



City Council Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

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TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: JULY 6, 2021

FROM: PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT WARDS: ALL

SUBJECT: RIVERSIDE ARTS ACADEMY PROGRAM UPDATE AND RECOGNITION OF RIVERSIDE YOUTH MUSICIANS AT THE YOUTH ORCHESTRA LOS ANGELES NATIONAL FESTIVAL

ISSUE:

Receive an update on the Riverside Arts Academy within the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council:

1. Receive and file this report summarizing the programs and activities offered to youth and families in the Riverside Community by the Riverside Arts Academy; and
2. Recognize the accomplishments of Riverside youth musicians invited to the Youth Orchestra Los Angeles National Festival.

BACKGROUND:

Since the economic recession in 2011-2012, the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department (PRCSD) and community volunteers/leaders established the Riverside Arts Academy (RAA). It was formed based on a need for visual and performing arts for underserved youth ages 4-17 in the Eastside community, which later expanded City-wide. The curriculum focus is on improving the quality of life through dance, music, visual and performing arts for youth. With the implementation of a strings component (i.e. violin, cello, and viola), the RAA applied for affiliation with the International Harmony Project. This organization incorporates and focuses on instruction in music theory, musicianship and eventually led to the formation of a youth orchestra.

The goals of the program are to provide low to no-cost quality arts programming for youth of the community in four core disciplines; to assist in the development of fundamentals; and to fine-tune artistic techniques. To accomplish these goals and ensure all youth in Riverside have access to the arts, funds were raised to offer scholarships and offset the cost of the programming budget.

The project's target audiences are the underserved communities of Riverside. During the COVID-19 pandemic, with concerns for the mental health and fear of isolation for youth, RAA was able to offer virtual dance, music, and art classes by utilizing the 2020 CARES Act funding.

Program participation through the years:

- 2020-2019: 2,041 youth attended, 60 classes offered, and taught 2,800 lessons
- 2019-2018: 2,434 youth attended, 55 classes offered, and taught 2,640 lessons
- 2018-2017: 2,909 youth attended, 63 classes offered, and taught 3,024 lessons
- 2017-2016: 2,718 youth attended, 54 classes offered, and taught 2,592 lessons
- 2016-2015: 2,743 youth attended, 38 classes offered, and taught 1,216 lessons
- 2015-2014: 200 youth attended, offered 20 classes, and taught 960 lessons
- 2014-2013: 90 youth attended, offered 6 classes, and taught 264 lessons

DISCUSSION:

Riverside Arts Academy Music Project (RAAMP)

In 2015, RAA and community partners launched the Riverside Arts Academy Music Project (RAAMP). RAAMP collaborates with local school districts to provide free music instruction and instruments to underserved youth. Based on the benefits found in the research of leading expert, Dr. Nina Kraus, Professor of Neurobiology and Otolaryngology (Northwestern University), RAAMP offers semester-long sessions throughout the school year and summer. The research shows that long-term exposure and training in music can positively impact a child's cognitive development, specifically in the area of literacy. The goal is to provide students with the tools to thrive, not only as musicians, but as members in their communities. RAAMP students receive mentorship from their instructors and learn to serve as peer mentors themselves. The Making Music in Education conference is an ongoing collaboration with educational partners for the advancement of arts and education.

Youth Orchestra Los Angeles (YOLA) National Festival

The YOLA National Festival is an opportunity for young musicians from El Sistema-inspired programs, like RAA, and programs similarly invested in youth and community development through music. Musicians convene each summer in Southern California for a two-week period of learning and performance with world-renowned conductors and artist mentors such as Gustavo Dudamel of the L.A. Philharmonic, culminating in performances at the Walt Disney Concert Hall. Participation travel, lodging, meals, and programming are provided to students at no cost. The festival's aim is to create a civically-minded community of musicians from diverse regions across the country, while developing a model for excellence that will positively shape progressive music education nationwide.

Hundreds of student musicians from around the world, ages 12 to 19, audition for the prestigious festival each year. We are pleased to announce that 4 students from the Riverside Arts Academy Music Project were admitted to the 2021 festival!

- Rebekah Campbell, 12th Grade, Clarinet
- Aiden Co, 9th Grade, Flute
- Joseline Duarte, 8th Grade, Violin

- Yunshu Zhang, 8th Grade, Clarinet

The PRCSD would like to congratulate these talented youth! They make the City of Riverside proud! Looking at the immediate future, the PRCSD is pleased to share that the 2021 Summer Music Camp will be held in-person, during the month of July. It's a welcome return to the Cesar Chavez Community Center as students will be able to rehearse together, again.

The Riverside Arts Academy is not just an arts program; it is a defined music and art curriculum. Through hard work, professional instruction and mentoring, this program provides each child a brighter future as they strive to achieve academic excellence.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact related to this update.

Prepared by: Adolfo Cruz, Parks, Recreation and Community Services Director
Certified as to
availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer
Approved by: Rafael Guzman, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form: Kristi J. Smith, Interim City Attorney

Attachment: Photo of YOLA Students