

Six Month Report - Aquatics

October 2015

It has been an extremely busy spring, summer and start to the fall for the aquatics department. Maintaining our thriving program participation numbers while managing a short staff and upkeep on facility maintenance issues have kept us busy and challenged.

Our spring, summer and fall group and private swim lesson numbers continue to hold steady and mirror the 2014 spring, summer and fall seasons. We feel that our lesson numbers have remained constant with no huge fluctuations in either direction due to the partnership with both RE1J school district and Tenderfoot Childcare Center. In working with these schools to offer lessons during their school day we are reaching a wider range of students, but some of those students will choose to do lessons with the school rather than sign up for our group and private lesson offerings. We are offering more lessons to more kids with our collaboration with the schools, and our revenues reflect this, but our group and private lesson numbers are not growing.

This summer we offered a free swim lesson session that was attended by over 80 local youth. During this session of lessons we focus on teaching our participants about making smart, safe decisions while recreating in and around our local bodies of water. Our department worked on various grants to help fund this important community program. We were successful applicants for the Upper Gunnison River Conservancy District Mini Grant. This \$300 grant and over \$800 in private donations helped us to offset all costs associated with the free swim lesson offering this year. We encouraged the board of the Upper Gunnison River Conservancy District to attend one of the lessons to see the curriculum we implemented each lesson, and they were extremely grateful for this program and see the importance it plays in our community; we are hopeful that the board will help us fund this program next year.

We are continuing to develop a close working relationship with GCSAPP in regards to our programing. Historically, we have offered a day trip to Elitches each summer for our Middle/High School aged kids. This year GCSAPP wanted to help us offer more trips of this type to these ages and help subsidize the cost to "choice pass" holders. We took 19 kids to Elithes, 17 Kids to Water World and 10 Kids to Ouray & Montrose. These trips generate great revenue for our department and offer our local kids an option to go on some fun day trips during the summer with their peers. We have also started teaming up with GCSAPP to offer choice pass holders discounts on various certifications our department offers. High School choice pass holders have the opportunity to get lifeguard and WSI trained and certified with our department and GCSAPP will foot the bill. We are hopeful that this will lead to more employees for us! Middle School choice pass holders will have the same opportunity

with Jr. Lifeguard and Babysitting training. Partnership with GCSAPP in this capacity has been very beneficial to our department, and we are hopeful it will continue build a strong symbiotic relationship.

We had a very busy summer with many new high school aged lifeguards. Usually we have 1-2 guards under the age of 18 working for us, this summer the majority of our staff was under 18. This age group of employees was very responsible and hard working. A major goal for managers was to plan and implement a "Mock Emergency" drill this summer. At various training classes other facilities talked about the importance of this teaching/training technique. We teamed up with EMS and dispatch to hold this drill. We had mostly high school aged lifeguards who were on staff while this drill took place, and they did fantastic. The drill took place on a busy summer afternoon, where we notified patrons that there would be a drill taking place and to please be patient with the staff while we implemented this 20-30 minute drill. Managers watched the drill from the slide tower to note issues and points of success. We also videoed the drill and used it at the following inservice training. This drill was very successful in showing management where we need to work on skills/communications and to work on our partnership with both EMS and dispatch. We will plan more of these types of drills in the future.

We have been experiencing some major issues with our staffing. We are short employees and struggling to recruit and retain. Because of this shortage, management has been working a big portion of the lifeguarding shifts just to make sure we have the accurate staff numbers on for our facility. We are optimistic that we will be approved for base wage increases in 2016. With this increase we are confident that we will be more competitive to potential employees and we will also be able to retain our employees for longer. Hiring lifeguards can be a very difficult task. We are lucky that our management is trained to certify lifeguards, but the pot of potential employees is very limited as they must be strong confident swimmers and willing to take a 30-40 hour certification class just to start the job. We have offered 4 lifeguarding classes since July. All of these classes have produced employees, but these lifeguards have limited availability and usually have multiple job and school obligations.

With our transition to the WSI swim program we definitely have more confident, knowledgeable and responsible swim instructors, but we have struggled to recruit and retain these employees as well. We have held 4 WSI classes since January and have certified over 8 employees. Currently we only have 1 certified instructor out of these 8 on staff – not including our 4 managers.

Managers have been working toward continuing education and obtaining new certifications. Currently Faith is working toward her LGI (lifeguard instructor) certification. This level of certification will allow Faith to play a bigger role at inservice trainings, and help teach our lifeguarding, community CPR, and other Red Cross classes. She is excited about this new certification and has been flexible in moving her schedule around so she can attend the mandatory training days. Ginny and Traci attended a Red Cross Babysitting Trainers course in September.

With this 16 hour certification course we will be able to train our young community members how to be safe, responsible babysitters. This course and certification has the potential to bring in some extra revenue dollars for the department and offer an important class to our community. The aquatic managers are looking for a management course to take in 2015 or 2016 that would help all to be more confident managers. While we all have experience managing employees, none of us have any formal training. We feel that we would benefit greatly from a management seminar or course. We will continue to look for training in this area and will plan to attend/complete this type of training if time and funds allow.

For the last six months we have been diligent in our facility maintenance and repairs. With the help of Clayton Hassel with Associated Pool Builders, we installed new water chemical controllers in May and have noticed a big difference in our water chemistry and maintenance ease. This was a crucial capital expense purchase for our facility. While here, Clayton also serviced our UV sanitation units and replaced the light bulbs and quartz sleeves. Currently our leisure pool UV unit is working at 100% and has a great impact on our leisure pool and lap pool water chemistry. Because the UV unit is taking the chloramines (bad stuff) out of the leisure pool water and area air, it is also helping our air quality and in turn is taking the chloramines out of the lap pool. We noticed our lap pool chloramines were low and attributed it to clean patrons and good chlorine levels, but after Clayton's visit he mentioned that one UV unit is very beneficial to both pools if the unit is working correctly in conjunction with a good HVAC system. It will be an estimated cost of \$1,500 to keep the units running at 100% each year, but it is vital to the health and safety of our patrons to keep our UV unit up and functioning. As always, we were grateful for Clayton's help servicing our units and providing us with his pool knowledge.

August brought another annual closure and cleaning. We only needed to drain the leisure pool this year, and focused our time on thoroughly cleaning out both leisure pool and lap pool pits (extra water storage) and did extra cleaning and maintenance on our chlorine feeders, acid feeders, strainers and pumps. Most cleaning tasks went smoothly and we were back up and running on our projected open date.

With the success of our various swim programs and community events and our short, but dedicated staff we have had a busy six months. We will plan to meet and exceed our 2015 pool program revenue projection and continue to streamline various aquatics operations and maintenance. We are looking forward to, and hopeful for a 2016 budget that increases our lifeguard and swim instructor wages.