



# Park and Recreation Commission

*City of Arts & Innovation*

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**TO: HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS** **DATE: MARCH 18, 2019**

**FROM: PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON THE PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES FRIENDLY STARS PROGRAM**

## **ISSUE:**

Receive an update on the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department Friendly Stars program.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Park Recreation and Commission receive and provide feedback on this report providing an update on the Friendly Stars Program.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The City of Riverside has long understood the responsibility to provide quality programming and services to its entire population, most specifically, to the underserved population of persons with disabilities.

In 1978, the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department (PRCSD) began offering activities through the Friendly Stars program for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Recognizing this demographic is at risk of social isolation, often disconnected from the community, and have limited income; the program provides a variety of recreational activities that emphasize recreational and social skills that promote learning and self-esteem.

During the past 40 years, staff has implemented social inclusion strategies to ensure that participants of the program continue to be involved and connected through a variety of social interests that include sports, dance, art, and themed activities. The program provides weekly recreational activities to over 160 participants ages 18 and older to support their social connections and engagement opportunities.

The Friendly Stars program is a welcoming place for individuals to gather in a safe and nurturing atmosphere while meeting the recreation, social, and physical needs of individuals with disabilities.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The Friendly Stars program meets every Friday from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. at La Sierra Park in the community and senior center. The fee per participant is \$62 for residents/\$108 for non-residents per six-month session. A majority of the Friendly Stars participants also utilize the services of the Special Transportation mini busses to provide their transportation.

Throughout the year, participants look forward to the weekly themed activities and events made possible with the assistance of community groups and volunteers. The staff continues to work closely with volunteers, community groups and the Friendly Stars Advisory team to help provide activities, resources, and active supervision that enrich the quality of life for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The Department will continue to sustain and support the citywide inclusion program through innovative programs that allow for enhanced individual skills and creativity that empowers individuals with disabilities to a greater level of self-sufficiency.

## **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

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Approved by: Rafael Guzman, Assistant City Manager

Attachment: Presentation