

*City of Alexandria, Virginia*

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 23, 2001

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 23 THERAPEUTIC RECREATION MAINSTREAMING PROGRAM (COUNCILWOMAN WOODSON'S REQUEST)

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This memorandum is in response to Councilwoman Woodson's request for information and performance measures on the Therapeutic Recreation Mainstreaming (TRM) Program.

The TRM program enables the integration of youth ages 6-12 with severe emotional disabilities (SED) into regular programming at the recreation centers. Specially trained TRM staff are able to supervise up to six SED youth, who are required to take part in the planned structured activities at the center. During the structured activities and free time, TRM staff interact with the youth to encourage participation and appropriate interaction skills, reinforce positive behaviors, and teach social, communication, self-help, and other skills. They also intercede to redirect inappropriate behaviors when necessary.

Potential participants in the program are identified based on their participation in SED special education classes in the Alexandria City Public Schools, recommendations from recreation center directors after recognition of significant emotional/behaviorial issues and the need for additional supervision, or recommendations from the Departments of Human Services and Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse. In September 2000, the program was advertised at the schools and was full with a waiting list the next day.

Currently the TRM program is in place at Patrick Henry and Charles Barrett recreation centers. Of the 12 youth now in the program (six at each site), 50 percent are expected to successfully graduate to independent participation in general recreation programs after one year in the TRM program. This success far surpasses the program's goal of graduating 20 percent of registrants after one year. In addition, there are several success stories from this past year. At least three children were asked to leave programs at either Campagna Center or the Tucker after-school program and subsequently enrolled in our TRM program. Two of these three are expected to graduate to independent participation in the general after-school or summer programs, and the third will continue to participate under the umbrella of the TRM program.

The \$62,219 unfunded supplemental request in FY 2002 proposed budget would provide for expansion of the TRM program at the remaining five regular recreation centers -- Charles Houston, Cora Kelly, Mount Vernon, Nannie Lee, and William Ramsay. The funding would support a part-time or seasonal Therapeutic Recreation Specialist at each center. Each staff member would supervise a maximum of six TRM participants. Therefore, the department would be able to expand the program by 30 participants, from 12 to 42.

cc: Mark Jinks, Assistant City Manager  
Brian Albright, Division Chief, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities  
Angela Smith, Budget Analyst, Office of Management and Budget