

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

Earn To Learn/Teen Teamworks

2012 Annual Report

Introduction

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) received additional funding through DEED, The City of Minneapolis and The General Mills Foundation, to operate its youth employment and training program during the summer of 2012. This report includes an overview of the program, results achieved, a profile of youth served, and program costs.

Program Overview and Background

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board was founded in 1883 and is responsible for maintaining and developing the Minneapolis park system and providing recreational programs for the city's residents. The Minneapolis Park System consists of 182 park properties, including local and regional parks, playgrounds, golf courses, gardens, picnic areas, biking and walking paths, nature sanctuaries and the 55-mile Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway. Together, these properties total nearly 6,732 acres of land and water. The backbone of the park system is its 49 full-service neighborhood recreation centers.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board annually serves nearly 400,000 citizens of Minneapolis. Approximately 18 million visits are made to the system each year, with an estimated five million visits to neighborhood parks. The Chain of Lakes draws over five million visits annually.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board offers over 6,000 programs annually serving pre-schoolers to senior citizens, and special programs serve those with mental or physical disabilities. Various classes, crafts, games, cultural events, environmental programs and sports are available.

The Board believes it is of paramount importance to help young, unskilled youth make the connection between school and work. Providing opportunities for these youth helps them evolve into productive and achieving members of the community.

MPRB operates Teen Teamworks, a summer employment program that has served more than 8,200 youth since its inception in 1986. This program offers a variety of positive work and educational experiences throughout our park system involving our environmental, maintenance, horticulture, administration and recreation divisions to unemployed or underemployed at-risk youth. The majority of youth served are between the ages of 14 and 18, due to new DEED guidelines we were able to offer employment to young people up to the age of 24. The primary reason for unemployment is not necessarily a shortage of available jobs, but a lack of basic skills and unrealistic expectations of what is required to succeed in the work world. Without appropriate intervention, this may translate to chronic unemployment or underemployment in adulthood.

Helping young teens acquire an appreciation for the connection between academic, social, judgment and job skills has been the ongoing focus for the Teen Teamworks project.

Teen Teamworks youth are referred to our program from Minneapolis Schools, the MN WorkForce Centers, Juvenile Justice Programs, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, Minneapolis Step-Up program, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board staff and other youth servicing agencies. Youth must live in Minneapolis, meet income guidelines, and or have additional barriers to employment (Examples are IEP's, English language learners, or pregnant or parenting teen).

This summer Teen Teamwork made a conscious effort to recruit youth with disabilities and include them in our workforce. 8 youth from Minneapolis Public Schools Deaf/Hard of Hearing program were hired along with an adult supervisor certified in American Sign Language. Twelve youth with learning disabilities from Transition Plus High School also had the opportunity to work with us this summer. Having skillful supervising staff to guide youth provided a safe and successful work experience.

Community Needs

The MPRB has identified changing social and economic needs as a primary reason for an expanded summer employment and training program. These social and economic changes have created a higher demand for a more diverse community-based program that responds to the unmet needs of neighborhood families. Minneapolis children who live in highly stressed; disorganized family environments are faced with multiple risk factors, which can combine to place youth in jeopardy of a lifetime of restricted opportunities. Many Minneapolis youth are rapidly heading for adulthood poorly prepared both academically and emotionally. Projections indicate that many of these youth will be unable to hold jobs due to a lack of fundamental literacy skills and work habits.

Minneapolis is becoming more culturally and economically diverse. Each neighborhood is unique and reflects both the positive and negative changes experienced by other major metropolitan areas over the past decade. The increase in poverty, alcohol and other chemical abuse, teen pregnancy, gang activity, serious juvenile crime, and school dropout rates underscore the need for youth employment and training programs.

Program Activities and Services

“Teen Teamworks/Earn While You Learn” offers Minneapolis youth the opportunity to earn money and learn appropriate work maturity skills through a combination of work experience and academic enrichment. There are two main components to the program: daily participation on a work crew and weekly classroom sessions.

Employment Opportunities

The majority of youth work on crews of ten youth with their adult supervisors performing basic environmental and maintenance tasks in the city's parks. Crews work eight seven-hour days in the two-week pay period at the hourly pay rate of \$7.25. Youth learn and participate in the day to day routine upkeep of their home parks which includes removing trash, clearing storm drains, raking sand lots, pulling weeds, spreading wood chips, edging paths, and other standard or special maintenance tasks.

As Teen Teamworks works towards going *green*, Park Board Environmental Education Staff provide special training to supervisors and youth to identify and remove invasive species; provide presentations on River/Stream water testing and Stream erosion/pollution. Youth also participate in educational sessions on how to reduce waste and promote recycling in our parks. Last summer two Teen Teamworks crews along with other Minneapolis Parks employees participated in a garbage sort of over 1,345 pounds of trash from Lake Harriet

There were four specialized crew special assignments which included:

Bike and Trails

In 2012 the Bicycle Crew was located at Farview Park and consisted of 14 youth. With assistance from their adult site supervisors, this crew was tasked with some distinctive responsibilities and had some unique experiences. The goals for the crew were to learn to ride safely and legally on bicycle paths and on streets, to keep bicycle trails within the parks clean and safe, to report problem areas on trails, to learn basic bicycle maintenance, to learn how to navigate between different locations within the park system and around the city, to share knowledge of bicycle safety with peers and younger riders, and finally to learn about careers related to bicycling.

Environmental Operations Services - Green Team

In its fifth year, the Green Teams had another great summer working and learning in the natural areas of Minneapolis parks. The goals of the program are to engage youth in hands-on environmental work, increase their knowledge about natural resources, and expose them to a wide array of potential green careers.

The Mississippi River Green Team (Green Team) is a conservation-based crew engaged in daily hands-on environmental work throughout the summer. The crew works in the natural areas of the Minneapolis park system, and mostly within the watershed of the Mississippi River. Typical work days include invasive species removal, weed wrenching, planting, watering, mulching, and citizen science work.

This summer the Green Team engaged in two citizen science programs focused on water quality. As part of the Minnesota Odonata Survey Project, each week the teens helped catch and identify dragonflies at North Mississippi Park. Dragonflies are an indicator species for assessing habitat and water quality in a wetlands, riparian forests, and lakeshore habitats. The Green Team claimed two Hennepin County records for catching a Wandering Glider (a migratory dragonfly) and a Russet-tipped clubtail. You can read more about the Odonata Project, and volunteer for it, here: <http://www.mndragonfly.org>. The Green Team also took to the streets to sample organic materials from selected curb lines in North Minneapolis neighborhoods. The team used protocols developed by the Fresh Water Society, the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization, and the U of MN's Water Resources Management Center. The samples are being analyzed so we can more accurately measure the nutrient content of leaves, grass clippings and other organic materials carried by storm drains into area lakes and rivers. High nutrient levels negatively impact water quality and contribute to stinky algae growth and fish kills.

As part of the Urban Migratory Bird Treaty, the Green Team installed several hundred native plants at North Mississippi Park and BF Nelson Park. Both parks serve as nurseries for many migratory and resident birds; and a baby songbird's diet is almost exclusively insects.

Providing native plants that attract pollinators (insects), helps ensure that songbird hatches are successful.

Other summer work sites included Heritage Park/Sumner Field, Audubon Park, and Powderhorn Park. The crew planted a rain garden in Loring Park, and removed Queen Anne's Lace (an invasive species) from Mill Ruins Park. The Green Team also removed invasives and mulched planting beds at three of the City's stormwater retention ponds.

The Green Team worked with the National Park Service to mentor Rec+ youth from Webber Park. Over the course of the summer, teens showed Rec+ how to use a plant key and how to install plants. The two groups planted native shrubs and perennials along Shingle Creek, and planted trees along one of the entrances to North Mississippi Park. The children and teens tested the water quality of the creek, and used nets to catch and identify macro-invertebrates.

The Mississippi River Green Team was featured in a short video clip created by Minnesota 2020, which can be seen here: <http://mn2020.org/issues-that-matter/economic-development/video-teenagers-on-the-mississippi> And as part of an education day, the crew visited the Minnesota Television Network (MTN) studios to learn how to operate cameras and sound systems. They then created four 'talkshow-style' videos focused on the team, invasive species, dragonfly monitoring, and water quality. The videos can be seen at: <http://mtn.org/youth/partners/2012/greenteam.html>

The Green Team will continue to work at least one Saturday per month throughout the school year. The teens will also learn CPR & First Aid, how to write a resume, and participate in mock job interviews. The Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (MWMO) provides training to the teens so they can work at community events and provide water quality education to their neighbors. The Green Team recently worked at the grand opening of the Lowry Bridge and the MWMO's new headquarters building. You can see the event and the Green Team kids at work here (look for the teens in blue t-shirts):

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pApV_RkR-hQ&list=UU1kuEDjpDf9DZh6VKx-on7g&index=1&feature=plcp.

The Mississippi River Green Team is made possible through a partnership between the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization, with additional funding through STEP-UP.

Environmental Operations Services - Garden Crew

This summer the Garden Crews (14 youth) again propagated plants at JD Rivers' Children's Garden. The Garden Crew planted a sharing garden and assisted younger children plant, weed, water, compost and harvest. They also prepare, sample and take home the garden produce, such as vegetables, herbs, and a little bit of fruit and flowers. Extra produce is donated to a local food shelf. The crew removed invasive species; determined walking path routes and wood chipped the trails.

Typical garden days included keeping the garden watered, weeded, and harvested, but as versatile teens their work also extended into Theodore Wirth Park. In the park their responsibilities became keeping trails clean and intersections visible, weeding out perennial flowers and planting annual ones, removing invasive species and learning how to identify native ones too. In addition to learning through daily gardening activities, teens also focused a few hours each week on themed activities such as how to properly measure, graph and map

their own garden map, and with the help of Community Bees on Bikes and the Minnesota Audubon Society they were fortunate to gain experience in honey-bee keeping, birdhouse building and local conservation. All admitted to liking the opportunity of spending the summer outdoors, but several also admitted to considering gardening much harder than they thought it would be. Regardless, all considered gardening as something they would continue in the future. The program seems to have had as positive of an effect on the teens as they did on the garden.

The Green and Garden Teams are made possible through the collaborative efforts of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Mississippi Water Management Organization, Minneapolis Employment and Training Program and National Park Service.

Park Pathways

Teen Teamworks Park Pathways is a newly formed group of diverse, young teen leaders from different parts of Minneapolis. The Teen Teamworks Park Pathways program goal is to enrich the lives of youth who live in the Minneapolis area by creating a language and culture camp hosted in Minneapolis parks that incorporates fun with language learning. Each day, Park Pathways leaders select a language of the day to focus on and teach the children ages 8–12. Languages include but are not limited to Spanish, French, Swahili, Korean, Chinese, Japanese and Somali.

The camps have quickly become a huge success with children attending each day eager to learn something new about the world's languages and cultures. With more than 6,700 languages spoken in the world, the power of knowing one word in other languages breaks a language barrier and creates a method of communication that otherwise would have been closed.

Teen Teamworks Park Pathways leaders are also involved in sports, serving as mentors for children ages 9–12. This year, Park Pathways supported international baseball and softball teams during the RBI World Series in Minneapolis. The teens were fans to kids of cultures who speak different languages, connecting to their incredible work at language and culture camp.

Park Pathways program teens have also worked at ice cream socials and during the Minneapolis Aquatennial, educating the community about the importance of recycling and what can and cannot be recycled.

The **Individual Placement** component to the Teen Teamwork program was again a success; we were able to place 75 youth one on one with a full-time MPRB staff member. These volunteer mentors came from all divisions of the MPRB. The tasks youth completed proved to be very rewarding experiences for the teens. Some examples are listed below.

Individual Placement - Recreation Division Fall, winter and Spring Internships

Youth assigned to work with Center Directors, Recreation Leaders and Youthline gained a variety of job experiences depending on the season. Youthworkers were responsible for monitoring the safety of small children using the wading pools, tot lots, computer labs and other park facilities. Teens helped schedule the use of park equipment and rooms, answered phones and established a positive relationship with park users and other staff. Teens also planned and organized their own group activities such as craft projects or sport events. Other experiences included setting up, marking and maintaining of football, soccer, softball

and baseball fields. Teens developed important leadership skills and had the chance to become mentors themselves. 9 youth worked directly with Rec Plus the MPRB's daycare program. Youth selected for this opportunity had expressed that working with children was their top career choice on their applications.

Educational Internships

Six youth who expressed an interest in teaching were able to intern with instructors in our educational component Earn While You Learn. Youth assisted with preparing curriculum, lead class discussions, and maintained time and attendance records. These young people also worked one on one with youth in the classroom that required or requested additional tutoring.

Two of this summer's newest initiatives:

Minneapolis Urban League

A new partnership with the Minneapolis Urban League (MUL) provided a summer employability and career development experience for youth ages 14-24. MUL coordinated summer Youth Workforce Development Experiences in the Building and Construction Trades, and pilot programs focused on the Culinary Arts and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) career pathways. MUL served 19 participants. Key to the significance of the MUL Teen Teamworks program design was counteracting the negative peer culture, working instead to foster positive beliefs in self through project based learning and plan design competence.

Minneapolis Urban League conducted evidence based talent development and career exploration experiences for participants which were designed to foster the identification of a personal career pathway; as well as the enhancement of their foundational, soft and technical skills so that they could gain greater understanding of the requirements of the 21st century workplace and what actions are necessary for them to prepare.

The Building Trades and Construction Work Experience Track

In collaboration with its union partner, Construction Laborers Education, Apprenticeship and Training Fund of Minnesota and North Dakota Training Center, and its Building Trades and Construction CEO Roundtable, MUL placed 4 Teen Teamworks youth participants over age 18 in construction sector jobs. Topics covered in training included: Building Trades' Multi-Craft Core Curriculum, OSHA Safety-10, First Aid and CPR.

Culinary Education Work Experience Track; A Universal Skill

Culinary Arts, a skill that is universal across the world, prepares individuals for a wide range of jobs within the food service industry. 7 Teen Teamworks youth participants in this track gained introductory knowledge and hands-on experience in the food services industry. Through a curriculum inclusive of both the practices of culinary arts and the business side of this occupational sector, as well as hands on meal preparing activities and serving at three special events, students learned the following: kitchen safety, hygiene, sanitation, tools, and equipment; measurement and basic food preparation principles; baking; stocks, soups, and sauces; preparation of vegetables, meats poultry, and seafood; garnishing and food presentation; customer service; budgeting; nutrition; and meal planning.

8 Teen Teamworks participants were placed in *STEM* related work assignments at TLC Precision, Inc. Participants were afforded the opportunity to work in two businesses: TLC Precision Wafer Technology high tech research & manufacturing, and the TLC Education

Foundation Summer FLY (Future Leader Youth) Program, an academic and STEM industry camp. Activities that STEM participants were involved in during their employment experience are: worked with computer network engineer and then outline, structure, plan, and put a computer network together that readily interfaced with main computer network. Measure, draw, purchase, and install a protection runway network. Work with website designer to then lead and upgrade website. Figure out and configure the protection of manufacturing equipment in a clean room.

Regulatory Services

This summer Teen Teamworks contracted with the City of Minneapolis' Regulatory Services department to mow the vacant lots in North Minneapolis. Regulatory Services issued work orders for lots that needed to be mowed. The work order included pictures of the lot, the date work could begin and the date work needed to be completed. A crew of 5 older youth, junior supervisor and adult supervisor had to plan their route based on when they could mow and location of lots to efficiently plan their day, take before and after pictures of each work site and record date and time completed.

The mowing crew also attended classes on Career Exploration, Workplace Characteristics and Employment Readiness. Teen Teamworks continues to offer job leads, resume assistance and other services.

Academic Enrichment

In addition to these work experiences, all youth also participate in the academic enrichment component of the Teen Teamwork project - Earn While You Learn. For the third consecutive summer, Teen Teamwork was awarded the contract to provide educational services to all City of Minneapolis STEP-UP youth. The curriculum focuses on three areas:

1. Basic skills development in reading, writing and math to develop and reinforce program participants' knowledge of graduation standards.
2. Exploration of personal and social issues facing today's youth (for example: teen parenting, family values, money management skills, violence, and substance abuse), and integration of classroom topics with work experience on the various crews (for example: teamwork, job seeking and keeping skills, and filling out job applications).
3. S.T.E.M. (science, technology, engineering and math) topics span from non-traditional career assessments to examining each individual's carbon footprint. Students take time to study the shapes that make structures strong and apply their learning in hands-on activities.

Supervisors and youthworkers felt the educational sessions were beneficial because they got some helpful tips on how to communicate better with people and how to get and hold jobs more successfully. The educational sessions also helped youth learn and practice job and social skills such as listening, communicating, contributing to group activities, and developed an understanding of expectations.

Topics were selected on the basis of comments from participants in previous years, as well as formal and informal assessment of Minneapolis students and teachers during the school year. Also, guest speakers were invited to speak to our youth about relevant topics and they had the freedom to propose the specific lesson plan they would use. Guest speakers allow youth to develop avenues for establishing positive relationships with adults in their local community, and this summer we chose to have the Minneapolis Police Department's Crime Prevention Interns,

Metro Transit’s Customer Advocate, and Community mentors from Seen on Da Streets come make presentations about relevant issues facing youth in Minneapolis.

Using a variety of interactive teaching techniques, including panel discussions and laboratory sessions, educational staff help the youth learn about appropriate work attitudes and behavior, sexual harassment, educational options, career exploration, decision-making, financial literacy, teen parenting, HIV/AIDS, violence, and family issues.

These classes are offered to youth employed by Teen Teamworks and the City of Minneapolis’ STEP-UP. By working with Minneapolis Public Schools’ Area Learning Center Division, and the Independent School District 916 we are able to ensure that all youth who receive education this summer have the ability to receive credit for successful participation in class.

Classes were held at North Community High School and South High School. A benefit to holding our classes in a Minneapolis public school is that they are easily accessible for youth with disabilities. Special arrangements have and will be made in regards to ensuring that youth with disabilities are able to be included in our classrooms. By planning in advance, small buses and crew trucks used by MPRB Teen Teamworks can be utilized to bring students to and home from the school.

In addition Leadership Camps were implemented by MPRB Community Outreach staff and attended by all TTW crew members. This three session camp instructed and encouraged conversations with youth in developing strategies to communicate effectively in all areas of their lives and build self-esteem. The camps finished by working with local artist Charles Caldwell to understand how to express themselves through art by creating a mural that will have the capability to travel from park to park for display. Feedback from youth has been very positive and important connections were developed.

Profile of Youth Served this summer

PARTICIPANT SUMMARY INFORMATION		
Total Participants Served		330
Gender	A. Male	191
	B. Female	139
Age	A. 14 – 15	195
	B. 16 – 17	84
	C. 18	27
	D. 19 – 21	22
	E. 22 – 24	2
Ethnicity / Race	A. Hispanic/Latino	13
	B. American Indian or Alaska Native	6
	C. Asian/Pacific Islander	39
	D. Black or African American	257

	E. White	13
Education Level	A. 8 th grade and under	71
	B. 9 th Grade – 12 th Grade	237
	C. High School graduate or equivalent	22
	D. Post-Secondary Education	
Other Demographics	A. Limited English Proficient	16
	B. Youth From Families Receiving Public Assistance	180
	C. Foster Youth	8
	D. Youth with a Disability	87
	E. High School Drop-Out	14
	F. Youth Offender	6
	G. Pregnant or Parenting Youth	4
	H. Basic Skills Deficient	171
	I. Homeless or Runaway Youth	14
	J. Not Employed at Program Enrollment	330
	K. Veteran	0
PROGRAM SERVICES, ACTIVITIES, AND OTHER RELATED ASSISTANCE		
	A. Received Education or Job Training Activities	330
	B. Received Work Experience Activities	330
	C. Received Community Involvement and Leadership Development Activities	276
	D. Received Post-Secondary Exploration, Career Guidance and Planning Activities	330
	E. Received Mentoring Activities	330
	F. Received Support Services	50
INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE		
	A. Attained Work Readiness or Education Goals in ISS	313
	B. Received Academic Credit or Service Learning Credit	247
	C. Obtained High School Diploma, GED, Remained in School, Obtained a Certificate or Degree, or Dropout – Returned to School	288
	D. Entered Post Secondary Education, Vocational/Occupational Skills Training, Apprenticeship, Military, Job Search or Employment	87
	E. Completion Rate	97.35%
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION		
	A. Number of participants rating experience as “Excellent”	51.5%

B. Number of participants rating experience as "Very Good"	29.5%
C. Number of participants rating experience as "Average"	16.9%
D. Number of participants rating experience as "Below Average"	4.26%
E. Number of participants rating experience as "Poor"	0.0%
F. Total Number of Surveys Completed	231

Outcomes

All staff, worksite supervisors and educational staff in the Teen Teamworks demonstrate an ethic of service to the youth. There is a real sense of care and commitment. Supervisors and educators are highly conscious of the fact that, for many of the youth, they may well be the only positive adult role model. They routinely go "above and beyond" their job responsibilities in their efforts to help these youth.

The program is also making real strides at building a sense of community in each of the city's neighborhoods. Youth are performing a much-needed community service in their "home" parks, which is appreciated by neighborhood residents and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. At the same time, youth are also learning to value and respect the city's natural resources, as well as work with peers from their neighborhoods to achieve common goals.

As an accredited Area Learning Center in Minneapolis, we were able to provide 160 youth with a recovery credit this summer. Additionally, 400 youth were enrolled in Independent School District 916 and will receive a letter of credit that can be turned in to their school counselor for credit at their home school. We continue to work with youth who are enrolled in schools outside of the district or in an alternative school to assist them in making sure they receive a credit. Although not all youth were eligible to receive the recovery credit, 100% of the youth that completed the program this summer were awarded with a certificate of completion.

Program Costs/Funding Sources

The program cost per participant (including tools, transportation, the educational curriculum development and leadership) is approximately \$ 2,750 per participant.

DEED	\$330,000.00 (\$30,000 carry over from 2011)
MPRB	\$150,000.00
General Mills	\$15,000.00
Step Up/Enclave	\$332,181.00
SU Interns	\$4,000.00
Regulatory Services	\$8,500.00
City of MPLS	\$74,000.00
MPS	\$7,553.00
SU Education	\$63,327.00
Green Team Sup	\$11,082.00
Total	\$995,643.00