



# Park and Recreation Commission

*City of Arts & Innovation*

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**TO: HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS** **DATE: JULY 15 , 2019**

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

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON THE 12TH ANNUAL YOUNG MEN'S CONFERENCE HOSTED BY PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND THE RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY HEALTH FOUNDATION - HELD AT THE BOURNS TECHNOLOGY CENTER**

## **ISSUE:**

Receive an update on the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Young Men's Conference hosted by the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department and the Riverside Community Health Foundation, held at the Bourns Technology Center for young men.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Park and Recreation Commission receive an update on the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Young Men's Conference.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department, in partnership with the Riverside Community Health Foundation, hosted the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Young Men's Conference at the Bourns Technology Center on Wednesday, April 24, 2019. The Young Men's Conference helps at-risk youth develop positive relationships, respect and tools to overcome issues they face on a regular basis. The conference offers interactive breakout sessions, presentations and skill building workshops to help at-risk youth build strong and positive connections with adults who add value to young people. Presenters provide workshops and resources in mentoring, leadership, skill development, student engagement and family & community engagement. Throughout the conference, participants engage in workshops and activities where they listen to speakers and learn about opportunities (education, career, mentoring, treatment, etc.) available to them and the obstacles that hinder their success, such as gangs, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, incarcerations, domestic violence, homelessness, and abuse. Over the past 11 years, the event has averaged 235 at-risk youth per year. Participants are recruited from Riverside, Alvord, and Jurupa Unified School Districts and various organizations such as charter schools, youth opportunity centers, and probation officer recommendations.

The conference was named a "Best Practice" example by the California Office of Family Planning in 2011.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The 2019 conference introduced 241 at-risk young men to technology and the innovative career options available, health and wellness, team building and mentoring. The interactive workshops and presentations provided the young men an opportunity to engage with subject matter experts in a safe and neutral place. The conference was a great success and staff received multitudes of positive feedback. Program surveys stated that the conference was beneficial, rating it a 95% outstanding.

This year's interactive workshops consisted of drones, robotics, art, one-on-one mentor discussions and boxing demonstrations. Key Note Speaker Benjamin Nakamura, Principal at John W. North High School, shared his testimony as a local Inland Empire youth who struggled with drug addicted parents and growing up in an unstable household. The at-risk youth related and were moved by his testimonial as he gave examples of how he overcame those battles he dealt with as a young man. Mr. Gerry Lopez, Riverside County Supervising District Attorney, was the closing Key Note Speaker. He shared his experience as a young man growing up in East L.A, watching his friends and family members become incarcerated, addicted to drugs and dropping out of school. This motivated Gerry to help his community and become a better person.

Based on the feedback from the 241 participants, they were motivated by the testimonials and could relate to the experiences shared by the guest speakers. The obstacles shared in the testimonials inspired participants to believe that success is possible with mentorship and guidance.

## **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

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### Attachments:

1. 2019 Young Men's Conference Presentation
2. Young Men's Conference Video