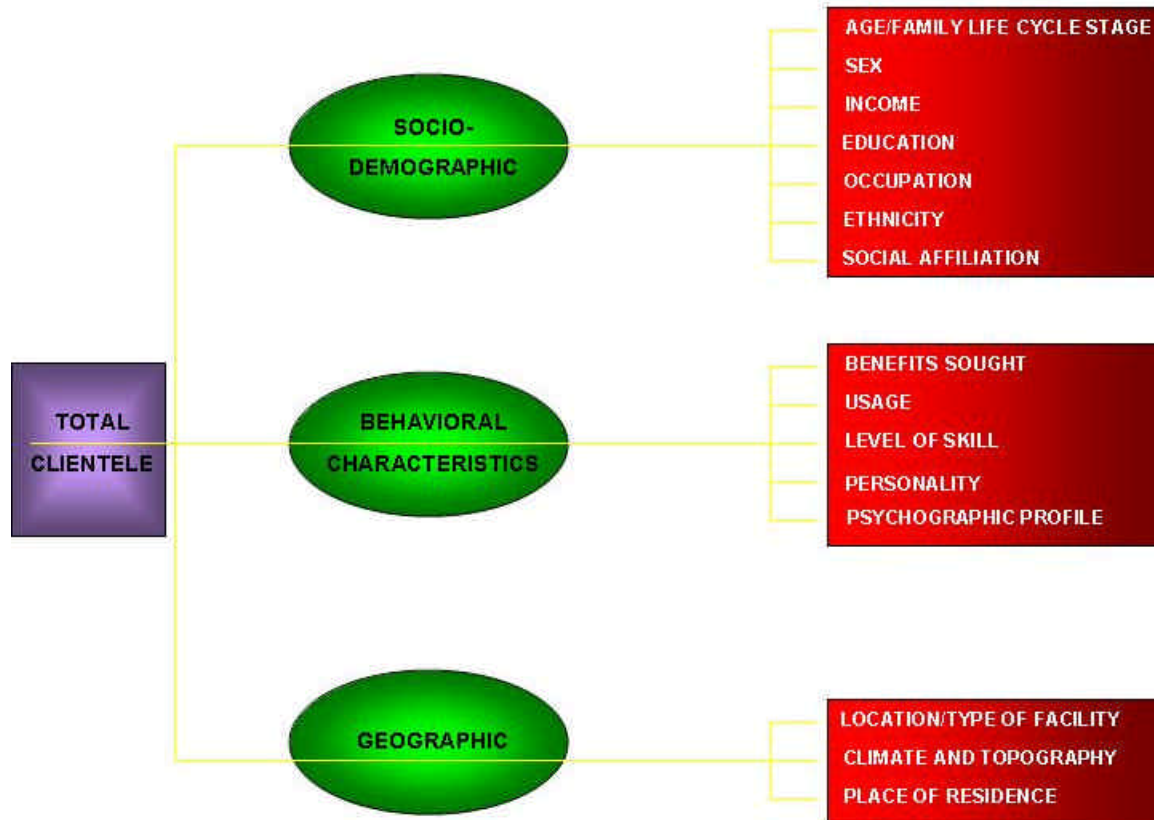
Market segmentation is defined as the process of dividing users into potential client groups. Broadly speaking, market segmentation simply reflects reality. It recognizes the different client groups have different wants, which in turn influence market demand. Market segmentation may be defined as the process of dividing a total clientele into potential groups consisting of people who have relatively similar service or program preferences. A potential client group may be defined as a group of individuals or organizations that share one or more similar characteristics and who have relatively similar service or program preferences.

Based on the consultant team’s analysis of the characteristics for segmenting clientele and reviewing the criteria which has been established to determine the core program, eight programs have been targeted. Those programs/services are:

- Day Camps
- Special Events
- Adult Sports
- Youth Sports
- Senior Programs
- Home School Physical Education and After School Programs
- Specialty Facilities- Theater, Gallery, Observatory, Equestrian Center, Magnolia Mound, Extreme Sports Park (BMX/Velodrome and Skatepark)
- Youth and Teen Programs



Figure 6.1: – Characteristics for Segmenting Clientele



CORE PROGRAM ANALYSIS

Municipal agencies such as BREC and privately owned businesses find it equally as important to identify and manage their core businesses, but what are they? If an agency does not know the answer to that question, it stands the chance of investing resources in the wrong things and eroding its customer base.

Core businesses are the programs and services that differentiate BREC from other providers in the Parish through the eyes of the citizens. Other non-core programs and services are routinely referred to as “context” activities. Context activities are still important but are not competitive differentiators and can be handled in other ways such as outsourcing to contractors, or partnering, with other providers.

The significance of understanding one’s core and context services is a matter of focus. If BREC, for example, does not identify and manage its core services effectively, it will lose customers to other providers and its program will decline. Evidence of this is occurring right now in the Parish as other providers have begun to compete with BREC for programs and services which, heretofore, were dominated by BREC in the market place.



To succeed over the long term, BREC must focus on the things that truly makes it different than other providers in the Parish! BREC must understand what draws new customers to its programs and services and keeps existing ones coming back. Once these things are understood, it is extremely important to direct the bulk of available resources to them.

The consultant worked with staff to identify the core programs and services. The criteria used to make the final selections included the following indicators of what core programs and services will have:

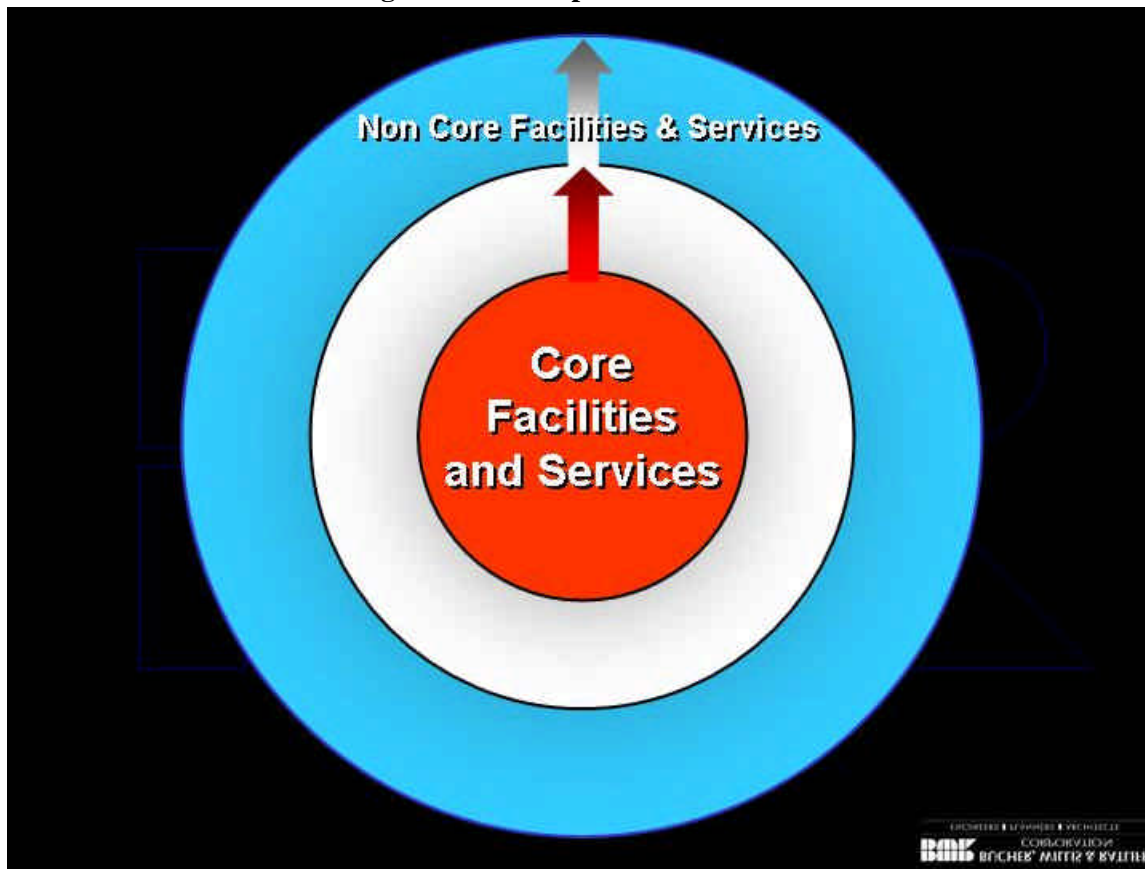
- Full-time dedicated staff
- Dedicated facilities to support the program or service
- Represents a significant percentage of agency's budget
- Has a large target market or wide demographic appeal
- Controls a significant percentage of total market
- Operates 3 or 4 seasons per year
- Has long history of being provided by the agency
- Has the ability to earn income
- Partnerships opportunities exist

Based on these criteria and findings from the program assessment, it is the consultant's recommendation that the following be established as the core programs and services for BREC:

- Day Camps
- Special Events
- Adult Sports
- Youth Sports
- Senior Programs
- Home School Physical Education and After School Programs
- Specialty Facilities - Theater, Gallery, Observatory, Equestrian Center, Magnolia Mound, Extreme Sports Park (BMX/Velodrome and Skatepark)
- Youth and Teen Programs



Figure 6.2: – Graphic View of Core Services



PROGRAM LIFE CYCLE ANALYSIS

Description of Program Life Cycle: Each program offered by any agency has a predictable life cycle. For analytical and management purposes, an agency should always know where each of its programs is on the life cycle. For example, it would not be good to have all programs declining in enrollment; it is important to have some new programs in their growth stage, etc.

The introduction stage does not mean to imply that every program which is offered will succeed; in fact, according to the Learning Resources Network (LERN), an agency should expect that only one of twenty new program ideas will be highly successful. The number of old courses to offer each year should vary between 70% and 90%. If 70% of programs offered are old programs which have previously been offered and have been successful, that is an indication that the agency is more innovative and on the creative edge. If, on the other hand, 90% of programs offered are old courses, that is an indication that the agency is more conservative and traditional.

The growth stage is an indication of the popularity of a program. To succeed, an agency needs 60% to 70% of its participants to be repeat customers. The rule of thumb is that it is six times easier, and costs less, to get a participant to return to a program. If 60% to 70% of participants are not returning, it is an



indication that something is wrong with the location, time, promotion, customer satisfaction, or product mix and the agency needs to understand the reason (s).

The maturation stage varies for all programs. Softball, for example was at a level, mature stage, for a couple of decades. The challenge to management during the maturation stage is to continue to satisfy its customers. The reliance during this stage is on repeat customers as very few new participants are entering the program.

The decline stage is the stage when participation decreases. Decline in participation may occur when other programs become more attractive to participants; new programs may have been introduced which provide a new source of satisfaction; or, just the search for a new experience.

The exit stage occurs when a conscious decision has been made to eliminate the program from the activity guide. Management must make a decision at this point relative to the continuation of programs which fall in this category by continuing with a low level of participation, or to eliminate them from the activity guide.

Figure 6:3: – Program Life Cycle Model

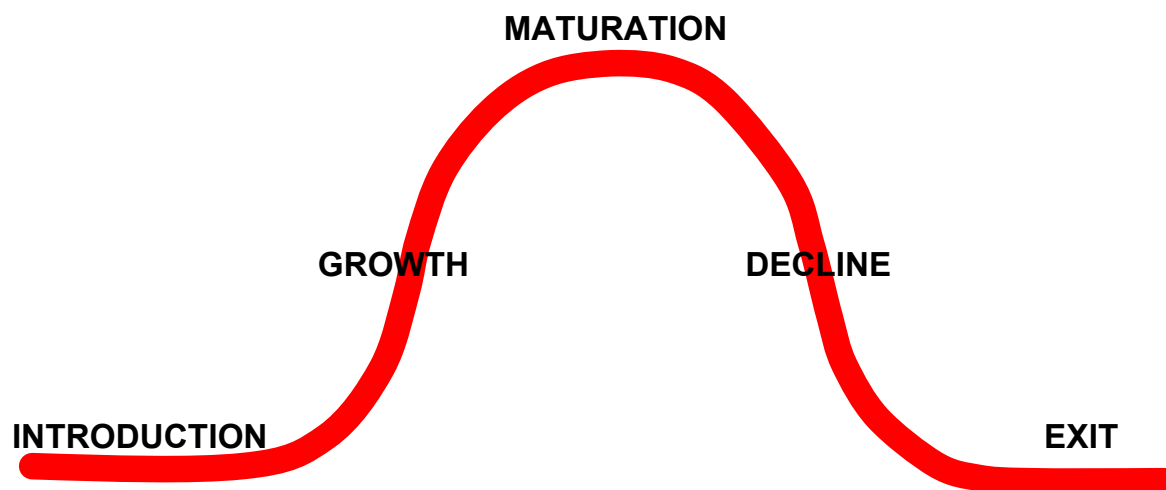




Table 6.4: – Participation Rates in Core Programs

| Program | 2000 Data | 2001 Data | 2002 Data | 2003 Data |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Day Camp | 9512 | 9158 | 10,377 | 9711 |
| Special Events | 69,479 (37) | 54,717 (39) | 95,502 (25) | 156,416 (25) |
| Adult Sports | 397 teams | 262 teams | 320 teams | 305 teams |
| Youth Sports | 504 teams | 500 teams | 455 teams | 450 teams |
| Senior Programs | 45,576 | 50,192 | 49,515 | 50,168 |
| After School Programs | 120 | 140 | 159 | 183 |
| Specialty Facilities | 157,529 | 177,927 | 283,666 | 182,059 |
| Youth & Teens | 4901 | 41,000 | 53,473 | 20,399 |

Note: Special Facilities include: Art Gallery, Bluebonnet Swamp, BMX & Veladrome, Observatory, Horse Activity Center, Magnolia Mound, Comite/Hooper Bike Trails and Independence Theater

Note: Youth and Teens Data retrieved from the BREC Annual Report from the Community Resource Department Section. Other youth and teens were served through the programs offered by the Recreation Department.

Table 6.5: – Current Life Cycle Stage of Core Programs

| Introduction | Growth | Maturation | Decline | Exit |
|--------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------|------|
| | Special Events | Day Camps | Adult Sports | |
| | Senior Programs | | Youth Sports | |
| | After School Programs | | | |
| | Special Facilities | | | |
| | Youth and Teens Programs | | | |

OTHER PROVIDER ANALYSIS

The consultant, with BREC assistance, identified those agencies and businesses in the Parish that provide comparable services within the East Baton Rouge market. Factors that were used for the analysis were:

- the number of programs offered;
- fee structure;
- program participation levels;
- type of services offered;
- facility hours of operation and design/condition assessment; and,
- the provider's market niche (competitive, membership driven, etc.)



Figure 6.4: – East Baton Rouge Parish Parks

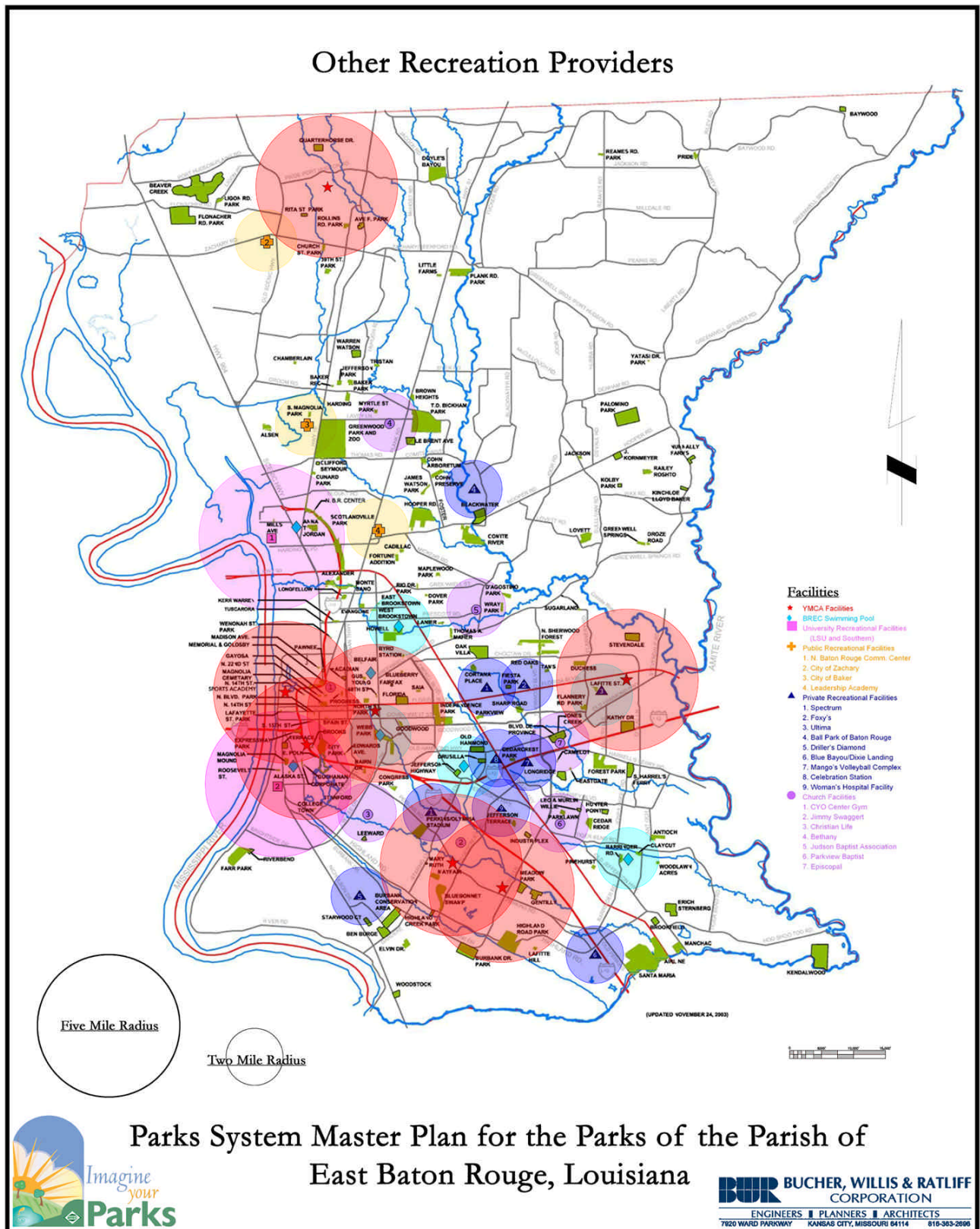




Table 6.6: – Other Providers – Youth Sports

| Other Providers – Youth Sports |
|-----------------------------------|
| YMCA |
| Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) |
| Central Area Youth League (CAYL) |
| Youth Baseball Baton Rouge (YBBR) |
| Comite River League |
| City of Zachary |
| Churches |
| Schools |
| Other Youth Sports Organizations |
| Baton Rouge Soccer Association |
| American Legion |

Table 6.7: – Other Providers – Day Camps

| Other Providers – Day Camps |
|-----------------------------|
| YMCA |
| Boys and Girls Club |
| Churches |
| Day Care Providers |

Table 6.8: – Other Providers – Adult Sports

| Other Providers – Adult Sports |
|--------------------------------|
| Churches |
| Lawyer’s League |
| Exxon Mobile |

Table 6.9: – Other Providers – Senior Programs

| Other Providers – Senior Programs |
|-----------------------------------|
| YMCA |
| Council on Aging |
| Churches |
| United Way Agencies |
| Housing Authority |
| YWCA |

Table 6.10: – Other Providers – After School Programs

| Other Providers – After School Programs |
|---|
| YMCA |
| Schools |
| United Way Agencies |



Table 6.11: – Other Providers – Special Events

| Other Providers – Special Events |
|----------------------------------|
| Centroplex |
| Downtown Development District |
| LSU |
| Southern University |

Table 6.12: – Other Providers – Specialty Facilities

| Other Providers – Specialty Facilities |
|--|
| Louisiana Arts and Science Museum |
| LSU |

Observations from the consultant’s review of other providers are as follows:

MARKET CONTROL

- There are several agencies providing similar services to those offered by BREC. It appears that BREC does not control the market in very many program areas, however, it is competitive in services. The program areas where BREC is competitive in services include: day camps, sports leagues, youth and teen programs and senior services. In the area of sports, BREC does provide a very competitive service. The league numbers have decreased in adult sports but remained flat or increased in youth sports indicating that the service remains competitive in the market. Day camps, while they do not control the market, are also a competitive service. BREC’s camps offer a good alternative to more expensive and specialized camps offered by other agencies.

Areas that BREC has the opportunity to control the program service market are in the areas of special events and specialty facilities. In the area of special events, there are other service providers but BREC offers larger and more special events than those agencies. It is the consultant’s opinion that the special event market demand is met by BREC. The specialty facilities in the BREC system meet a demand that is not offered in other areas.

FEES AND CHARGES

- Fees and charges in the agencies reviewed vary widely by program area. Some of the agencies such as the YMCA have membership fees as well as program fees. BREC fees appear to be below the market rate in many program areas but are in line in other areas. For example:

Fees for general programs such as martial arts or fitness are well below market rate compared to the fees being charged by other service providers. Day camp fees for most camps offered by BREC are below market rate. The market average for camps in the Parish appears to be about \$75 per week. The Boys and Girls Club Day Camp ranges from \$0 to \$65 as it can utilize grants for some of its participants. BREC fees are \$90 for a two week session (\$45 per week). In the area of sports, BREC is in line with market rates for league fees.



Table 6.13: – Day Camp Fees

| Agency | Fees |
|---------------------|---|
| BREC | \$45 per week |
| YMCA | \$75 per week |
| Boys and Girls Club | \$0 to \$65 (higher fee for more supervision) |

FACILITY OPERATIONS

- Facility hours and capacity of operations were reviewed in this area. The YMCA, Fitness Spectrum and the other private agencies reviewed have significantly greater operational hours. The average number of weekly hours of operation was 90. BREC’s hours vary by facility but are significantly lower and average 40 hours per week.

Table 6.14: – Facility Hours of Operation

| Provider | Facility Hours of Operation/Weekly |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| BREC | 40 |
| YMCA | 90 |
| Fitness Spectrum | 90 |

Historically, most BREC Recreation Centers have been open after school and on Saturday mornings. Some Centers are open, as needed, to accommodate day-time meetings and activities such as Day Camps.

Use of Recreation Centers is complicated due to the lack of air conditioning. Records do not provide usable data for the number of users at the Centers, however, it does not appear to the consultant that they are heavily used. Possible reasons would include the lack of things to do at the Centers and their lack of “curb appeal”. Choice of interior and exterior materials and color schemes are not inviting to those who are looking for a location to recreate. Clearly, these facility issues are among the reasons for some programs being less than competitive in the market.

PARTICIPATION LEVELS

- Participation levels have varied in program areas for BREC and the other service providers. Numbers in the area of fitness programs have decreased for BREC but have increased for the YMCA, Spectrum Fitness and other private fitness centers. Special event numbers have increased for BREC at all special events. Day camp numbers have remained steady fore both BREC and other service providers. Sport leagues have varied - adult sport numbers as a whole have decreased while youth sports have remained steady or increased.

As a whole across the Parish, program numbers for general programs have decreased. Programs that promote family, that are short term and high impact appear to have the highest participation numbers. This is a trend across the country and is not unique to East Baton Rouge Parish.



COMMUNITY RESOURCES DEPARTMENT ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

Literature Research Credit - This section of Chapter 6 is devoted to the analysis of the Community Resources Department and its social impact on the citizens who live in the Parish of East Baton Rouge, with an emphasis on young people. Dr. John Crompton of Texas A & M University, and a member of the consultant team, has teamed with Dr. Peter Witt, also of Texas A & M, to provide much of the research used by the consultant in this section.

Benefits of Services - For the purposes of this section, it is our premise that services provide positive benefits which can be used as community development tools, although hard to quantify, by making inner city neighborhoods more livable; by improving the lives of at-risk youth, low income children and low-income families; and, by providing places in low income neighborhoods where people can experience a sense of community.

BREC History - BREC has provided indoor recreation facilities and recreation programs for young people since its initial year in 1946. Programs for at-risk youth have been provided for 10 years through the BREC Community Resources Department which works in cooperation with the BREC Recreation Department and other health and human service partners in the Parish.

Initially, when the Community Resources Department was formed, the Department Director was strictly a grant writer who sought funding for at-risk youth programs. As funding was identified, the programs were managed by the Recreation Department. However, over time, budgeted funds were increased for the Community Resources Department which allowed for the hiring of additional staff. As a result, the Community Resources Department not only identified grants/funding for its programs but also managed them. Within the last year, or two, BREC has created a Grants Department which now reduces the grant writing responsibilities formerly spearheaded by the Community Resources Department.

The 2003 BREC Annual Report identifies eighteen programs sponsored by the Community Resources Department, many of which target at-risk youth. During 2003, 20,399 citizens were served by these eighteen programs.

Community Resources Department History - The Community Resource Department was added to BREC as a result, in part, of its sensitivity to the citizens in the Parish who live at the poverty level. The Department received its funding in its initial years through grants which were matched by BREC funds. The initial objective was to network with community government agencies, community/civic and social organizations and to form cooperative relationships to assist with programs for at-risk youth, disadvantaged senior citizens and persons with disabilities. That initial objective continues today.



Key Findings

The Community Resources Department partners with a number of outside agencies to produce programs.

There is duplication of effort between two BREC Departments – the Community Resources Department and the Recreation Department.

New program ideas are done in concert with staff and other providers to determine if they are the best use of resources.

The food bank program should be produced by an outside agency.

Program results are not quantified to determine if behavior is improved after a participants involvement in a program provided by the Community Resources Department.

Recommendations

Based on consultant team interviews, review of programs offered by the Community Resources Department and review of the professional literature, several recommendations have been developed:

1. BREC resources need to be allocated in an efficient and effective manner. Three examples of how that can be done are:
 - Eliminate duplication of effort within the BREC Organization between the Community Resources Department and Recreation Department.
 - Eliminate duplication of effort between BREC programs and outside agencies.
 - Discontinue the direct provision of the food bank program and find a partner to assume that responsibility.
2. BREC's organizational structure should be re-aligned to eliminate the duplicative effort between the Community Services Department and the Recreation Department. These two departments should be consolidated.
3. BREC should meet with the Baton Rouge Police Department to see if its Crime Statistics Division can alter its reporting mechanism to provide BREC and others with the information it needs to acquire and analyze data surroundings its major facilities which attract youth.

Methodology to Analyze the Community Resources Department

The strategy used by the consultant to analyze the Community Resources Department included:



- An interview with the Director of Community Resources
- Interviews with representatives of seven other providers of health and human services in the Parish:
 - The Big Buddy Program
 - YWCA
 - YMCA
 - Children's Defense
 - I Care
 - Family Roads
 - Boys & Girls Club
- Review of program descriptions, analysis of Outreach Programs provided by staff and other documents provided by staff of the Community Resources Department
- Consultant facilitation of a one day staff meeting with senior managers at BREC which included the Directors of Community Resources
- Review of the literature relative to programs and activities provided by the Community Resources Department – especially the literature authored by a member of the BWR Team, Dr. John Crompton of Texas A & M University
- Review of crime statistics in the Parish provided by the Baton Rouge Police Department

Findings from Program Evaluations (provided by staff of the Community Resources Department)

PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

Program: Academy of Performing and Visual Arts

Strengths

- Develops a sense of accomplishment through exposure, unfolding self-esteem involving hidden talent and nurturing an appreciation for the arts
- All participants share the same experiences to the best of individual abilities

Weaknesses

- The relatively small number of participants
- The difficulty of getting parental involvement which helps with steady attendance

Program: Alsen Coalition for Community Action, Inc. Food Bank

Strengths

- Provides food for those in need

Weaknesses

- Not enough food for those who qualify

Program: Baker Manor Tutorial

Strengths

- Good parental support
- Dedicated persons working with the students



Weaknesses

- Need improved technology and more computer programs

Program: Boys Choir and Upward...Boys to Men!

Strengths

- Builds self-esteem

Weaknesses

- Initial lack of motivation

Program: “CTEP” Cultural tutorial Enrichment Program

Strengths

- Parental interest
- Grades of some participants were improved
- Counselors were enthusiastic and well prepared

Weaknesses

- Lack of interest by some parents
- Many students did not want to be tutored, they just wanted to do home work

Program: Delta Haven

Strengths

- The site was good
- Counselor’s feeling of participants’ feeling of belonging

Weaknesses

- Need more prevention materials

Program: Doug Williams Annual Football Clinic

Strengths

- Availability of National Football League players

Weaknesses

- None

Program: Roving Leader Program

Strengths

- Homework helpers with individual school support
- Recreational and social activities were offered
- After hours support for homework helper participants



- Parental support
- Transportation and snacks provided

Weaknesses

- Disregard by a few staff and site supervisors with reference to protocol (time, time sheets and attendance) to the Roving Leader Tracker

Program: “SAT” Save-A-Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program

Strengths

- Provision of a safe and peaceful haven for the children
- The “SAT” Program has had a very positive influence on the lives of all involved
- Participants are learning to make wise social choices through field trips, workshops, education, tutorial and spiritual opportunities

Weaknesses

- More funding is needed to have the children participate in more activities

Program: Sisters Supporting Sisters

Strengths

- Sisterly concerns

Weaknesses

- None

Program: St. Isidore Tutorial Program

Strengths

- Cooperation of parents and staff
- Teaching abilities of staff

Weaknesses

- Program is too new to evaluate

Program: Alsen Summer Enrichment Camp

Strengths

- Field trips exposed youth to culture and adventure
- There were many learning activities each day at camp
- It was a safe environment for at-risk youth to socialize and develop character development skills

Weaknesses

- Curriculum and number of campers



Program: Tom “Pete” Purvis Summer Enrichment camp/Entrepreneur Program

Strengths

- The program encouraged teamwork and self-esteem
- Counselors were extraordinary; worked above and beyond their duties and were knowledgeable in reference to character development
- There were many learning activities each day at camp

Weaknesses

- Limited number of field trips

Program: WAGS – I Writing Arts Government Self-Esteem

Strengths

- Participants learned about respect and obedience
- Religion was tied into character development lessons
- Participants and counselors interacted at a personal level

Weaknesses

- Need more presenters

Program: WAGS – 11 Writing Arts Government Self-Esteem

Strengths

- It was a safe haven for youth to convene at the church
- There were several educational and entertaining programs

Weaknesses

- Need more parent involvement
- Need more field trips

Program: WAGS – 111 Writing Arts Government Self-Esteem

Strengths

- The access to computer technology provided an opportunity that is somewhat unattainable to children in lower socio-economic areas

Weaknesses

- Need more in-depth training for Americor/Eurac workers
- Boys were not given an opportunity to participate in scouting
- Need more field trips



Program: Top Teens of America

Strengths

- Community links among 6,000 youth in the USA through bonding and uniform structure

Weaknesses

- Need to recruit more participants

Findings from Research and Analysis in the Parish

1. There are 38 providers of health and human services in the Parish according to the Capital Area United Way.
2. The Community Resource Department partners with several other providers to ensure that programs are offered.
3. Several providers of health and human services are in need of dependable indoor space to produce their programs.
4. BREC has under-used indoor space at its Recreation and Senior Centers.
5. Other providers are anxious to partner with BREC to provide programs at its facilities; a partnership which would improve the utilization of space at BREC recreation and senior centers.
6. There is no quantification of positive impacts on participants as a result of program participation.
7. Other chapters of this report indicate the importance of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of programs offered by BREC, thus the need to identify programs which are the right fit for the resources available to BREC (core services) and the need to know that the programs are effective (performance measures). In every instance, it is imperative that program duplication is avoided as BREC expenses are expected to exceed revenues in 2005, if proactive steps are not taken by management to address the issue.
8. The organizational structure at BREC includes two departments who are in the business of recreation; the Community Resources Department and the Recreation Department.
9. There is program duplication between the Community Resources Department and the Recreation Department. Examples of program duplication include:
 - a. Day camps – a couple of camps are held at BREC facilities and are being staffed by Community Resource employees but are planned and managed by Recreation Department staff.
 - b. Senior Programs – a couple of church-based senior programs are planned solely by the Community Resources Department without the assistance of Recreation Department staff.



- c. Tutoring Programs – some programs are strictly tutoring; however, some have recreation activities included. Most of the tutoring programs which are produced by the Community Resources Department are held at sites other than BREC facilities.
- d. Sports Programs – a football camp held in May was produced by Community Resources, however, two held in June were organized and produced by the Recreation Department.

Findings from the Professional Literature on Social Impact Analysis

1. All youth are at risk, but some are more at risk than others.
2. Current national approaches to lessening youth problems have produced weak, transient or no results.
3. Services for youth need to both help reduce problem behaviors as well as increase pro-social attitudes and skills.
4. Efforts need to be made to create organizations and communities that enable youth to move along the pathways to adulthood by supplying the supports and opportunities necessary to develop beyond simple problem prevention. These approaches do not eliminate the need to target specific high-risk individuals for attention, but clearly indicate that efforts should not be restricted to this group or only be concerned with problem remediation. As experts have noted:

At the center of this thinking [is] the idea that young people are assets in the making - their development dependent on a range of supports and opportunities coming from family, community and the other institutions that touch them. When supports and opportunities are plentiful, young people can and do thrive; when their environments are deficient or depleted, youth tend not to grow and progress.

5. Youth development is a process which prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences which help them to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically, and cognitively competent. Positive youth development addresses the broader developmental needs of youth, in contrast to deficit-based models which focus solely on youth problems.
6. The youth development process must involve youth serving organizations, but also must involve families, schools and other institutions. In other words, an ecological approach to development is required.
7. Some Park and Recreation Departments (PARD's), like many other youth serving agencies, hire individuals who are too young and have too many issues themselves to be strong resources in the lives of youth. In addition, too often leaders are hired who only plan to be around for a short period of time, thus undermining the value of creating long-term, in depth relationships between meaningful adults and youth. In many cases, a system is not in place to develop leaders on a pre-service and ongoing basis who understand the principles of youth development and how to translate these principles into meaningful practice. Finally, we often do not pay enough to attract and retain quality staff. Too often we entrust our youth to low paid individuals who turn over far too quickly.



8. The potential of park and recreation departments (PARD's) to be a primary community resource for alleviating societal problems associated with at-risk youth has long been recognized by many in this field. Professionals and academics (and many members of the public) believe that PARD's are uniquely positioned to address this issue for at least three reasons:
 - a. First, recreation centers and park areas, where many young people congregate, are widely distributed across communities, and thus can be used as service centers for dealing with youth-at-risk issues.
 - b. Second, PARD personnel are experienced in establishing empathetic relationships with their clients.
 - c. Third, recreation activities are inherently appealing to large segments of youth in general, including at-risk youth, and thus offer a vehicle for assessing and positively influencing pro-social behavior.
9. Program outcomes conducted by PARD's are showing some success stories. Several departments show results which demonstrate decreases in crime rates attributable to the initiation of park and recreation programs. Examples of some of these studies are as follows:
 - a. Cincinnati, Ohio, reported a 31 % decrease in crime incidents in the first six months after the Winton Hills prevention programs began.
 - b. Commerce, California, compared gang related assaults in their city with neighboring East Los Angeles to demonstrate program effectiveness. In East Los Angeles there were 140 gang related assaults and 11 homicides in 1993 compared to seven gang related assaults and zero homicides in Commerce.
 - c. Kansas City, Missouri, reported a 25% decrease in the rate of juvenile apprehensions compared to the previous year in the areas abutting centers in which Midnight Basketball programs were offered.
 - d. In Fort Worth, Texas, crime statistics supplied by the Police Department indicated in a one mile radius of the community centers where the midnight basketball was provided, crime dropped 28%.
10. We will undertake a disservice to our clients, who already are beset by part-time parents and part-time education, by offering part-time programs. To be effective, programs must be consistent, constant and sustainable. Otherwise we simply feed the loop of failing to fulfill our promises.
11. If PARD's are to realize their potential leadership in alleviating the consequences of youth being at-risk (prevention programs) and intervening and modifying behaviors such as drug abuse and criminal activity (intervention programs), possible program impact has to be scientifically demonstrated. Although there is a widespread belief among recreation professionals, professionals in other fields, and elected municipal officials that recreation services can be a powerful force for both prevention and intervention, full support of PARD efforts will not be forthcoming without solid evaluative efforts.



REVIEW OF THE PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE RELATIVE TO SOCIAL IMPACT

Literature Review #1 - What is this Thing called Youth Development

Youth development as a term and set of practices began to emerge in the late 1980's. However, in many cases we have adopted the language but have not looked at nor understood the implications of the underlying principles for how youth serving programs and organizations should be conceived, organized and evaluated.

But first a little history. Rising concerns about increases in negative youth behaviors led to calls in the late 1980's and early 1990's to "doing something" to stop or decrease negative behaviors such as using alcohol and drugs; engaging in unprotected sex; having children out of wedlock or before teens were ready to be responsible parents; and being involved in or the victim of gang violence. The origin of many of park and recreation at-risk youth programs can be traced to a negative event(s) in their communities that grabbed public attention and mobilized community efforts to do something to overcome these problems and issues.

The Creation of At-Risk Youth

During this period, it became fashionable to talk in terms of serving "at-risk" youth, youth who were thought to be more likely to undertake "risk behaviors," due to community or family circumstances. Because stopping or decreasing negative behaviors was deemed necessary by the public and politicians, agencies requesting funds promised that their programs would decrease unwanted behaviors and prevent currently uninvolved youth from undertaking these negative behaviors in the first place. To label youth as "at-risk" was politically useful, if not necessary, and helped agencies define their niche and purpose. Those who were successful in stating their goals in terms of problem reduction and prevention got the biggest share of attention and funding. A limited group of indicators were considered useful in defining success (e.g., impact of programs on crime rates, adolescent pregnancies, drug and alcohol consumption, etc.) Government agencies and some universities participated in supplying needed outcome data and evaluations.

All Youth are At-Risk

However, concerns began to emerge that youth programs were being restricted to "at-risk" youth, too often defined as persons of color from economically disadvantaged families, and from single parent homes. Clearly, it was argued, there were youth from many other backgrounds, living in all parts of almost every community, who were demonstrating problematic behaviors. In addition, there was a growing professional and public backlash against only dealing with the problems of a few, as opposed to offering services for everyone. Many professionals argued that "all youth are at-risk," that youth across the entire community are in need of services, and that school shootings, drug arrests and pregnancy rates in even middle-class communities are evidence of the need to serve everyone. However, among those trying to obtain funding through the political and foundation process, there were still concerns that efforts should be directed to those most in need. Monies were not available to serve everyone and that the limited funds needed to be targeted. Thus, grew the argument: "Yes, all youth are at risk, but some are more at-risk than others."

Problem Free is Not Fully Prepared



Unfortunately research findings have suggested that approaches to lessening youth problems whether for some youth or all youth have "produced weak, transient or no results". While a problems-based approach assumes that there is something wrong with the individual and that we need to provide the skills and knowledge to correct deficiencies, undertaking these types of programs has only had modest success. Thus, it has been argued that whether one is dealing with problem behaviors in the entire or targeted portions of the youth population, deficit reduction efforts are too limited. The argument thus has become "problem free is not fully prepared" and "fully prepared is not fully engaged". Services for youth need to **both** help reduce problem behaviors, **as well as** increase pro-social attitudes and skills. The message is that it is possible to be problem free and still not necessarily grow up to be a fully functioning adult, and it is possible to be fully prepared and not use the skills and abilities one has in a positive manner.

These leaps of understanding are the bedrock principles of the youth development movement. According to advocates, efforts need to be made to create organizations and communities that enable youth to move along the pathways to adulthood by supplying the supports and opportunities necessary to develop beyond simple problem prevention. These approaches do not eliminate the need to target specific high-risk individuals for attention, but clearly indicate that efforts should not be restricted to this group or only be concerned with problem remediation. As experts have noted:

At the center of this thinking [is] the idea that young people are assets in the making - their development dependent on a range of supports and opportunities coming from family, community and the other institutions that touch them. When supports and opportunities are plentiful, young people can and do thrive; when their environments are deficient or depleted, youth tend not to grow and progress.

The changing understanding of mission is similar to the debate that emerged in the 1980's in the health field. For a long time, health was defined as the absence of illness. However, concerns arose that in order for a person to achieve quality of life, more than being free of illness was necessary. The discussion turned to ways to enhance health through better diet, more exercise, better relationships with others, and expansion of interests and abilities. Creating a healthy lifestyle was added to reduction of illness as the twin goals of medicine. In addition to advocacy that we must move beyond a "problem free" focus in youth services, other understandings have also emerged. For example, it has been argued that "academic competence, while critical is not nearly enough" and "competence alone, while critical, is not enough." In the first instance, to be fully prepared, individuals also need to achieve vocational, physical, emotional, civic, social and cultural competence. In the second, it is a necessity to apply one's competence by turning it into action.

In addition to these principles, the emerging youth development lexicon strongly promotes thinking beyond an "either-or" mind set to one that embraces "and." It is not necessary to choose between prevention and positive development. Both are appropriate and needed. In a similar manner, we can:

- work to achieve quick turnarounds of negative behaviors **and** undertake efforts to develop longer term supports for positive development.
- promote both basic services targeted to a single issue or area of the community **and** at the same time promote efforts to strategically plan a system of services in our communities;
- utilize youth professionals to lead and plan activities **and** insure that youth, their parents and other stakeholders in the community are fully engaged and involved; and
- develop new ideas into pilot programs **and** make concerted efforts to develop long term programs, with solid funding streams.

Our understanding of youth development is furthered by noting that:

If the entire spectrum of youth services can be thought of as a continuum, youth development services would be at one end and social control or incarceration would be at the other. In between these ends of the



continuum would fall primary prevention (of problems such as substance abuse, adolescent pregnancy, juvenile crime, and the like); short-term intervention; and long-term treatment.

Defining Youth Development

The National Youth Development Center (2001) website lists a variety of youth development definitions promulgated by a number of different individuals and organizations. No one definition of youth development has emerged to be currently accepted across the entire youth services field. However, in light of the principles outlined above, the following definition approved by the executives of National Collaboration for Youth Members, in March 1998, (National Youth Development Information Center website, 2001) is useful:

Youth development is a process which prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences which help them to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically, and cognitively competent. Positive youth development addresses the broader developmental needs of youth, in contrast to deficit-based models which focus solely on youth problems.

These understandings are exciting changes in language and focus for our efforts to better serve youth.

Unfortunately, in a number of cases youth serving agencies have adopted the youth development language, but have in reality made few changes in their service priorities and approaches. [This is similar to what has taken place in the benefits movement, where too often agencies have adopted slogans and other elements of the benefits framework, without fully engaging in real change in agency approaches to program conceptualization, goal setting, program planning, outcome evaluation, and program delivery].

Again as professionals have noted, we need to "increase the options for instruction and involvement by improving the quality and availability of supports, services, and opportunities" to achieve what is referred to as "thriving behavior."

The youth development process must involve youth serving organizations, but also must involve families, schools and other institutions. In other words, an ecological approach to development is required. The Search Institute's Development Assets Model and agreements such as America's Promise emerged from efforts to operationalize these goals. The development assets model has provided a powerful tool for identifying and building the internal and external supports necessary for youth to grow along the pathway to adulthood, while America's Promise articulates a series of five elements of a plan leading to the positive development of young people:

1. creating ongoing relationships with caring adults - parents, mentors, tutors or coaches;
2. creating safe places with structured activities during non-school hours;
3. enabling each child to get a healthy start and have a positive future;
4. through effective education helping each child to develop marketable skills; and
5. enabling youth to have opportunities to give back through community service.

The 2001 National Academy of Sciences report finds that there 11 basic elements that characterize quality youth programs. These elements are thought to be the building blocks of quality youth development programs.

1. Physical and psychological safety
2. Structure that is developmentally appropriate



3. Emotional moral support
4. Opportunities for adolescents to experience supportive adult relationships
5. Opportunities to learn how to form close, durable human relationships
6. Opportunities to feel a sense of belonging and being valued
7. Opportunities for skill building and mastery
8. Opportunities to develop confidence in one's abilities to master one's environment (a sense of personal efficacy)
9. Opportunities to make a contribution to one's community and to develop a sense of mattering
10. Strong links between families, schools, and broader community resources

Literature Review #2 - Youth Development and Park and Recreation Departments

Park and recreation departments (PARD's) are one element of the total youth development system. However, to fully play a role, there is currently a need for PARD's to:

- fully understand and adopt the youth development language;
- fully use the power of the underlying youth principles to make real changes in programmatic approaches;
- meaningfully collaborate with other youth serving agencies to identify needs and provide more consistent youth development programs; and
- develop a dynamic youth development system that works within the context of the overall community.

Over the last 10-12 years, PARD's have moved closer to adopting and fully understanding youth development principles and practices. There is also growing understanding that youth development is a complex, comprehensive strategy for changing young people's environments and opportunity structures. Thus, to be successful, PARD youth development efforts must be part of a comprehensive youth development strategy that involves all segments of the community. Developing supports and opportunities, developmental assets, or meeting the goals of America's Promise all require efforts beyond a single agency. PARD's and other youth serving agencies thus need to embed their efforts in a larger community context and be willing to become part of community-wide planning efforts. This approach is being taken in many communities across the United States. In most cases, PARD's are playing a key role in helping communities better understand youth needs, developing comprehensive strategies for meeting these needs, and implementing and evaluating whether strategies are being successful.

However, in many cases, we still need to move beyond "gym and swim" programs designed to keep youth off the streets. These programs and settings mainly provide a place to go and things to do. But can full youth development be a result of these efforts? As has been consistently argued in our field, we must move beyond "fun and games" to an approach that embraces all aspects of the youth development continuum. We must also move beyond a casual approach to programming to one that involves "intentionality:" what do we want to have happen and how are we going to make it happen?

If created intentionally and strategically, more supports for more youth in more neighborhoods constitute more pathways to success - pathways are diverse, wide and accessible enough for all youth to see, try and ultimately select from. These pathways offer the basic things young people need: people to talk to, places to go, opportunities to explore. [These pathways] build the attitudes, skills, values and knowledge that young people need in a full range of areas from cognitive and vocational to personal and civic.



To do this, we need to develop a "common vision of success at the end of adolescence, in particular, the ability of youth to find rewarding and remunerative employment, form a lasting and gratifying partnership or become contributors in their communities". We also need to further our understanding of the dimensions of activities that make the transition to adulthood more likely to succeed. At present, there is fairly good agreement that the following program elements are necessary:

- a sense of safety;
- challenging and interesting activities;
- a sense of belonging;
- supportive relationships with adults;
- involvement in decision-making;
- opportunities for leadership; and
- involvement in community

Table 6.15: – America’s Promises

| America’s Promises | Definition of Promises | Characteristics of Promises |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Caring Adults | Ongoing relationship with caring adults – parents, mentors, tutors or coaches | Ideally, youth develop sustained connections with parents or other caregivers; extended family members; neighbors and other adults youth see in their daily lives; adults who spend time with youth through schools and programs, including coaches, teachers, mentors, child care workers, youth workers and employers |
| Safe Places | Safe places with structured activities during non-school hours | Young people need structure, and they need to be physically and emotionally safe. Providing safe places and structured activities has many benefits to both young people and society. |
| A Healthy Start | Today, too few young people are experiencing the level of support in their communities that will ensure a healthy future. A healthy start includes making sure caregivers and young people have access to the services and opportunities they need to be healthy | To many, a healthy start focuses on what children need before they start school; prenatal care, immunizations and school readiness. Indeed, these early years are crucial. But we must also think about this promise more broadly as a healthy start for adulthood. They need accessible and affordable health insurance that covers regular checkups; health education focusing on risk behaviors such as violence and alcohol, drug and tobacco use; adequate nutrition and exercise |
| Marketable Skills | Marketable skills enable young people to prepare for | Young people need a foundation in basic skills such as reading, |



| | | |
|------------------------|---|--|
| | employment in the 21 st century. Young people must master basic academic and analytical skills, learn workplace etiquette, and know how to use technology, such as computers and the Internet. | writing, mathematics, science, technology and communication; thinking skills such as creativity, decision-making, problem solving and reasoning; personal attitudes and qualities such as integrity, responsibility and self-motivation |
| Opportunities to Serve | Opportunities to give back through community service | Giving young people an opportunity to serve others is an important strategy in shaping America's future. Though school-based community service has received the most attention, there are many different avenues through which youth can contribute to their communities such as: religious congregations; neighborhood teams; service clubs; family volunteering; youth organizations; and, schools |

The Power of Adults

The youth development paradigm also recognizes the primacy of adults in supporting youth efforts to navigate the pathways to adulthood, while still enabling youth to have real voice and power in planning, organizing, and leading programs and activities. There is also substantial evidence that "resilient children, the ones who thrive despite obstacles, typically have caring adults present and active in their lives". Caring adults can be program staff, volunteers from the community, and/or parents. In all cases, the adults are most effective who "work in partnership with young people, who see themselves as supportive friends and advocates in contrast to adults motivated to save, reform, or rescue young people from their circumstances. The key is to make sure that youth efforts are "scaffolded" by adults. Youth, like an emerging building, need support during "construction - development." Eventually, when ready to stand on their own, the scaffolding can first be lessened and eventually withdrawn.

PARD's too often have been based on the primacy of the activity over the process of participants interacting with meaningful adults. Adults can serve as leaders, coaches, or teachers. Whatever the role, adults have the potential to guide and influence youth as they move along the pathways to adulthood. No one setting offers the richness and variety of experiences. Unfortunately, not all departments take advantage of their potential to make a difference in the lives of youth in their communities.

To realize the full power of adults in the lives of youth, quality adult leaders must be hired, trained, rewarded and retained. However, these objectives are not always easy to accomplish. Some PARD's (like many other youth serving agencies) hire individuals who are too young and have too many issues themselves to be strong resources in the lives of youth. In addition, too often leaders are hired who only plan to be around for a short period of time, thus undermining the value of creating long-term, in depth relationships between meaningful adults and youth. In many cases, a system is not in place to develop leaders on a pre-service and ongoing basis who understand the principles of youth development and how to translate these principles into meaningful practice. Finally, we often do not pay enough to attract and retain quality staff. Too often we entrust our youth to low paid individuals who turn over far too quickly.



Other critical elements of youth development practices include ensuring that the opportunities, services and supports offered are available for a critical mass of those young people who want or need them. Our services must be of a scale and a level of saturation to achieve the threshold necessary to make a difference. In addition, it is critical that the opportunities created are sustained from year to year. Development is ongoing and takes time to accomplish. One shot, short term programs can generate participants, but not necessarily meaningful development.

Ensuring that more young people in more neighborhoods have more and better supports and opportunities more of the time should be our goal.

Changing the way we think about design and delivery of programs can go a long way to achieving development beyond problem prevention. While the tone and structure of youth development is subtle and multi-layered, its tenets and practices can be achieved in every park and recreation department across North America. To do less is to waste our opportunity to be an active participant in the positive development of our nation's youth.

Literature Review #3 - Impact of Services and Methodologies for Service Evaluation

The potential of park and recreation departments (PARD's) to be a primary community resource for alleviating societal problems associated with at-risk youth has long been recognized by many in this field. Professionals and academics (and many members of the public) believe that PARD's are uniquely positioned to address this issue for at least three reasons:

- First, recreation centers and park areas, where many young people congregate, are widely distributed across communities, and thus can be used as service centers for dealing with youth-at-risk issues.
- Second, PARD personnel are experienced in establishing empathetic relationships with their clients.
- Third, recreation activities are inherently appealing to large segments of youth in general, including at-risk youth, and thus offer a vehicle for assessing and positively influencing pro-social behavior.

Although these attributes suggest that PARD's are likely to be a primary community resource for addressing the needs and problems of at-risk youth, the best results are likely to be forthcoming when an holistic approach is used that involves cooperation with other community service agencies (e.g., police, health, education, social services, etc.) in developing a successful prevention or intervention strategy.

Advocates have long evangelized about the prevention or intervention potential of recreation and park programs. Much of the early public leisure provision in the mid-nineteenth century was stimulated by a desire to alleviate delinquent behavior. Similarly, there is a long tradition of using what might be termed "pseudo-scientific evidence" to demonstrate the efficacy of these efforts. For example, in 1910, the chief planner for the City of Chicago observed, "Police records show an extraordinary decrease of youthful



crimes in the neighborhood of playground parks". However, advocacy, anecdotes, and pseudo-scientific evidence are of decreasing effectiveness in today's political arenas.

Can recreation and park services effectively contribute to alleviating problems associated with at-risk youth? As professionals with knowledge of successes elsewhere and our own first-hand experience we respond "yes." Unfortunately, in many communities, most people respond "no" or "not sure." The reason for the difference in view is explained by the concept of positioning.

Positioning refers to perceptions of the role of recreation and park services in the minds of elected officials, decision-makers, and citizens. The position which prevails in many of their minds is that recreation and park services are a "soft" alternative which pampers youth and has no ameliorating effect on their behavior. At best these activities temporarily divert their attention and "keep them off the streets" so they are not engaged in deviant behavior during that time period, but their program involvement has no lasting impact.

Those who hold this prevailing perspective believe that society is better served if these youth are subjected to "hard-nosed" treatment by law enforcement agencies. Thus, in contrast to recreation and park agencies, police departments are centrally positioned in these people's minds as the primary, and often exclusive, resource for alleviating the problem.

These positions explain why there is more funding support for law enforcement programs than recreation and park programs. They suggest that resource support for recreation and park programs developed for at-risk youth, will only be forthcoming when the field is repositioned in people's minds so, like law enforcement, it is perceived to be central to preventing or alleviating disruptive or deviant behavior by youth.

To better position park and recreation programs as useful vehicles for prevention and intervention efforts for at-risk youth, scientific evaluations are needed which show the impact of park and recreation services on the knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of at-risk youth. Ideally, controlled studies using treatment and control groups (where possible) should be undertaken. Unlike simply counting the number of participants, collecting testimonials and anecdotal evidence, or relying solely on post-program participant satisfaction surveys, controlled studies can provide scientifically legitimate evidence which is less challengeable by stakeholders, such as legislatures, bureaucrats in charge of directing federal and state funding for at-risk youth, other human service professionals, and the public at large. These types of evaluations have to be carefully planned at the outset. They assess the impact of a recreation program on youths' psychological and social state, and/or on their behavior. To this point, relatively few examples of this type of evaluation have been undertaken by PARD's.

Over the past several years, good progress has been made in evaluating outcomes of PARD at-risk youth programs that move beyond counting participants, collecting testimonials, and measuring participant or other stakeholder satisfaction with services. Most of these studies have been part of a National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) sponsored project, which was funded through the National Recreation Foundation

(NRF). An initial grant to Texas A&M University (TAMU) was leveraged by involving partners at three other universities, Arizona State University West, Clemson University, and The Pennsylvania State University.

Each of the universities involved in the project has completed, or has in progress, at least one study of outcomes associated with a local park and recreation program. In addition to the NRPA/NRF funding,



each of the projects has received either direct or in-kind support from the PARD's with which they have worked and in some cases additional support from foundation sources.

In the past several years, considerable effort has been invested in resolving difficult methodological issues and developing instruments to measure outcome changes. This has resulted in several scientific studies which have shown positive outcomes. The number of studies is still relatively small, since much investment had to be made in the basic methodological and instrument development process. The immediate challenge over the next several years is to multiply the number of studies. The field's credibility in this area depends on reporting findings from a threshold number of studies - say 20 to 30 which show positive outcomes.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

Program outcomes conducted by PARD's are showing some success stories. Several departments show results which demonstrate decreases in crime rates attributable to the initiation of park and recreation programs. Examples of some of these studies are as follows:

- Cincinnati, Ohio, reported a 31 % decrease in crime incidents in the first six months after the Winton Hills prevention programs began.
- Commerce, California, compared gang related assaults in their city with neighboring East Los Angeles to demonstrate program effectiveness. In East Los Angeles there were 140 gang related assaults and 11 homicides in 1993 compared to seven gang related assaults and zero homicides in Commerce.
- Kansas City, Missouri, reported a 25% decrease in the rate of juvenile apprehensions compared to the previous year in the areas abutting centers in which Midnight Basketball programs were offered.
- In Fort Worth, Texas, crime statistics supplied by the Police Department indicated in a one mile radius of the community centers where the midnight basketball was provided, crime dropped 28%. At five other community centers where these programs did not exist, crime rose an average of 39%.

Instrument and Evaluation Development

One major instrument has been developed. The Protective Factors Scale was developed to measure program outcomes in ten areas related to developing knowledge, attitudes and behavior necessary to develop resilient youth who can avoid risk-related behaviors.

Protective Factors Scale

The principle underlying the protective factors concept can be illustrated by analogy. In winter, many people live under conditions that lead some of them to get the flu. These individuals may become debilitated from being out in the cold, or from stressful conditions in their lives; may fail to get enough exercise because of being confined indoors; and perhaps may fail to eat a nutritious diet. All of these factors stress the immune system. The risk of catching the flu also is increased by the number of people with whom there is contact. However, getting a flu vaccination may result in avoidance of the illness or in



a less debilitating case of it. Lifestyle, habits, and the surrounding environment put people at risk, but the flu vaccination provides a degree of protection that results in avoidance or reduction in the incidence of risk. Those who have this protection and are not inflicted by the flu under conditions of exposure to risk, are said to be resilient.

The same situation applies to youth who are exposed to multiple risk circumstances in their homes, schools, or communities. Some of them avoid the deviant behaviors exhibited by peers who grow up in the same environment. This realization has resulted in growing interest in "protective factors" that are operative in the lives of "resilient" youth, which enable them to avoid the negative consequences of multiple risk environments. Protective factors are those facets which impinge on an individual's life space that moderate and/or mitigate the impact of risk on subsequent behavior and development. Resiliency has been defined as a pattern of successful adaptation following exposure to biological and psychosocial risk factors and/or stressful life events. Protective factors and resilience help at-risk children and youth avoid behaviors that compromise health and normal growth, and help them achieve economic self-sufficiency, positive and responsible family and social relationships, and good citizenship. The protective factors approach shifts attention from identifying the risks to which children are exposed, to focusing on the protective mechanisms and processes of negotiating risk situations.



Table 6.16: – Protective Risk Factors, Risk Behaviors and Health/Life Compromising Outcomes

| Risk Factors | Risk Behaviors | Health/Life Compromising Outcomes |
|--|---|--|
| Poverty Illegitimate opportunity Models for deviant behavior Low perceived life chance Low self-esteem Risk-taking propensity Poor school work Latch key situations | Illicit drug use Drunk driving Tobacco use Delinquency Truancy Unprotected sex | School failure Legal trouble Low work skills Unemployability Disease/illness Early childbearing Social isolation Depression/suicide a-motivation |

Table 6.17: – Risk Factors and Protective Factors

| Risk Factors | Protective Factors |
|--|---|
| Poverty Illegitimate opportunity Models for deviant behavior Low perceived life chance Low self-esteem Risk-taking propensity Poor school work Latch key situations | Interested and caring adults Neighborhood resources School and club involvement High control against deviant behavior Models for conventional behavior Positive attitudes toward the future Value on achievement Ability to work with others Sense of acceptance Church attendance Quality schools Cohesive family |



Table 6.18: – Protective Factors and Pre/Post Program Question Format

| Protective Factors | Pre/Post Program Question Format (strongly agree to strongly disagree on a 7 point scale) |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Interested and caring adults | There are adults who are interested in me I can turn to adults for help There are adults who will look out for me Adults are willing to help me with my problems |
| Neighborhood resources | I know lots of safe places to play/hangout I know lots of activities to do in my community I am interested in participating in programs in my community I am interested in programs that take place after school |
| High control against deviant behavior | I must stay out of trouble I must obey the rules I will be punished if I break the rules I must follow the rules if I want to participate |
| Models for conventional behavior | I respect authority figures I respect adults I respect people in charge I respect children who stay out of trouble |
| Positive attitudes toward the future | I am creative I can set goals I can deal with problems that might come up in the future I like to try new things |
| Value on achievement | I can succeed in life It is important for me to always do my best It is important for me to do well at school It is important for me to stay in school |
| Ability to work with others | I try to treat other children with respect Teamwork is important Cooperation is important All players need a chance to play |
| Sense of acceptance | I am able to get along with friends There are other children who like me I am an o.k. person I am wanted by the people around me |



Table 6.19: – Protective Factors and Post Program Only Question Format

| Protective Factors | Post Program Only Question Format (as a result of participating in the program, I increased/decreased:) |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Interested and caring adults | <p>My understanding that there are adults who are interested in me</p> <p>My understanding that I can turn to adults for help</p> <p>My understanding that there are adults who will look out for me</p> <p>My understanding that adults are willing to help me with my problems</p> |
| Neighborhood resources | <p>My knowledge of safe places to play/hangout</p> <p>My knowledge of other community activities</p> <p>My interest in participating in programs in my community</p> <p>My interest in programs that take place after school</p> |
| High control against deviant behavior | <p>My understanding that I must stay out of trouble</p> <p>My understanding that I must obey the rules</p> <p>My understanding that I will be punished if I break the rules</p> <p>My understanding that I must follow the rules if I want to participate</p> |
| Models for conventional behavior | <p>My respect authority figures</p> <p>my respect for adults</p> <p>My respect for people in charge</p> <p>My respect children who stay out of trouble</p> |
| Positive attitudes toward the future | <p>My ability to be creative</p> <p>My ability to set goals</p> <p>My ability to deal with problems that might come up in the future</p> <p>My ability to try new things</p> |
| Value on achievement | <p>My understanding that I can succeed in life</p> <p>My understanding that it is important for me to always do my best</p> <p>My understanding that it is important for me to do well at school</p> <p>My understanding that it is important for me to stay in school</p> |
| Ability to work with others | <p>My ability to treat other children with respect</p> <p>My understanding of the importance of teamwork</p> <p>My understanding of the importance of cooperation</p> <p>My understanding that all players need a chance to play</p> |
| Sense of acceptance | <p>My ability to get along with friends</p> <p>My understanding that there are other children who like me</p> <p>My knowledge that I am an o.k. person</p> <p>My understanding that I am wanted by the people around me</p> |



Features of Successful Programs for At-Risk Youth

The following are some basic elements of successful programs that have been gleaned from the literature, case studies presented at national and regional conferences, and discussions with recreation program providers.

Assessment of Underlying Community Issues

- Teen pregnancy
- School dropouts
- Delinquency
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Poverty
- Perceived lack of opportunity
- Lack of safe places to play

Role of Recreation

Recreation as a "hook," the means of attracting youth to programs

Provide a safe environment for youth to interact

Deal with "unproductive" time within which youth can get into trouble

Long Term Goals and Specific Objectives

Focus on early identification and intervention

Give major emphasis to prevention

Target those most in need

Programs should be purposive

Programs need to have clearly articulated goals

Parents and youth should be active agents in program design and planning

Constraints

Make programs accessible (e.g., insure adequate transportation)

Provide appropriate equipment and safe environment

Provide opportunity for participants to learn appropriate activity and social skills

Program Content

Programs should be comprehensive and/or part of a comprehensive system of services

Create programs that are culturally appropriate

Provide opportunities for positive social relationships with peers and adults

Avoid one-shot programs

Make provisions for transportation

Serve children on site when appropriate (e.g., public housing)



Program Process

- Provide opportunities for mentoring
- Provide intensive and individualized attention
- Programs should be responsive (kid-centered)
- Participation incentives should be relevant to youth served
- Rules and behavioral expectations clear and respected by youth

Resources

- Pricing: fees, scholarships
- Leverage available funds through collaborative efforts with other agencies in development and delivery of services
- Who gets the credit is less important than getting the job done
- Work to develop ongoing base-level funding, i.e., not all services contingent on soft money (permanence)

Staffing

- Provide pre and in-service staff training
- Develop procedures and incentives for retaining quality staff (e.g., implement good system for advancement and pay)
- Create appropriate administrative structures
- Generate volunteers

Promotion

- Develop mechanisms for promoting services to participants and stakeholders
- Use catchy acronyms

Evaluation

- Document program success via testimonials, surveys, outcome measures, comprehensive evaluations
- Involve stakeholders and participants in program evaluation process
- Use evaluation information to fine tune program content, process and leadership
- Develop mechanisms for disseminating outcome information to stakeholders

Concluding Remarks from Literature Research #3

Without significant coordinated intervention by PARD's and other governmental and community organizations, the negative consequences for both at-risk youth and society in general will continue to increase. With juvenile arrests for crimes such as murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, and theft still at unacceptable levels, elected officials in many communities are faced with the political necessity to undertake prevention and intervention programs. With juvenile drug use, alcohol abuse, and teen pregnancies at unacceptable levels, significant cost effective actions are being sought. However, given the increased call



for accountability at all levels of government, services developed to help deal with these issues must provide meaningful evidence of their efficacy. Most recreation agencies have limited fiscal and qualified human resources to do good evaluations. In addition to providing a body of scientific evidence, this project will better equip practitioners to undertake their own evaluations in the future.

Evidence from evaluation studies should also help when arguing for maintaining or improving program funding. As David Fisher, Executive Director of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, reminds us, recreation programs for at-risk youth need to be supported by long-term base-budget city funding rather than relying on short-term grants and special purpose funding.

We will undertake a disservice to our clients, who already are beset by part-time parents and part-time education, by offering part-time programs. To be effective, programs must be consistent, constant and sustainable. Otherwise I believe we simply feed the loop of failing to fulfill our promises.

If PARD's are to realize their potential leadership in alleviating the consequences of youth being at-risk (prevention programs) and intervening and modifying behaviors such as drug abuse and criminal activity (intervention programs), possible program impact has to be scientifically demonstrated. Although there is a widespread belief among recreation professionals, professionals in other fields, and elected municipal officials that recreation services can be a powerful force for both prevention and intervention, full support of PARD efforts will not be forthcoming without solid evaluative efforts.

We have begun to scientifically demonstrate positive outcomes associated with providing recreation programs for at-risk youth, but a larger set of studies is needed to achieve the threshold volume which will make the cumulative evidence convincing. Evidence needs to continue to accrue which documents positive outcomes in a wider range of programs and contexts provided by park and recreation agencies, and in relation to the range of problems that park and recreation programs seek to alleviate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on consultant team interviews, review of programs offered by the Community Resources Department and review of the professional literature, several recommendations have been developed:

1. BREC resources need to be allocated in an efficient and effective manner. Three examples of how that can be done are:
 - Eliminate duplication of effort within the BREC Organization between the Community Resources Department and Recreation Department.
 - Eliminate duplication of effort between BREC programs and outside agencies.
 - Discontinue the direct provision of the food bank program and find a partner to assume that responsibility.
2. BREC's organizational structure should be re-aligned to eliminate the duplicative effort between the Community Services Department and the Recreation Department. These two departments should be consolidated.



3. BREC should meet with the Baton Rouge Police Department to see if its Crime Statistics Division can alter its reporting mechanism to provide BREC and others with the information it needs to acquire and analyze data surrounding its major facilities which attract youth.

FINDINGS

- BREC's facilities and staff compete both internally and with other providers for the same program market. The internal competition is an historical issue which is driven by two issues: a) the need to generate revenue to meet budget expectations as established by senior management; and, b) the emphasis on the neighborhood concept and expectation that programs will be offered in the neighborhood recreation centers, all of which are very close to each other.
- There is a good opportunity for establishing partnerships with other service providers. This was evident with several of the interviews held. For example, the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) and BREC staff see themselves as established partners and do not feel there is competition in programs between the two agencies.
- Youth and teen programs are offered by both the Recreation Department and the Community Resource Department – both of which are Departments within the BREC Agency. The Community Resource Department boasts of 55 community partnerships in the 2003 BREC Annual Report as it works externally with other providers. The Recreation Department also speaks in the Annual Report of its partnerships, although a specific number is not provided. The consultant has observed overlap/duplicative programming efforts both externally with United Way Agencies and internally with the Recreation Department.
- While BREC does not control the market in many program areas, the programs being offered are filling a gap in the market in most program areas. BREC is doing this by either providing an alternative to private agency programs or beginning level programs that feed into other programs. For example, in the area of dance or gymnastics. These programs provide basic skills and then feed into advanced programs at studios.
- BREC needs to focus on providing services that are considered their core businesses. These include senior programs, day camps, youth and adult sports, youth and teen programs, special events and specialty facilities. The department should not compete with other service providers but complement the services offered.
- Fees and charges for programs and services have just been reviewed by staff as of May 2004. The consultant observed that many program fees are below market rate. This does not necessarily create an advantage for BREC's programs as many users equate the quality of service with the advertised fee – low fee equates to low quality; high fee may equate to high quality. A pricing comparison should be done within the local market place on an ongoing basis for BREC's core services.
- The BREC youth sports program emphasizes recreational play rather than competition. Other providers focus on the competitive aspect of the game.



- The BREC day camps are affordable and open to anyone. Day camps provided by others have evolved for several reasons: a) YMCA and churches are membership driven and these are services for their membership. Their members are typically looking for a value-oriented approach and for the amenities they can provide; i.e. swimming pools at the YMCA, and close-to-home for the churches; and, b) the Boys and Girls Club receives grants to help low income families, thus their fees to participants is low and, in some cases, free. BREC cannot provide “selective scholarships” to individuals. The attraction to the Boys and Girls Club Camps is their structured and monitored environment, their ratio of 15 to 1 for supervision and their focus on education in the morning and typical fun activities in the afternoon.



Table 6.20: – List of Major Providers of Programs

| BREC provides opportunities for citizens to get involved with a variety of program categories. Categories include: a) visual/graphic arts and crafts; b) performing arts; c) sports, athletics and aquatics; d) environmental; e) self improvement; f) social; g) hobbies; and, h) special events. Day Camps | Special Events | Specialty Facilities | Youth Sports | Adult Sports | Youth and Teens | Senior Programs | School |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| BREC | BREC | BREC | BREC | BREC | BREC | BREC | BREC |
| YMCA | Centroplex | Louisiana Arts and Science Museum | YMCA | Churches | YMCA | YMCA | YMCA |
| Churches | Downtown Development District | LSU | CAYL | Exxon Mobile | YWCA | Council on Aging | United Way Agencies |
| United Way Agencies | LSU | | Churches | Lawyers League | Boys and Girls Club | Churches | Schools |
| | Southern University | | Sports Associations | | Other United Way Agencies | United Way Agencies | |
| | | | City of Zachary | | | Housing Authority | |
| | | | | | | YWCA | |



Table 6.21: – Provider Target Markets and Market Niche

| Agency | Demographics Served | Core Program | Market Niche |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|
| YMCA | All ages | Baseball, basketball, fitness and teen programs | Membership driven with focus on Christian values |
| Sports Associations | Youth and teens | Soccer, baseball, softball and basketball | Competitive sports |
| Churches | Youth and teens | Sports, pre and after school programs | Close-to-home programs for church members with emphasis on Christian values |
| Schools | Youth and teens | Sports, education, special events | Development of tomorrow's leaders through highly educated and trained instructors |
| Private Fitness Clubs | Adults | Fitness | Membership driven |
| United Way Agencies | Youth and teens | After school programs | Low income families |
| CYO | Youth and teens | Sports | Membership driven and emphasis on competition |
| Council on Aging | Seniors | Meals, education, trips | Open to anyone |
| City of Zachary | Youth and teens | Youth sports | Residents of Zachary |
| Housing Authority | seniors | Meals and education | Residents of that facility |
| Boys and Girls Club | Youth and teens | After school programs (health and fitness) | Low income families with emphasis on areas which underachieve in school and on free and reduced meals program |
| YWCA | Pre-kindergarten to high school | Head Start Centers and in-school teen programs | Low income families with emphasis on prevention of teen pregnancy |

- BREC has assumed the role of provider for most of its services. Other choices are for BREC to serve as a facilitator and in an outreach capacity.
- There is no cost recovery policy in place for the Department.
- Program registration is accomplished by the walk-in method which requires citizens to enroll at a local recreation center.
- The program brochure (guide) is printed twice each year – fall/winter and spring summer.
- Recreation programs are advertised in the newspaper with an insert on two occasions each year to run concurrently with the distribution of the program brochure.



- Program descriptions are minimal or non-existent. Program descriptions are not used in the program guide.
- Marketing is an issue with programs and special facilities. There needs to be more done to increase awareness and recognition of programs and facilities. There appears not to be a comprehensive marketing plan in place.
- The program guide is not used as adequately as it could be to showcase programs.
- A diverse pricing scheme is not in place which offers higher-priced programs for those who can afford it.
- Tracking of programs and participation numbers is done sporadically.
- There is no standard customer feedback program in place. Program evaluations are not done on a consistent basis.
- The physical condition of program facilities (recreation centers) is an issue. A majority of the gym space is not air conditioned and this limits programming opportunities. Some program space is not conducive to program needs.
- There are no standards developed for programs to ensure quality or consistency.
- There is very little staff training and development in place.
- There appears to be very little in the way of policies and procedures in place.
- Facilities and staff appear to compete with each other for the same market share. Programs are offered within the same area.
- There is little or no joint programming done in the department.
- Programs have no set curriculums in place.
- Communication appears to be an issue with staff. There is a general feeling that information does not get filtered down to all staff.
- The general approach to programming is inconsistent. For example, program standards and performance measures mentioned in this report are not in place. The Department must roll its programs out to the public as any good business would with every element in place: fee structure must be carefully considered; marketing materials must be distributed at the same time prior to each program; programs must be citizen-driven; and, recommendations in this report for increasing registrations must be implemented.
- Staff's emphasis for some programs is on quantity rather than quality. For example, the history of the agency has been to come down more on the side of trying to be all things to all people rather than the identification of the core program and do fewer things but do them well.
- There are no formal partnership agreements in place for many program areas at this time; however, BREC is implementing a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with key partners who provide needed services in the Parish.
- Although there is no Department expectation that program revenues will recover a major percentage of their costs, staff does strive to generate enough revenue to meet the Department's stated revenue goal. This effort does lend itself to competition/duplication within the Department from one Recreation Center to another.
- Transportation to programs and facilities is an issue, especially for inner-city youth. BREC does provide facilities and programs to inner-city youth in recognition of this issue.
- BREC sponsored programs utilize Recreation Centers but also take advantage of other specialty facilities within the agency such as the zoo and observatory to provide participants with an enjoyable and educational experience. This use of all BREC facilities is admirable, however, from a financial perspective, it is also a consideration as recreation program users of specialty facilities limits their availability for other users.



NEW PROGRAMS – THE PROCESS AND SPECIFIC PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

The Process - New programs are generated through a multi-faceted process. The most important part of the process is to ask citizens which programs they are most interested in and will support if they are offered. The process of asking citizens for input can be referred to as the “Needs Assessment Process”. A needs assessment was completed as part of this Strategic Master Plan.

Uses of Needs Assessments should be used in three ways:

1. To determine which customers to serve. By asking citizens what programs they want through surveys, informal visits and post-program questionnaires, BREC has worked with the consultant to identify its market segments. Those market segments are:
 - Day Camps
 - Special Events
 - Adult Sports
 - Youth Sports
 - Senior Programs
 - Home School Physical Education and After School Programs
 - Specialty Facilities - Theater, Gallery, Observatory, Equestrian Center, Magnolia Mound, Extreme Sports Park (BMX/Velodrome and Skatepark)
 - Youth and Teen Programs
2. To determine what activities to offer. Activities to be offered should include a mix of existing programs within the BREC Activity Guide as well as new trendy programs each year to keep things fresh. From the Strategic Planning Process, citizens have expressed interest in programs such as sports, indoor recreation and fitness, activities for teens, special events, after school programming, senior programs and hobby programs.
3. To determine how activities should be offered. No longer is the topic the only motivating factor in getting participants into a program. There are also other considerations which include: time, place, quality of instructors, price and promotion. Getting the best information possible on all these factors is critical to a successful recreation program.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY FOR YOUTH AND TEENS

Programs for Youth and Teen must contain opportunities to develop “resiliency skills”. Resiliency skills enhance an individual’s capacity to cope, adjust and respond to the problems, issues and circumstances that face him in everyday life. Of course, these skills are important to all ages but most important at a young age when we are more vulnerable to the pressures surrounding us. Resilience skills include: a) insight; b) independence; c) relationships; d) initiative; e) creativity; f) humor; and, g) values orientation.



Young people are also surrounded by “risk factors”. These factors can lead to negative or undesirable behavior. Examples include alienation, low level of perceived life chances, family history of alcoholism/abuse, high levels of stress, poor/inconsistent parenting, poverty/low socioeconomic status and racial inequality.

Through recreation programming, a shield can be developed to protect young people. The shields consists of “protective factors” which include knowledge/availability of neighborhood resources, a cohesive family unit, the presence of close friends, positive use of time, and the presence of role models.

BREC has existing programs, other providers have programs and new programs can be developed which can equip young people with the skills they need to improve their chances of succeeding in life.

Current youth and teen programs which are popular around the nation with communities who have similar demographics as East Baton Rouge include:

Pre-School Programs

- ❖ Start smart
- ❖ Parachute games
- ❖ Shaving cream mountain
- ❖ Jell-o play
- ❖ Draw themselves as the opposite sex
- ❖ Paint with feet
- ❖ Whipping cream collages
- ❖ Rhythm sticks
- ❖ Silly songs
- ❖ Bubble blowing
- ❖ Play dough
- ❖ Fingerpaint

Programs for “Tweens” (ages 9-14)

- ❖ Go out to eat
- ❖ Cooking activities
- ❖ Fashion show/modeling
- ❖ Dances
- ❖ Swim festival
- ❖ Helping younger children
- ❖ Crafts
- ❖ Camps
- ❖ Music-related activities
- ❖ Hip-hop dances
- ❖ Crazy Olympics



- ❖ Junior leaders program
- ❖ All night dance party
- ❖ Tours of places
- ❖ Battle of the bands
- ❖ Outdoor movies
- ❖ Skateboard design/building
- ❖ Fishing
- ❖ Teen sports

Teen Programs

- ❖ Teens want a place to hang out
- ❖ Extreme sports
- ❖ Laser tag
- ❖ Paintball
- ❖ Field trips to minor league ball game or pro game
- ❖ A place to play their music
- ❖ Cooking classes
- ❖ Clean a stream
- ❖ Grass planting
- ❖ 24 hour camping at the recreation center
- ❖ youth disco
- ❖ sports
- ❖ scavenger hunt
- ❖ slumber parties
- ❖ community work day and cleanup
- ❖ rope courses
- ❖ culture programs
- ❖ drama
- ❖ computer classes

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY FOR FAMILIES

The family unit has changed over the last several years. In East Baton Rouge, there are grandparents raising children, single moms and dads raising children and the traditional nuclear family. BREC is aware of this issue and provides facilities and programming to meet as many of the needs as possible.

On a national level, we know that the trend toward family recreation is increasing. For example, attendance at contemporary recreation centers and aquatic facilities with shallow water and toys are heavily used. On the local level, all of the specialty facilities provided by BREC are very popular.

From a programming perspective, the Recreation Department must emphasize programs which focus the family unit on the protective factors which were listed in this chapter.



Family Activities

- ❖ Contemporary recreation centers
- ❖ Contemporary aquatic facilities
- ❖ Programs may include quilting
- ❖ Get away opportunities for the parents/grandparents
- ❖ Celebrate Today - (January 21 is national hat day; February 14 is read to your child day, March 9 is panic day, April 6 is twinkies day, May 11 is eat what you want day, June 5 is yo yo day, July 20 is creative flavor ice cream day, August 18 is bad poetry day, September 10 is national grandparents day, October 15 is national grouch day, November 18 is Mickey Mouse's birthday and December 26i is ugliest tie day)
- ❖ Computer education
- ❖ Doggie splash day
- ❖ Dog-n-Jog

RECOMMENDED PROGRAM STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Program Standards

1. Programs will meet the highest level of quality at all times which will be determined by feedback from customers on their post-program evaluation forms.
2. All programs will have staff trained in customer service, program delivery, attendance reporting, first aid procedures, and registration process.
3. All programs will have descriptions, proper fees, age restrictions, group size limitations, locations, instructor information, program dates and registration dates clearly stated.
4. Programs will be consistently monitored and adjusted to meet the highest level of customer satisfaction. A customer feedback program will be put in place to monitor programs. Written customer evaluations will be done the last day of every program. Programs will be monitored mid point of the program session either with short phone surveys, site observations, or customer evaluations.
5. Attendance records will be kept on a daily basis for all programs.
6. All programs will have the proper equipment available and in safe condition.
7. Programs will strive to meet a 100% customer satisfaction rating.
8. Four new programs will be established each session.
9. All programming guidelines will be incorporated into new programs and program delivery.
10. Program staff will strive for an 80% level of programs offered versus programs held. In other words, 20% of programs offered may not generate enough interest to be implemented.



11. Staff will follow consistent service delivery for programs. Programs will be taught or managed in the same manner.
12. To ensure customer driven programs, staff will review and incorporate citizen preferences based on behavioral (benefits sought, usage, level of skill, personality and psychographic profile), sociodemographic (age, sex, income, education, occupation, ethnicity and social affiliation) and geographic considerations (location/type of facility, climate and topography and place of residence).
13. All programs will have a set curriculum that has been researched to ensure that program content is accurate and appropriate for the targeted audience.

Program Guidelines

1. BREC cannot be everything to everyone! The “we serve everyone” paradigm is simply not functional, not profitable, not efficient nor effective in today’s environment.
2. Management’s biggest role is to decide which target audiences to serve. This is the most important decision made in the organization relative to programming.
3. Programs, which produce benefits citizens are looking for, will be selected by BREC through the citizen involvement process. It is only by knowing the benefits that citizens are looking for that we can produce the most appropriate programs. Citizen involvement includes a mix of program evaluations at the conclusion of each program, focus groups, surveys of repeat customers who are BREC’s best customers.
4. BREC must embrace a process of analyzing citizen needs. The preferred eight step process includes:
 - brainstorming – the gathering of new ideas from all sources, including staff and participants. No idea is a bad idea. It is a critical first step without which the other stages cannot succeed.
 - Research – at the same time brainstorming is occurring, it is important to also be doing research. Research includes data and numbers on current participants and activities, analysis of the competition, and the review of the total environment within which BREC is operating at the time.
 - discussion of options – from the brainstorming and research process, choices are narrowed down to two or three options. A small work group of the appropriate persons (staff, advisory board, focus group, or leadership) is the preferred choice to make final decisions.
 - development of a model program – it is critical to work out a potential new program on paper. Without putting some numbers to paper, such as response rate, cost of promotion and production, anticipated participants, it is difficult, if not impossible, to succeed.
 - survey – current BREC participants should be surveyed to gain additional and final information on what will make the new program (s) a success.



- try it – new ideas are offered after a strong promotional effort. If sufficient time and effort has been spent on the stages 1 through 5, this effort should provide evidence that the new program will be successful over the long term.
 - decision process – often times, not enough energy and thought is put into the analysis of the results of the first effort to offer a new program. Sometimes new programs are discontinued when they actually have demonstrated some potential for long-term success. Eliminate unsuccessful programs for sure, however, the program evaluation committee must carefully consider the elements of a successful program before eliminating a new program without careful consideration.
 - evaluation – every program requires ongoing evaluation to improve. All new programs will need to be refined and tuned to improve its quality.
5. Old courses which have been offered successfully in the previous session should fit within a range of 70% to 90% of the total course offerings. A mix of 70% of old courses, and therefore 30% new courses, is more innovative and on the creative edge. A program which has a mix of 90% old courses, and therefore 10% new courses, is more conservative and traditional.
 6. 60% to 70% of program participants should be returning customers. It is easier, and thus costs less, to get a participant to return to your program, thus the goal is to increase the return rate. In fact, it is six times easier to get someone to return to your program than to recruit a new participant.
 7. 15% is the overall cancellation rate that the BREC program should expect each year. If the program cancellation rate is less than 15%, it is an indication that the program is static and not positioning itself for future changes in trends. If the rate is above 15%, it means that BREC is either not promoting its programs enough, or that the product mix is wrong (place, time, fee, etc.).
 8. BREC needs to know a lot about other providers. Questions which need to be addressed are as follow:
 9. What audiences do they own?
 - What audiences have they left unserved?
 - What subject/topic areas are their strengths?
 - What gaps in subject/topic areas have they left us?
 10. Program pricing should be diversified. Programs should be offered at different price levels. This will attract a greater variety of audiences and increase program registrations.
 11. Mail twice to your past participants. Registrations can be increased by mailing the brochure to past participants. Ideally, the past participants will receive the brochures one to two weeks apart.
 12. Include a second registration form. The brochure should include a second registration form as participants like to take a class with a friend. The second registration form encourages this.
 13. Make registration easy. The more ways you can allow people to register, the more registrations you will have. Encourage people to register by mail, phone (using credit cards), walk-in, fax and e-mail.
 14. Tell people registration is easy. Make the registration information clear and easy to read.



15. Take credit cards for registration. Research shows that persons registering with a credit card spend up to 25% more with the recreation program, either by taking more classes or signing up for more expensive courses.
16. Put an adult on the cover of the brochure. Adults tend to know and assume that recreation programs are for children and youth. However, many overlook the fact, or are not aware, that recreation classes are also available for adults. By putting an adult on the cover of the brochure, you may capture more registrations from adults without losing enrollments from children and youth audiences.
17. Offer at least four sessions a year. BREC should print four brochures each year for spring, summer, fall and winter. Each brochure should have a different cover graphic and a different color scheme on the cover so people know it is a new brochure. By combining sessions such as winter/spring, fewer people register for the classes that begin later. The more brochures or sessions, the better registrations will be.
18. Offer some higher priced programs. There is an audience that values time and the quality of the program over saving a few dollars.

STAFF TRAINING GUIDELINES RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

To ensure the best quality of service delivery, staff will be trained in specific areas. Training areas identified by the consultant team during the program assessment process are as follows:

Vision and Goal Setting

This will be done in a retreat format and all full time staff will be involved. This will help to insure that staff has the same vision and are working toward the same goals.

Policy and Procedures

All staff will attend an in-service training session on current policies and procedures to insure they are familiar with them and the department's expectations that they will be followed.

Customer Service

All full-time and part-time staff will be trained in customer service and will learn the difference between average and exceptional customer service. Also to be addressed are phone etiquette, how to handle difficult customers and the importance of a positive employee image.

Marketing

Staff will be trained to write program descriptions, how to create flyers, identification of customer needs and gaps in services, marketing standards and guidelines.

Identifying Other Service providers

Staff will learn as much as possible about other service providers. They will learn how to analyze other providers to determine which audiences they own, which audiences have they left un-served or



underserved, which program/activity areas are their strengths, and, which gaps in the program/activity areas they have left for BREC.

Customer Feedback Programs

Program staff will be trained to learn how to establish and monitor customer feedback programs. This will include the best way to write surveys, methods of distribution and other methods of gathering customer feedback.

Activity Based Costing

Fees and charges and important managerial decisions cannot be made in the absence of knowing what true costs are for each program. Activity Based Costing (ABC) provides an easy-to-use tool which tracks all costs by program.

Performance Measures

As mentioned on numerous occasions in this report, there are a number of performance measures that need to be in place to ensure progress toward BREC goals. Again, if it doesn't get measured, it doesn't get done. Training needs to be provided on an on-going basis which confirms the most important measures, the reasons why they are important and the results of the data collected during the process.

Creative Thinking

Although most staff will say that it is not creative in its thought process, the reality is that each of us has something to offer. Our era requires new ideas, new ways of avoiding costs, new ways of collaborating with others, new ways of involving citizens in the planning process, etc.

Secret Shopper Program

An important management tool is to implement a Secret Shopper Program. Although we would rather not believe it, it is true from time to time that some of our employees will not provide the level of service which is required for us to succeed. The Secret Shopper Program is intended to send an associate to our facilities to "test" our service.

Conflict Resolution

Each employee will deal with conflict on a regular basis. There are proven methods which improve our ability to deal with others in these times of need.

Teamwork

All of us are a part of a team. There are proven methods of developing a team and for understanding our role on a team. Everyone needs to be aware of their role and the things they can do to provide the citizens of East Baton Rouge with a department they can be proud of.

Personal Development

Development is an on-going requirement to succeed in life and in the workplace. Each person has a given set of skills and abilities which can be improved.



Communication

Everyone needs to understand that communication is a two-way street. It is common to say that top management doesn't distribute the message to all employees; however, we also understand that employees have a responsibility to seek the information they are looking for.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the consultant's analysis of existing programs, review of input received from staff and citizens at interviews and formal meetings and best practices within the parks and recreation profession, the following recommendations are made:

Finding Category #1 – Role for Provision of Services: BREC cannot be everything to everyone. It must carefully select those services which it can be a direct provider of, which services it should facilitate, and, which services for which it should provide outreach services.

- Direct Provider Role – in effect, the agency pre-assembles the essential program ingredients such as leadership, materials, and facilities to create a number of immediate, ready-made participation opportunities. The shortcoming of this approach relates to its facility-centered orientation. This approach assumes that citizens will somehow have the means and ability to attend those activities offered.
- Facilitator Role – the adoption of the facilitator role requires the agency to serve as an enabling agent and take on the tasks of coordination, referral and technical assistance. This system involves the co-sponsorship of programs with other agencies. Implicit in the adoption of the facilitator role is the recognition that no one agency, relying exclusively on its own resources, can meet all the leisure needs of a community.
- The Outreach Role – This role is defined as the effort that takes place when a social service agency, like recreation, reaches out and assists through personal contacts those citizens systematically excluded from, unaware of, or unreceptive to an agency's service or those of related agencies.

Recommendation: BREC should continue its direct provider role for all of its core services with the exception of youth sports. Other core services which it should continue to be a direct provider for include: day camps, special events, senior programs, adult sports, after school programs, special facilities and youth and teens.

Regarding youth sports, BREC should outsource this program to be managed by others outside BREC administration. Currently, there are a number of other providers who are involved with youth sports, thus different philosophies permeate the youth sports environment in the Parish relative to the level of competition versus recreation, coach's training, fees, etc.



Figure 6.5: – Provider Role Options



Table 6.22: – BREC’s Current Role for Providing Programs

| Direct Provider Role | Facilitator Role | Outreach Role |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Day Camps | Day Camps | |
| Special Events | Special Events | |
| Adult Sports | Adult Sports | |
| Youth Sports | Youth Sports | |
| Senior Programs | | |
| After School Programs | | |
| Special Facilities | | |
| Youth and Teen Programs | Youth and Teen Programs | Youth and Teen Programs |

Finding Category #2 - Core Programs: Historically, BREC has not identified its core programs, thus there has not been a clear focus on the programs or businesses which are the most successful. Successful core programs meet the criteria shown below:

- Full-time dedicated staff
- Dedicated facilities to support the program or service
- Represents a significant percentage of agency’s budget
- Has a large target market or wide demographic appeal
- Controls a significant percentage of total market
- Operates 3 or 4 seasons per year
- Has long history of being provided by the agency
- Has the ability to earn income
- Partnerships opportunities exist



Recommendation: Based on the findings from the program assessment, it is recommended that the following be established as the core services for BREC:

- Day Camps
- Special Events
- Adult Sports
- Youth Sports
- Senior Programs
- Home School Physical Education and After School Programs
- Specialty Facilities - Theater, Gallery, Observatory, Equestrian Center, Magnolia Mound, Extreme Sports Park (BMX/Velodrome and Skatepark)
- Youth and Teen Programs

Finding Category #3 – Programming Approach: There is no clear defined approach to programming. There are no program or service standards in place for recreation programs to ensure quality or consistency. This is creating many inconsistencies in program delivery and customer service. Customer service and program evaluations are done sporadically. There is no way to track customer satisfaction with programs or services without measures. There are little or no joint programming efforts in the recreation division. This creates inconsistencies in programming from site to site and also does not utilize resources in the most efficient manner.

Recommendation: Create a clear defined approach to the programming in each program area. This will be accomplished by creating and implementing the following:

- Develop program standards in all core service areas.
- Have defined customer service standards.
- Develop a staff training and development program for full time and part time staff to ensure quality service delivery.
- Develop a customer feedback program that could include pre and post program surveys, trailer calls, focus groups, mid-program participant surveys and mystery shopper programs.
- Curriculums and program descriptions for core programs need to be written and implemented. For example, each program should be detailed on a Program Planning Sheet. The Sheet should ask for the following information:
 - ◇ Identification of the Target Issue for which the program is being developed
 - ◇ Identification of the Program Goals
 - ◇ Program Title
 - ◇ Facility Needs
 - ◇ Supplies
 - ◇ Evaluation Plan

Finding Category #4 – Programming Vision: There is not a clear vision in place for the recreation services division. Therefore staff in each are is operating on individual goals, objectives and vision. They are operating in cylinders rather than as a complete team.



Recommendation: Create business plans for each core business area. This would help serve as a guide in managing the business and provide clear understanding of the business. It is also going to help in evaluating the key components of the core service such as, profit and loss, size of the market, and the effectiveness of the organization.

Elements of a business plan include:

- Business Identification
- Market Information
- Operations Assessment
- Implementation Strategies

Identifying the Business Includes:

- History
- Vision and mission Statements- specific to business area
- Core Programs/Services
- Product Service Mix - hours of operation, locations, etc.

Business plans will provide a clear direction and illustrate alternatives for the future of your business or service. Business plans are a very positive and effective management tool.

Finding Category #5 – Program Marketing: Marketing of programs and specialty facilities is not as effective as it needs to be. Marketing is inconsistent for the programs and services. More needs to be done to increase awareness and recognition of programs and facilities.

Recommendation: Create a marketing plan for each core business. Identify target markets, potential partnerships, and other possible marketing tools. Have established marketing standards in place that would include logos, themes, program descriptions and a marketing calendar. Proven marketing techniques include:

- Mail the program guide twice to past participants
- Include a second registration form in the program guide so the reader can share a form with a friend
- Put an adult on the cover of the program guide. Adults tend to know and assume that recreation programs are for children and youth, but many overlook the fact, or are not aware, that recreation programs are also available for adults
- Do not put non-program information in the program guide. Most people do not like to read, thus the insertion of non-program in the guide will make it more difficult for them to find the program registration information they need
- Four program guides should be distributed each year (spring, summer, fall, winter). Each brochure should have a different cover graphic and a different color scheme on the cover so people know that this is a new guide. If sessions are combined into two each year, fewer people will register for the classes that begin later. The more brochures, the better registrations will be
- Switch from late fees to early registration discounts. Take registrations anytime, even after the class starts and stop charging late fees. Late fees discourage people from registering and



participating because many people object to the implicit label of being something “bad” because they are registering late. Instead, switch to early registration discounts. You can set your initial fee a little higher, offer an early registration discount and you still have the same net revenue that you would have had otherwise.

- Don’t set maximums for class size. Just add another class if you have interest.

Finding Category #6 – Organizational Structure: The organizational structure of the Recreation Department should be adjusted to reflect the key recommendations of this Plan.

Recommendation: First, the Community Resources Department should be consolidated into the Recreation Department. Second, the six area supervisor positions should be consolidated into three areas. Third, the three area supervisors would be responsible for recreation in their area as well as accountable for key elements of the Strategic Plan. For example, one area supervisor would be accountable for new programming; one area supervisor would be accountable for recreation marketing; one area supervisor would be accountable for program guidelines.

Finding Category #7 – Performance Measures: Performance measures are not in place. From a management perspective, if it doesn’t get measured, it doesn’t get done. Staff must be accountable for results, thus the development of key performance measures.

Recommendation: Staff of the Recreation Department must have performance measures which they can use to improve the overall program. Here are some measures which are proven:

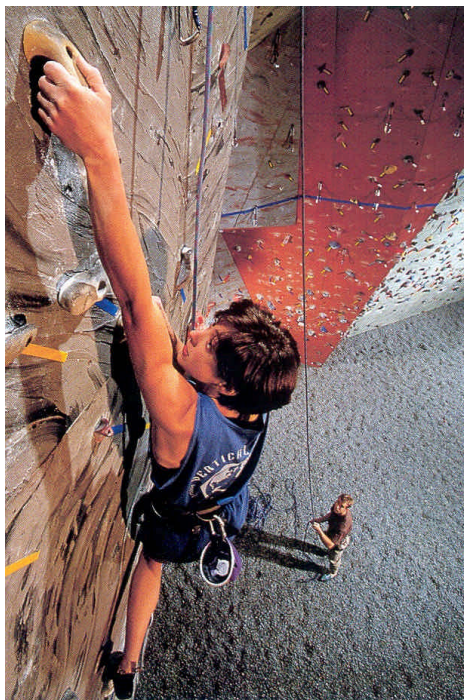




Table 6.23: – Performance Measures

| Item | Description | Measure |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Promotion Costs | Brochure, printing, postage, advertising and posters | 10% to 15% |
| Production Costs | Instructors, handouts, and materials | 45% to 50% |
| Administrative Costs | Administrative salaries and benefits, staff travel and training, computers and office expenses | 35% to 40% |
| Old Programs | One that has been offered successfully in previous years | 70% to 90% of total programs offered by the Department |
| New Programs | New programs keep the Department on the cutting edge and will promote the Department as one with new interests and people will read the brochure more often to fine out about what new activities are being offered | 10% to 30% of the total programs offered by the Department |
| Return Participation Rate | The number of participants from previous sessions who attend new sessions | 60% to 70% |

Finding Category #8 – New Program Development: The current process for developing new programs is not inclusive of the eight step process recommended by the consultant.

Recommendation: The Recreation Department should pursue an eight step process as defined below. A process which requires:

- brainstorming – the gathering of new ideas from all sources, including staff and participants. No idea is a bad idea. It is a critical first step without which the other stages cannot succeed.
- research – at the same time brainstorming is occurring, it is important to also be doing research. Research includes data and numbers on current participants and activities, analysis of the competition, and the review of the total environment within which BREC is operating at the time.
- discussion of options – from the brainstorming and research process, choices are narrowed down to two or three options. A small work group of the appropriate persons (staff, advisory board, focus group, or leadership) is the preferred choice to make final decisions.
- development of a model program – it is critical to work out a potential new program on paper. Without putting some numbers to paper, such as response rate, cost of promotion and production, anticipated participants, it is difficult, if not impossible, to succeed.
- survey – current BREC participants should be surveyed to gain additional and final information on what will make the new program (s) a success.



- try it – new ideas are offered after a strong promotional effort. If sufficient time and effort has been spent on the stages 1 through 5, this effort should provide evidence that the new program will be successful over the long term.
- decision process – often times, not enough energy and thought is put into the analysis of the results of the first effort to offer a new program. Sometimes new programs are discontinued when they actually have demonstrated some potential for long-term success. Eliminate unsuccessful programs for sure, however, the program evaluation committee must carefully consider the elements of a successful program before eliminating a new program without careful consideration.
- evaluation – every program requires ongoing evaluation to improve. All new programs will need to be refined and tuned to improve its quality.

Finding Category #9 – Registration Process: The registration process must be easy and citizens must be reminded that it is easy once the necessary procedures are in place. Currently, BREC requires citizens to walk-in to a local recreation center to register for programs.

Recommendation: The more ways BREC allows people to register, the more registrations it will have. Recommended registration opportunities include:

- Mail
- Phone
- Fax
- e-mail

Finding Category #10 – Staff Training and Development

There is a need for additional staff training and development on an on-going basis.

Recommendation: Training should include: a) customer service; b) activity based costing; c) performance measures; d) creative thinking; e) establishment of standards; f) secret shopper program; g) conflict resolution; h) team work; personal development; and, i) communication.

Finding Category #11 – Program Facilities (Recreation Centers) do not provide the learning and fun environment that is required

Existing facilities are not air conditioned and do not have the “curb appeal” to invite guests in. The facilities are the arenas within which programs occur and must provide the comfort and environment within which successful programs can occur.

Recommendation: Implement the capital improvement plan and list of projects and costs provided by the consultant in this Strategic Master Plan.

Finding Category #12 – There is a need for all providers to improve their communication opportunities



Recommendation: There should be a minimum of one annual meeting for all providers of programs. BREC could easily be the facilitator of this meeting.

