



## DC Family Policy Seminar

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# “Families that Play Together: Recreation and Leisure in the District”



### *BACKGROUND BRIEFING REPORT*

*The DC Family Policy Seminar aims to provide accurate, relevant, non-partisan, timely information and policy options concerning issues affecting children and families to District policymakers.*

*The DC Family Policy Seminar is part of the National Network of State Family Policy Seminars, a project of the Family Impact Seminar, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Research and Education Foundation.*



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# **“Families that Play Together: Recreation and Leisure in the District”**

## *BACKGROUND BRIEFING REPORT*

*By*

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*This report provides a brief introduction to the issues addressed by the DC Family Policy Seminar on July 18, 1995. The author thanks the numerous individuals in District of Columbia government and in local and national organizations for contributing their time and efforts to this seminar—especially Ted Pochter, Chief, Policy and Planning Division of the D.C. Department of Recreation and Parks. Special thanks are also given to Valerie Gwinner and the staff of the National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health for their invaluable assistance in hosting this seminar.*

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# “Families that Play Together: Recreation and Leisure in the District”

This seminar is the seventh in a series designed to bring a family focus to policymaking. The panel features the following speakers:

**Gordon Braithwaite**, Director of Cultural Affairs, D.C. Department of Recreation and Parks, 3149 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20010; (202) 673-7679.

**Catherine Hogan-Lewis**, Manager of Outreach Programs for Bell Atlantic of Washington, DC, 1710 H Street, NW, 10th Floor, Washington, DC 20006; (202) 392-4325.

**William Peebles**, Deputy Director for Human Development at the Marshall Heights Community Development Corporation, 3917 Minnesota Avenue, NE, Second Floor, Washington, DC 20019; (202) 396-3832.

**Christen Smith**, Executive Director, American Association for Leisure and Recreation, 1900 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22091; (703) 476-3472.

This seminar focuses on recreation and leisure activities for families. This background report summarizes the essentials on several topics. First, it provides an introduction to what is meant by recreation and leisure. Next, it briefly describes the programs that provide recreation, details the benefits of recreation for families and communities, and outlines the challenges communities face in providing family-centered recreation during times of fiscal constraints. An annotated list of recreation and leisure activities for children and families in the District of Columbia is included in the report.

***“Families that play together, stay together.”***

## I. Introduction

Harold Smith, professor of recreation management and youth leadership at Brigham Young University, states that “research continues to show that individuals say the peak experiences in their lives are overwhelmingly related to recreation with a family member” (McCormick, 45). Other studies show that when husbands and wives share leisure time together, they tend to have more satisfying marriages. Family recreation is especially important for infants’ and toddlers’ healthy development. Families with young children who participate in recreation together may help children feel valued (Morris, 82). According to Morris, young children can “benefit from the exhilaration of regular physical exercise and the joy of laughter shared with family and friends” (83).

Yet, in describing the trends facing modern families, Morris Green, M.D., editor of *Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents*, writes:

These [trends] include a worrisome decline in the time parents spend with their children, less direct contact between children and their grandparents and extended family members, increased geographic mobility, a shortage of quality child care services, a reduction in neighborhood cohesiveness

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and social supports, and a widespread restructuring of family relationships (xi).

Most families are keenly aware of these trends. In the National Survey of Children and Parents conducted by the National Commission on Children, 8 out of 10 Americans felt they did not spend enough time with their children (National Commission, 9). Almost 60 percent of the parents wished they had more time with their children. And 3 out of 10 parents surveyed wanted to spend *a lot more time* with their family (National Commission, 15).

Broad economic and demographic changes are largely responsible for these trends. Families under economic stress—especially single parent families—undoubtedly find it difficult to spend recreational time together. Nevertheless, recreation programs can work with families to foster healthy development, encourage educational success, moderate risk-taking, and build strong families and communities. Recreational activities can help children and families enjoy more fully the leisure time they do have together.

Kraus defines recreation as “activities that one carries on in leisure for pleasure or to achieve other important personal outcomes” (Kraus, 13). Recreation can include activities such as sports, arts and crafts, religious studies, music, or games. Recreation thus need not be simply a way to fill the hours spent outside work or school; it can include active participation in athletic, cultural, social, and other pursuits.

Leisure and recreation can be highly enriching and creative parts of modern life—so much so that they are often considered a right. However, it has also been shown that leisure may encompass self-destructive or societally damaging forms of play, such as addictive gambling, substance abuse, and gang activity (Kraus, v). According to Kraus, “the realization that leisure may have both positive *and* negative potential, in terms of societal and human outcomes, led to government’s accepting responsibility for providing recreation and park facilities

and programs” (13). Because of the potential for both positive and negative outcomes of leisure time, families and neighborhoods have an interest in working with local governments to create recreation programs for children and families—especially activities that can benefit an entire community.

Leisure is now recognized as an important part of public policy, with families, government, religious groups, businesses, and other organizations all having a stake in its development (Kraus, 15). Today, governments help provide various forms of recreation. They establish parks, playgrounds, sports and arts complexes, senior centers, and other facilities for children and families (Kraus, 5). Many nonprofit organizations are involved in meeting the needs of communities, as are major corporations, the armed services, religious organizations, early child care providers, correctional facilities, and real estate developers. Even in the health care field, therapeutic recreation is a recognized professional discipline (Kraus, 5).

Recreation has two main purposes for the family. First, it has the potential to bring families closer together. Second, recreation can be structured to support families by providing a safe and enriching environment for children—one that reinforces the values of the family while the parents are at work.

### ***Changing Families and Recreation***

In the 1980s, the number of families with both parents working and the number of single working parent families increased significantly. Today, the United States has nearly 11 million single-parent households; a disproportionate number of these households are headed by African-American women (McCormick, 45). In addition, child poverty has increased in recent years; currently, approximately one in five children in the United States—including almost half of African-American children and 40 percent of Hispanic-American children—grow up in poverty (Seefeldt et al., 9).

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Children in single parent homes are most likely to be poor.

Community recreation agencies around the country have been implementing programs that reflect the changing family structure and recognize the economic reality of limited family-time and the need to provide safe and supportive environments for youth. For example, many agencies are now offering before- and after-school programs as well as holiday and summer day camp programming for children and youth (Smith, 10).

Yet, the programming of the past 25 years has tended to focus on individuals in specific age groups, particularly youth or seniors, rather than on the needs of families as a whole. Organized recreation and leisure for families has traditionally included special events and one-day programs rather than ongoing programs. This formula may no longer meet the needs of today's diverse families. Family recreation is a new trend in programming that involves activities designed for families to participate in together over extended periods of time.

This briefing report focuses on the existing (and, in the view of many, insufficient) recreation programs for children and families. District policymakers may want to give careful consideration to ways that our community can improve its family-centered recreational programs. At best, these programs can be effective mechanisms for fostering strong and healthy families—families that will stay together.

### ***Importance of Recreation for Children, Youth, and Adolescents***

Recreation services are important in that they are often the services that attract youth to a community center or multiservice center where they can be supervised by responsible adults and be given opportunities to receive a variety of other social services (Smith, *ii*). Increasingly, the role of youth organizations has been expanded to supplement families in providing for children's needs (Hechinger, 190).

Children and youth are the main users of community recreation services, but youth participation drops off around age 13 (Carnegie Council, 65). For example, only 9 percent of the Girl Scouts in the United States are 11 years of age or older, and only about 12 percent of YMCA members are between the ages of 12 and 17 (McLaughlin et al., 7). This is a disturbing fact, given that teenagers have so much "free" time. In fact, The Carnegie Council on Adolescents has found that 40 percent of young adolescents' wake time is discretionary (10). A 1988 National Educational Longitudinal Study that surveyed 25,000 eighth grade students found that 27 percent of the respondents spent two or more hours alone without adult supervision each day. Eighth graders who are from families in lower socioeconomic groups—the same children who often do not have adequate social support—are alone more than three hours each day (Carnegie Council, 10).

Policymakers and concerned citizens may look at the participation rates among teens and conclude that youth lack interest in organized recreational activities. But it is also possible that existing recreational activities often do not cater to the needs and interests of adolescents, and that programs that target the special concerns of adolescents may be just what they want and demand. Free time provides an enormous potential—for good or bad—in young persons' lives (Carnegie Council, 30).

A 1991 report from the Office of Technology Assessment on Adolescent Health recognized the importance of recreation in the healthy development of adolescents. The report (Carnegie Council, 66) called for expansion of community recreation services to help accomplish the following goals:

1. Ensure appropriate use of discretionary time;
2. Offer the potential for adult guidance;
3. Reduce personal distress;
4. Provide youth with opportunities to learn life skills and social competence;
5. Provide opportunities for work; and

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6. Possibly reduce substance abuse.

Because adolescents spend a lot of time with their friends and very little time with parents and other family members, recreation may be better aimed at adolescents while encouraging parents and families to help young adolescents make constructive choices with their free time (Carnegie Council, 32).

### ***Importance of Recreation for Families in Communities and Neighborhoods***

According to Christen Smith, the Executive Director of the American Association of Leisure and Recreation, “the purpose of community recreation services is to provide enjoyable, interesting and challenging recreation opportunities that will enhance the well-being and healthy development of participants and enrich community life” (Smith, 21). Community recreation services thus are provided in nearly every city, town, and village across the country (Smith, 11). Yet high-poverty neighborhoods—those with relatively low economic activity and high levels of crime—often have few public and social services, and *limited* recreational and youth development programs (National Research Council, 5).

Community development corporations (CDCs) typically seek to enhance the safety of communities in order to improve the quality of life for their residents. Therefore, many of their development plans include creating recreational opportunities for their families (National Research Council, 198). Yet, few communities attempt to fully address the needs of adolescents (Carnegie Council, 9).

Public recreation in communities is funded primarily through taxes. Public recreation programs get additional funds from gifts, grants, trust funds, and fees and charges for services (Smith, 11). Local government budget shortfalls in the 1980s and 1990s have brought about significant reductions in recreation services. The fiscal crisis has resulted in reduced staffing, decreased hours of operation of facilities, and elimination of some programs that

are not self-supporting or funded by outside dollars (Smith, 10). Family-centered programs are likely to be greatly affected by this fiscal crisis because they often involve larger facilities and more staff than are needed for programs aimed at individuals.

Communities have an interest in ensuring that recreational facilities and programs for families are available even in times of fiscal restraint. Especially when budgets are tight, communities may need to be more aggressive in encouraging public and private partnerships and interagency collaborations in order to provide recreation for the community's families.

## **II. Program Types**

Approximately 17,000 youth development organizations operate within the United States. Most of these are quite small; only 25 percent operate with annual budgets of more than \$25,000 (Carnegie Council, 50). Most are also local, although there are over 400 national youth organizations. The 15 largest (Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs, Camp Fire, 4-H Clubs, Girls Incorporated, YWCA, and YMCA) serve 30 million young people per year (Hechinger, 192). A wide variety of community organizations provide recreational opportunities to children and families. These include the YMCA, Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, Boys and Girls Clubs, Girls Incorporated, church-affiliated youth groups, local governments and recreation departments or community centers, adult service clubs, fraternities and sororities, performing arts centers, theater groups, dance troupes, training programs, grass-roots organizations, tutoring centers, museums, libraries, sports teams, and social clubs (McLaughlin et al., 8–9). (For a sample of the programs in the District of Columbia, see the annotated list at the end of this report.)

While these organizations do emphasize recreation, their activities often include an educational

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element, offered through such means as mentoring, coaching, drop-in activities, structured programs, safe places, constructive alternatives to gang involvement, therapeutic recreation, community service programs, formal and informal groups of varying sizes, peer groups, public performances, and through recognition for accomplishment. Examples of the educational goals are life skills, decision making, communicating, problem solving, and reading (Carnegie Council, 11).

Some organizations are facility-based, others are troop-based, and others rely on a one-to-one match between a young adolescent and an adult volunteer. Every organization defines its own membership, and many serve different demographic groups (Carnegie Council, 44).

### III. Benefits

Recreational programs will not solve all of the problems of children, youth, families, and communities. However, well-organized recreation programs can help stimulate healthy individual development, encourage skill building, prevent negative leisure activities, and build stronger families and communities.

#### ***Prevention***

According to Smith: "While recreation alone is not the only medium of intervention, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that participation in recreational activities can play an important role in the prevention of marginally deviant behavior" (28). A study by Long and Long (1989) showed that junior and senior high school students reported very different lifestyles for unsupervised youth compared to the lifestyles of supervised youth. "The more removed youth were from adult care, the more susceptible they were to peer pressure and to committing antisocial behaviors" (Smith, 24). It is not surprising that, as a recent study by the Michigan Department of Public Health of juvenile delinquency in metropolitan

Detroit found, many negative activities not only occur during leisure time, but actually serve as a form of recreation. "The antisocial activities satisfy the adolescent's need to seek thrill, excitement, glamour and high-risk adventure" (Smith, 28).

The federal government recognizes the role of recreation in preventing youth delinquency. In 1994, an amendment to the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Act of 1978 states: "Well-maintained recreational facilities and services significantly decrease the incidence of violent crime among youth and can be an effective tool in efforts to prevent crime, increase public safety and improve the quality of life of urban residents" (Urban Recreation Act, 1). Urban recreation can help deter crime by providing constructive use of nonschool hours for at-risk youth. Sports and other physical activities can serve as an outlet for pent-up anger and stress (Isaacs, 32). Midnight basketball is an example of a recreation program used to reduce violent crime and gang activity. The National Governors' Association, the Urban Institute, and the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development all support expansion of recreation as a means to reduce juvenile delinquency (Urban Recreation Act, 5).

Recreation programs can also reduce other destructive activities such as alcohol and drug abuse and can encourage various positive outcomes. A study by Columbia University showed that Boys and Girls Clubs appear to reduce alcohol and drug use among participants. A Women's Sports Foundation (1989) study found that minority students (boys and girls) who were involved in sports were less likely to drop out of school, achieved better grades, and were more socially involved in other school activities than other minority students (Seefeldt et al., 98).

#### ***Healthy Development***

Recreation can foster healthy development throughout life. Recreation can help families with infants to develop a strong bond with their

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children, and recreation providers, in turn, can provide advice, encouragement, and support to the family. As the infants get older, safe play areas can give young children the chance to partake in protected risk-taking opportunities important for early childhood development (Morris, 82). In stating that young children learn through play, Morris notes: “If the toddler experiences the security of a nurturing and reliable source of protection and attachment during infancy, he now has a strong base from which to explore the world” (82). Ordinary play on playgrounds or other environments has come to be considered “an important medium in learning and development” (Hartle and Johnson, 14). Development during middle childhood can be enhanced through access to playgrounds as well as gymnasiums and parks.

Community-based recreational programs appear essential to the healthy development of young adolescents (Carnegie Council, 36). Evidence suggests that “young adolescents’ ability to grow into healthy and mature adults is greatly influenced by the experiences they have and the people they meet during their nonschool hours”—hours they often spend by themselves or with friends rather than their families (Carnegie Council, 25). Community-based youth recreation programs can help youth grow into mature adults by allowing them to develop personal resilience, social competence, autonomy, and a sense of purpose and of a future. Smith states:

Through leisure experiences, the individual’s physical well-being and mental health are realized and enhanced. Recreation encourages self-discovery, self-actualization and the development of one’s unique potentials. Recreation provides opportunities to experience success, to establish positive, meaningful relationships with others, to experience a sense of belonging, and to develop self-esteem, self-identity, and self-worth. Participation in recreation improves the quality of life, develops life-long leisure skills and interests, and provides children,

youth, and families with the personal resources to continue to enhance their quality of life for a lifetime. Recreation provides youth with opportunities to make their own decisions, learn time management, develop self-initiative, gain experience in self-government and contribute to the community (22).

Sports have been cited frequently as the medium that most often provides the contact between wayward youth and caring adults. “Sport has been credited with providing a sense of affiliation, a feeling of confidence in one’s physical abilities, an appreciation of one’s personal health and fitness and the development of social bonds with individuals and institutions” (Seefeldt et al., 10). Families that exercise together may reinforce the positive behavior that will enhance personal health throughout their life span.

### ***Building Skills***

Many organizations and recreation programs focus on building specific skills and competencies rather than self-esteem and self-confidence (Carnegie Council, 44). Through participation in recreational activities young people can acquire skills in leadership, conflict resolution without use of violence, learn fair play and gain respect for the rights of others (Smith, 22). Other programs may involve educational enrichment and job training.

Involvement in sports can help children gain necessary motor skills. “Involvement of American children and youth in sports is regarded by many adults as an excellent opportunity for the acquisition of physical fitness, motor skills, and socially acceptable values” (Seefeldt et al., 5). Participants in youth sports can learn sports skills useful for leisure activities throughout life.

## **IV. Challenges for Public Policymakers**

Communities face many challenges to provide effective and affordable family-centered and

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family-supportive recreation for children, youth, and families—especially in poor urban areas. The challenge is to create recreation areas that are community centers where police, clergy, educators, and business people gather to identify common goals and collaborate for planning and for the provision of services for children and families (Foley and Ward, 69). Yet Foley and Ward contend that “recreation and parks is a frequently overlooked and underfunded public agency” even though it “can help weave the safety net through which we do not wish our urban youth to fall” (68-69).

### ***Creating Partnerships in Communities***

One important challenge is to create a network of community agencies working cooperatively rather than simply to have the community recreation agency operating alone. Fiscal constraints make partnerships a necessity if communities are going to meet the demand for recreation.

A major challenge to recreation agencies in the coming years will be to initiate collaboration and to expand their roles as facilitators and coordinators of all organizations in the community that provide recreation services. Potential partner organizations include the local school district, youth servicing agencies, foundations, adult service organizations, religious organizations and churches, and colleges and universities (Smith, 1).

### ***Engaging Families***

Another challenge to recreation programs is to create partnerships with families. The Carnegie Council for Adolescent Development (Carnegie Council, 88) advises recreation programs to do the following:

- Keep families informed of organizational activities and give them opportunities to consult in the planning process;
- Invite family members to contribute their time and energies to the agency’s efforts through such roles as board members and program volunteers;

- Design activities that encourage young people to consult with and learn from the experience of family members;
- Support families in their teen-rearing responsibilities; and
- Provide direct services to families.

Family members can be utilized as volunteers, fundraisers, program advisers, board members, or adult leaders (Carnegie Council, 89). In turn, youth organizations can help parents become more skilled parents. Christen Smith suggests that because today’s families relocate with increased frequency, families are “cocooning”—that is, they are staying home with their VCRs and other electronic entertainment, ordering food delivered to their door, and meeting many of their other needs within their own homes rather than in the community. Smith contends that the challenge for recreation agencies is to design programs “to bring the community together and strengthen neighborhood ties” (Smith, 64).

### ***Eliminating Barriers to Participation***

Recreation providers should attempt to eliminate any barriers to the participation of children, youth, and families. Barriers include “lack of proper clothing, transportation, social support, privacy and a non-smoking environment; safety; timing of programs (especially for women who will not go out alone at night); limited access to information; a feeling that one cannot keep up the pace of the program; staff not available to meet special requirements that may be needed; attitudes of the general population and lack of understanding” (Needham, 72).

Financial barriers also bear careful consideration. One of the distressing occurrences in communities inhabited by families with low incomes is the dependence on “pay for play” as a way to support agency-sponsored and interscholastic sports programs. This trend decreases the opportunities that are available to children and youth who are already deprived of the facilities and programs that

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are commonplace in most suburban communities. An extension of this reliance on direct revenues from program participants for eligibility for sports programs will result in the exclusion of most urban dwellers from organized sports during childhood and adolescence (Seefeldt et al., 93).

Recreation providers also must ensure that their programs and activities are accessible for children, youth, and families with disabilities. Programs that are not inclusive can prevent an individual or a family from participating in recreational activities with their peers. The American Disabilities Association stresses the need for true inclusion where people with disabilities can actively participate and interact in programs in a meaningful way (Galambos et al., 67).

### ***Ensuring Safety***

Along with the benefits of participating in recreation activities, there exists the potential for injury. Not only is it a challenge for recreation providers to prevent individual injury, but it is also a challenge to ensure that recreation facilities are free from crime and violence. Accidental injuries occur more often in high-poverty areas as a result of dangerous housing, neighborhoods, and recreational facilities (National Research Council, 20). Playground injuries often occur because of entrapment, falls from heights onto hard surfaces, pinching, crushing, protrusions and sharp areas, suspended hazards, protective railings, toxic materials, electrical equipment, and poisonous plants (Frost, 35-38). Recreation providers can prevent injuries by removing unsafe equipment and by ensuring that all equipment meets safety standards.

“Technologically improved equipment and playing areas have developed participants who are stronger, faster, and more intense at much younger ages than ever before. As a result, sports- and recreation-related injuries can exact an enormous physical, psychological, social, and financial toll on society” (National Institute of Health, 1). The

Children’s Safety Network reports that “sports are the most frequent cause of injury for both male and female adolescents. While injuries from team sports are more frequent, injuries resulting from recreation and individual sports are generally more severe” (37). Injury surveillance is necessary in order to develop an appropriate injury prevention strategy.

Violence is another problem that plagues many recreation programs and facilities. Violence takes many forms, such as homicide, suicide, rape, domestic violence, and child abuse. R. Dean Tice, executive director of the National Recreation and Parks Association, believes that “antisocial behavior and unrest in many forums spill over to public recreation programs and places, reducing the broader social value and degrading the environment” (Kraus, 361). Because of limited public recreation budgets, Kraus believes that “we must aggressively link the values of recreation and resources to other basic needs like economic security, shelter and education (and adopt) an advocacy agenda embracing ‘children, youth and family’ issues” (361).

Because children, youth, and families are at risk for a variety of different injuries related to recreation, prevention must be equally diverse. The Children’s Safety Network reports that injuries to children between the ages of birth and 4 years occur most often in settings with their parents. Recreation programs may need to educate and support parents about injury to reduce the possible risks. Injuries among youth ages 5 to 14 can be thwarted through education concerning various safety skills, such as learning how to be safe pedestrians and bicycle riders. Community organizations can intervene by “making school a safer place, providing safe play areas and protective sports equipment, including safety in neighborhood planning, and supporting families to minimize family violence” (Children’s Safety Network, 57). With respect to prevention of adolescent injury, the Children’s Safety Network believes that “enforcing safety belt, motorcycle helmet, work-

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place, and alcohol consumption laws, limiting access to firearms, and developing conflict resolutions skills to minimize interpersonal violence are of most benefit” (57). Overall, recreation programs can ensure that children, youth, and families have a safe place to play together, with limited risk for injury and violence.

### ***Ensuring Equity***

Adequate distribution of recreation facilities is important for community well-being. Equity among neighborhoods of different socioeconomic status continues to be a challenge for recreation providers in many diverse communities. For instance, adult service clubs such as Rotary International, Kiwanis International, and fraternities and sororities continue to put most of their funding for recent programs into low-risk communities (Carnegie Council, 54–55). Similarly, many sports organizations tend to exclude youth in high-risk environments. Most programs do not include special provisions for youth in low-income environments.

The same inequities can be found among many public recreation agencies. Because of budget cuts, a two-tiered public recreation system has evolved. More and better services tend to be available in suburban areas than in less affluent rural and urban areas. The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development states: “The current fiscal cut backs are servicing to increase the disparity between upper- and lower-income areas, meaning that youth most dependent on public recreation services are increasingly less likely to have access to such services” (Carnegie Council, 66). The greatest deficiencies were found in urban cores. “In the growing cities, the greatest need is for development of new parkland and facilities; in the older cities, lack of funds for programs and maintenance has restricted recreation opportunities and has resulted in the loss of large investments in park facilities as these facilities deteriorate and become unusable” (Kraus, 360). Since inner-city youth generally are members of low-income families, they

are more dependent on public recreation services; however, due to inequalities in recreation distribution, these youth may be “less frequently exposed to a range of recreational opportunities, and therefore, possess fewer recreation skills” (Smith, 55).

Gender equity is another challenge facing recreation providers. Although programs purport to serve both boys and girls, boys are 1.5 times more likely to participate than girls (Carnegie Council, 59).

## **V. Programs that Show Promise for Helping Families through Recreation**

Successful organizations view youth and families as sources for development rather than as problems to be solved. Their goal is to create a family-like structure of mutual benefit. Like the family itself, successful programs are often available to family members during days, nights, and weekends—typically imposing few specific rules but offering, instead, a broad sense of behavior and a shared philosophy (Hechinger, 197). These programs ensure that all activities offered to youth guarantee their safety; they are also seen as a refuge from violence.

There are several keys to building programs that sustain participation. The first is to attract quality leadership from staff and volunteers. (Attracting good staff is often a great challenge, however, given the demands of these programs to operate on evenings and weekends). Second, the planners need to develop, maintain, and promote activities that satisfy young people (S.W. Morris & Company, 17). It is also worth noting that programs that have been successful at sustaining participation often are nationally affiliated, church related, municipally supported, and independent (McLaughlin et al., 9). An ideal center might include family programs, perhaps parent-child cooking classes or family camping trips. At a minimum, family participation should be encouraged

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and promoted. Parents might also be involved as coaches or might be asked to volunteer in center activities (S.W. Morris & Company).

The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (Carnegie Council, 12-13) has offered these recommendations to recreation programs for children, youth, and families:

1. Tailor program content and processes to the needs and interests of children and families.
2. Recognize, value, and respond to the diverse backgrounds and experience of children and families.
3. Extend outreach to underserved families.
4. Actively compete for the time and attention of children, youth, and families.
5. Strengthen the quality and diversity of leadership.
6. Reach out to families, schools, and a wide range of community partners in youth development.
7. Enhance the role of children, youth, and families as resources in their community.
8. Serve as vigorous advocates for and with children, youth, and families.
9. Specify and evaluate programs' outcomes.
10. Establish strong organizational structures, including energetic and committed board leadership ).

## VI. The D.C. Experience

The District of Columbia is unique in that it serves in multiple roles as the nation's capital, the center of a metropolitan area, and a city of neighborhoods. Families in the District have a variety of national and local recreation facilities and programs in which to participate.

The D.C. Department of Recreation and Parks (DRP) is the government agency with the primary responsibility for providing recreation and leisure opportunities to meet the needs of District residents. The DRP also has been directed to perform a range of nontraditional recreation services such as

“crime prevention, custodial child care, education, job development, drug use intervention and other ‘front line’ social services during a time of declining financial resources” (DRP, 5). The DRP recognizes its important role in diverting “young people from drugs and crime, to reduce stress for adults who are overworked and uncertain about their economic future, to provide the setting for inter-generational programs, and to provide additional services to a growing elderly and immigrant population” (37). Because of fewer dollars and smaller staff, the DRP has had to scale back its role as a “front line provider” for working families on a year-round basis. As a result, the DRP now focuses on youth as the most efficient way to respond to the city's most critical problems. Consequently, although its services and programs are located throughout all eight wards, many DRP programs are centralized in Wards 7 and 8 where a majority of the city's children, youth, and families reside.

More than half of the city's children live in single-parent households and poverty is more likely to affect these families than in homes where both parents are present. The DRP recognizes the changing family structure and acknowledges that “children in these families require more concentrated assistance which often goes beyond recreation, such as before- and after-school care, mentoring programs, job training referral services, and other social services” (DRP, 51). The ultimate goal of DRP is to increase community participation in establishing “recreation centers as true neighborhood and community centers, where neighborhood social activities take place and families and children will feel safe and at home” (DRP, 55). DRP actively encourages churches and nonpublic institutions to collaborate in recreation center programs with a special emphasis on attracting families (DRP, 55).

In order to be eligible for grants under the Land and Water Conservation Fund program, the DRP develops a Comprehensive Recreation Plan every five years to ensure that the direction of funds and programs is in accordance with

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changing population characteristics, social conditions, and residents' needs. This plan also includes a funding strategy. Acknowledging the instability of the District's budget, the current plan identifies the need to diversify funds and to encourage private donations and recreation provision as well as self-sustaining, fee-for-service recreation ventures (DRP, 3).

## VII. Conclusion

The demand for "close to home" recreation services is likely to increase "because of the population growth and the demographic shift to single and working parents with less time and financial resources to travel for recreation purposes" (Urban Recreation Act, 4). Because of budget cuts in the District, public and private recreation providers must work together to ensure adequate, appropriate, assessable, affordable, and diverse recreational opportunities for today's children, youth, and families. There is a need to explore ways to deliver recreation services in urban areas more

efficiently and equitably. There is also a need to identify effective ways of delivering recreation services in neighborhoods that are affected by gangs, crime, welfare dependency, and other social problems. Recreation is a useful service that, in combination with other social services, can greatly benefit individuals and families in choosing to pursue positive and enriching activities during leisure time. As Smith explains:

Free, uncommitted time is only a potential resource. It may be an asset or a liability. It is the individual's choice to use it constructively. The challenge to recreation professionals is to prepare each individual to assume responsibility to use discretionary free time to improve their own quality of life and contribute to the community (Smith, 30).

Recreation can greatly enhance one's personal physical and mental well-being and translate into healthy and happier families and communities.

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# D.C. Family Policy Seminar

## Family Recreational Programs and Providers in the District

The following section presents a brief description of recreation programs available within the District of Columbia for children and families. This list is based on information obtained through informal surveys with local organizations and advocates. It does not represent a comprehensive analysis of local resources. Descriptions are included for purposes of reference rather than recommendation.

### **“Adult Sports”**

D.C. Department of Recreation and Parks  
3149 16th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20010  
(202) 645-3944  
Director: Luna Harrison

The primary function of Adult Sports is to work with adults and other interested parties to organize adult sports leagues.

### **Anacostia/Congress Heights Partnership**

2301 Martin Luther King, Jr., Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 21002  
(202) 889-2102  
Executive Director: Brenda Richardson

The Anacostia Partnership coordinates recreational programs with the Lutheran Church of the Reformation and the East of the River Community Development Corporation. In addition, they invite the D.C. Department of Recreation and Parks into their neighborhoods to register children for camp.

### **The Anacostia Museum**

Smithsonian Institution  
MRC 520  
Washington, DC 20560  
(202) 357-1300

The Anacostia Museum is a national resource devoted to identify, document, protect, and interpret, the African-American experience, focusing on Washington, DC, and the upper region of the South. The Anacostia Museum also examines contemporary urban issues, including housing, transportation, and health care, and their impact upon the African-American communities in the region. It provides a wide variety of programs and activities that are family oriented including an Intergenerational Summer Art Program, guided trail walks on the Dr. George Washington Carver Nature Trail, and a Family Day involving activities such as storytelling, steel drum music, quilt-making, doll-making, and mask-making workshops.

### **Barney Neighborhood House**

3118 16th Street, NW, Third Floor  
Washington, DC 20010  
(202) 939-9013  
Executive Director: Rob McLean

The Barney Neighborhood House provides a Summer Urban Day Camp which involves recreation, educational, cultural and social experiences and activities.

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### **“Before and After School Program”**

D.C. Public Schools  
1230 Taylor Street, NW  
Room 202  
Washington, DC 20011  
(202) 576-7132  
Program Coordinator: Carver King

The Before and After School Program provides structured activities on public school grounds throughout the District for children ages 5–12 before and after school as well as during the summer months.

### **Big Brothers of the National Capital Area**

1320 Fenwick Lane  
Suite 400  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
(301) 587-0021  
Executive Director: Paul L. Bliss

Big Brothers assists boys from homes where the father is absent, by providing long-term, one-to-one mentoring relationships with dependable, caring men. Through professional casework services and quality volunteers, the program helps young boys gain trust in others, experience new opportunities, and develop strengthened self-worth as they grow to become responsible men.

### **Big Sisters of the Washington Area**

4000 Albemarle Street, NW  
Washington, 20016  
(202) 244-1012  
Executive Director: Michelle Bussie

Big Sisters of the Washington Area provides one-to-one mentoring for girls ages 6–17 in the D.C., Maryland, and Virginia area.

### **“Books and Balls”**

Lutheran Church of the Reformation  
212 East Capitol Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20003  
(202) 543-4200  
Contact: Pastor Wanda McNeil

Books and Balls is a year-round program that combines recreation with education. Throughout the year, Books and Balls holds two-month leagues of flag football, basketball, and softball. Students are encouraged to read and to love learning.

### **Boy Scouts of America**

9190 Wisconsin Avenue  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
(301) 530-936017  
Executive Director: Ron Carroll

The Boy Scouts of America provides opportunities for young boys in the District to become Boy Scouts. It offers day camps in the summer for cub scouts and overnight camp in southern Virginia for older scouts. The Boy Scouts' program, Urban Emphasis, provides scouting for youth in public housing.

### **Calvary Bilingual Multicultural Learning Center**

1459 Columbia Road, NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
(202) 332-8697  
Executive Director: Ms. Beatriz Otero

Activities at the center include soccer, dance, arts, and swimming lessons.

### **Calvary Casa Del Pueblo United Methodist Church**

1459 Columbia Road, NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
(202) 332-3420  
Contact: Rev. Cristian Delarosa

The church provides a Christian Day Camp, a summer camp designed to help children learn, develop, and have fun in a safe environment with emphasis on reading, writing, math, geography, history, and culture. The church also hosts a program, Club Time, which includes ballet, sports, photography/video, karate, computers, and music/choir.

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**Campfire Boys and Girls Potomac Area Council**

Box 7598  
Arlington, VA 22207  
(703) 569-1686

Executive Director: Barbara Laposta

Campfire Boys and Girls offers a day camp for children ages 5–12 in Fort DuPont Park.

**Capital Children's Museum**

800 Third Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002  
(202) 675-41833

Contact: Gillian Foster, Assistant Director of Public Relations

The Capital Children's Museum is a unique educational complex that stimulates children to learn by direct experience with their environment. The museum's exhibits—which combine the arts, science, technology, and the humanities—are safe, innovative, imaginative, enjoyable, and educational for all ages, particularly for children ages 2–12.

**Center for Youth Services**

921 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20003  
(202) 543-5707

Executive Director: Samuel Tramel  
Contact Person: Dayna Nokes

The Center for Youth Services works with high-risk young people ages 14–21, to help them become productive adults. The center offers a multifaceted program that includes education, job counseling and training, health care, family planning, child care, and recreational activities.

**Central City Mission**

1350 R Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
(202) 745-7118

Executive Director: Rev. Tony Marciano

The Central City Mission was established in 1884 as an interdenominational Christian rescue mission providing shelter, food, clothing, and

other programs and services for the homeless, hungry, and poor of our nation's capital. The mission runs a summer camp, Camp Bennett, for needy, inner-city youth. The camp employs young Christian counselors who focus on activities such as Bible stories, recreation and swimming, singing, crafts, and outdoor activities. The Children's Ministry includes Tiny Tots (children up to five years), Capital Children for Christ (youth ages 6–12), and Capital Teens for Christ (teens ages 13–17). In addition, the Central City Mission offers a family services program that provides bible teaching, counseling, and recreation for families (especially fatherless families).

**Children's Services**

Library Administration

District of Columbia Public Libraries

901 G Street, NW

Washington, DC 20001

(202) 727-1151/(202) 727-1186

Coordinator of Children's Services: Maria Salvadore

The D.C. Public Libraries publish a monthly calendar of free events, many of which are family-oriented. On Fridays, films, songs, storytimes, and other activities are offered. In addition, the Summer Quest '95 program has been launched to encourage children to read.

**Church Association for Community Services**

710–712 Randolph Street, NW

Washington, DC 20011

(202) 541-5000

Executive Director: Frank D. Tucker

The Church Association for Community Services provides after-school activities, a martial arts program, and evening basketball leagues for the youth of the District.

**City Wide Learning Centers, Inc.**

770 Kenyon Street, NW

Washington, DC 20010

(202) 291-9275

Director: Mr. Ralph Phillips

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Activities at the center include drill team, creative dance, nature walks, swimming, bowling, music, art, and cooking classes.

### **Columbia Heights Youth Club**

16th and Harvard Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
(202) 234-1531

Executive Director: Leonard Harvey

Columbia Heights Youth Club is a nonprofit organization that serves youth ages 6–18. It has a gym and a photolab, offers computer literacy classes, and provides a summer day camp that includes both educational and recreational components. The Columbia Heights Youth Club also holds an annual family night when parents are invited to the club with their children to participate in the different activities.

### **Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind**

1421 P Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 462-2900

Ms. Ardella Richardson

Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind offers a Day Camp Fun program, with activities including adaptive computers, arts and crafts, braille, swimming, and field trips.

### **Concerned Black Men**

1511 K Street, NW  
Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 783-5414

President: Lafayette A. Barnes

Founded in 1982, the Washington, DC, Chapter of Concerned Black Men, Inc. (CBM) is a nonprofit organization of male volunteers. It provides positive male role models and builds stronger channels of communication between adults and children in the Washington metropolitan area. Adhering to the motto “Caring for Our Youth,” CBM sponsors a variety of programs and activities

promoting educational, cultural, and social development.

### **The Dance Place**

3225 8th Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20017  
(202) 269-1600

Executive Director: Carla Perlo

The Dance Place is a modern dance studio/theater which offers classes for adults and children. In addition, the Dance Place offers a performance series for families to attend together, and coordinates classes and performances with other youth organizations throughout the District.

### **Discovery Creek Children’s Museum of Washington**

4954 MacArthur Boulevard, NW  
Washington, DC 20007  
(202) 364-3111

President: Susan M. Seligmann

Discovery Creek Children’s Museum of Washington seeks to educate children and families about the wonders of the natural world. It offers a number of special programs throughout the year for children. On July 22, Discovery Creek is hosting a program, *Love Bugs*, for children ages 4–6. In August, Discovery Creek is hosting two programs, *Animal Architects* and *The Tortoise and the Hare*. In addition, the museum offers summer camps that involve outdoor exploration, art projects, science experiments, and live native wildlife.

### **D.C. Community Prevention Partnership**

1612 K Street, NW  
Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20006  
(202) 898-4700

Director: Linda Fisher

The D.C. Community Prevention Partnership is a private/public initiative linking neighborhoods, government agencies, and the private sector in an effort to prevent and reduce drug and

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alcohol abuse and violence in the District. It sponsors ward-based Youth Action Teams for youth ages 13–18 in each ward of the city, and neighborhood-based teams at Edgewood Terrace (Ward 5), East Capitol Dwellings (Ward 7), and Barry Farms (Ward 8), all public housing communities. These teams meet weekly and regularly participate in workshops on values, drugs, violence, AIDS, teen sexuality, and conflict resolution. The Teams also enjoy recreational activities and weekend retreats. The Partnership also holds an annual PIPAFEST to make people more aware of the need to prevent the use and abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. PIPAFEST also revitalizes recreation services in Ward 4 by promoting alternatives for young people and their families.

#### **D.C. Department of Recreation and Parks**

3149 16th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20010  
(202) 673-7660

Acting Director: Betty Jo Gaines

The D.C. Department of Recreation and Parks provides close-to-home recreation and leisure time opportunities to meet the needs of residents. Public recreation in the District encompasses a broad range of both indoor and outdoor physical, cultural, and social activities.

#### **D.C. Jewish Community Center**

1836 Jefferson Place, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 775-1765

Executive Director: Arna Meyer Mickelson  
Youth and Family Division Director: Elona Shaffert

The District of Columbia Jewish Community Center (DCJCC) provides community programs for Washington's urban Jewish culture. DCJCC's Youth and Family Division offers a wide variety of programs. The center offers after-school programs and day camps. *DCJCC Goes Live for Kids* is a series of performances for younger children that brings nationally known performers. The center also offers playgroups and a lunch bunch for working

mothers. DCJCC has both one-week theme camps and summer day camp. Families with children are invited to participate in select service activities year-round such as gardening in an abandoned urban lot, preparing sandwiches at Martha's Table, cleaning a section of Rock Creek Park or the Anacostia River Park, etc.

#### **D.C. Music Center**

All Souls Church, Unitarian  
16th and Harvard Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
(202) 265-8324

Executive Director: Ellen Carter

The D.C. Music Center is a nonprofit community school for all ages. It provides affordable music lessons for violin, piano, woodwinds, brass, percussion, and guitar, as well as for voice. The center also provides music appreciation classes for preschoolers and primary grade students.

#### **D.C. Special Olympics**

220 "I" Street, NE  
Suite 140  
Washington, DC 20002  
(202) 544-7770

Executive Director: Stephen Hocker

Special Olympics' mission is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with mental retardation. D.C. Special Olympics provides continuing opportunities for these youth and adults to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills, and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes, and the community.

#### **Duke Ellington School of the Arts**

3500 R Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20007  
(202) 393-3293

Executive/Artistic Director: Ms. Carol Foster

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The School of the Arts offers a Children's Theater Camp. The morning program includes dance, drama, and vocal music. Afternoons are filled with rehearsals and field trips.

**Easter Seal Society, Inc.**

2800 13th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
(202) 232-2342

Director of Camping and Recreation at Fairlee Manor: Mr. Mike Currence

Camp Fairlee Manor provides a range of activities including adaptive swimming, sports, and recreation; canoeing, gardening, sailing, nature study, music, dance, arts and crafts, horseback riding, travel camps, computer camp, high ropes, and overnight camp.

**Family and Child Services of Washington, D.C., Inc.**

929 L Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
(202) 289-1510

Executive Director: Rhoda Veney

Family and Child Services is a nonprofit organization that was founded in 1882. Its mission is to improve individual and community life through a broad range of professional services and supports in areas such as individual, family, and group counseling; child placement; camping services; and services for older Americans. Family and Child Services has a year-round camping program for children and youth, conducted at Camp Moss Hollow, a 400-acre site in Shenandoah National Park. The program provides educational, recreational, and socialization services for Washington metropolitan area children and youth ages 7-15.

**For the Love of Children (FLOC)**

1711-A Fourteenth Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
(202) 462-8686

Executive Director: Fred Taylor

FLOC is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to develop family-centered structures enabling hurting children to heal and get what they need to become fully participating members of society. FLOC has an Outdoor Education Center, which provides summer experiential education camping, year-round leadership training, and mentoring for inner-city youth and their families.

**Fort Dupont Community Center**

24 Ridge Road, SE  
Washington, DC 20019  
(202) 645-3874

President: Phebbie Scott

The Fort Dupont Community Center offers a variety of programs for its community in Ward 7 as well as field trips and day camp opportunities for youth.

**Gallaudet University Child Development Center**

800 Florida Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20002  
(202) 651-5130

Director, Ms. Gail Solit

The center provides day camp for children and staff who are deaf or hearing impaired and for those with normal hearing. Various activities are offered, including computer skills, recreation, speech/language arts, drama, field trips, and swimming.

**Girl Scout Council of the Nation's Capital**

2233 Wisconsin Avenue, NW  
Suite 410  
Washington, DC 20007-4187  
(202) 337-4300

Contact: Theresa Harris

Girl Scouts offers opportunities for girls in the District to participate in troop activities as well as a variety of summer camps. Girl Scouts offers a number of community-based summer day programs throughout the District. (Those interested in troop placement or volunteer opportunities, please

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contact Theresa Harris in the membership department at (202) 337-4300, ext. 21 or 22. )

**“The Go-Getters Youth Club”**

Community Research, Inc.  
1840 B Fenwick Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002  
(202) 526-4039  
Contact: Mr. Donald Freeman

The “Go-Getters Youth Club” provides recreation, social, and cultural activities to youth 9–21 years of age. Parents are involved in these activities through volunteering their services as well as through staff-led workshops and counseling. As needs surface, staff also serve as supplemental parents to the youth.

**Greater Washington Boys and Girls Club**

Montana Terrace Branch  
1625 Montana Avenue, NE  
Washington, DC 20018  
(202) 529-7222  
Executive Director: Edgar L. Reese Jr.

The Greater Washington Boys and Girls Club at Montana Terrace offers a variety of team sports including basketball and softball. They also provide a number of games such as pool and ping-pong in their recreational facility, which is open to all youth ages 6–18.

**Indo Chinese Community Center**

1628 16th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
(202) 462-4330  
Executive Director: Vilay Chaleunrath

The Indochinese Community Center was established in 1978 by Cambodian and Vietnamese refugees as a nonprofit community-based organizations to foster mutual assistance and a sense of solidarity and friendship among the three Indochinese refugee groups as well as the American community. It offers a variety of services and provides a number of cultural activities.

**Kelsey E. Collie Children’s Theater Experience**

(A Division of Color Me Human Players, Inc.)  
2236 R Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002  
(202) 399-5920  
Contact: Professor Kelsey E. Collie

Professor Kelsey E. Collie’s Children’s Theater Experience, formerly Howard University Children’s Theater (HUCT), introduces young people to the various disciplines of theater arts and their application for the cultural enrichment of everyday life. Through the discipline of the arts, the children learn the roots and tools to fully and freely express themselves.

**Kingman Boys and Girls Club**

1529 Kingman Place, NW  
Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 483-1210  
Executive Director: Aaron Webster

The Kingman Boys and Girls Club provides education, programs, counseling, employment, athletics and various other recreation programs and activities for youth ages 6–19 in the Shaw–Cordoba area of the District.

**Latin American Youth Center**

3045 15th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
(other programs at 3047 15th Street, NW, and  
1470 Irving Street, NW)  
(202) 483-1140  
Executive Director: Lori Kaplan

The Latin American Youth Center is a community-based nonprofit organization which was established in the late 1960s by Latino youth to serve the needs of their peers. Since its inception 24 years ago, the LAYC has extended its program to adults, youth, and families of all minority communities, including other those of other ethnic and language backgrounds. LAYC hosts a Teen Drop-in Center for youth to participate in a variety of activities ranging from instrumental music and

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mural painting or topic-specific educational and cultural workshops to ping-pong, pool, and weightlifting. An Arts Program also provides multi-disciplinary visual and performing arts activities. The center also hosts a Leadership Program, which trains youth and adults in leadership skills, critical thinking, public speaking, and educational enrichment.

### **Levine School of Music**

1690 36th Street, NW  
Washington, DC  
(202) 337-2227

Ms. Janet Hofmeister, Ms. Sally Mennel, Music and Arts Camp Directors

Ms. June Huang, Ms. Margy Wright, String Camp Directors

The Levine School of Music offers a D.C. camp with the theme of music, dance, and stories from Latin America. Activities include storytelling, puppetry, instrument making, mime and improvisation, singing, acting, and electronic music.

### **Marshall Heights Community Development Corporation**

3917 Minnesota Avenue, NE  
Second Floor  
Washington, DC 20019  
(202) 396-1200

Contact: William Peebles

Marshall Heights Community Development Corporation offers a number of youth-centered programs, including Northeast Performing Arts, Northeast Graphic Arts Programs, Fletcher Educational Program for Youth, and the Deanwood Youth Program. The organization also collaborates with Boys and Girls Clubs, currently works with the National Park Service to enhance recreation in their communities, and also works with other community based organizations to enhance “family fiber”.

### **Metropolitan Police Boys and Girls Clubs, D.C.**

4103 Benning Road, NE  
Washington, DC 20019  
(202) 397-CLUB

Executive Vice President: Dianne L. J. Brown  
Police Director: Lt. Melvin Scott

The mission of the Metropolitan Police Boys and Girls Club, D.C. has been to entice kids off the streets with recreational activities and to encourage responsible behavior through interaction with the club’s police officers. The clubhouse proved to be so popular that the program now includes nine clubhouses and a summer camp, Camp Ernest W. Brown, serving over 12,000 boys and girls. Each clubhouse offers a choice of team sports including football, basketball, Little League baseball, and soccer. Some facilities also offer individual sports such as boxing, weightlifting, karate, cheerleading, and double-dutch jump roping. The clubhouses also offer a number of leisure activities such as board and ball games, jump roping, marbles, jacks, hopscotch, and ping-pong. Some clubhouses have pool, pinball, and computer games. In addition to sports and leisure programs, the clubhouses offer tutoring and education programs, life skills seminars, job and career counseling, and drug prevention programs. All are directed by a dedicated staff of police officers and civilians.

### **The Mexican Cultural Institute**

2829 16th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
(202) 728-1628

Contact: Ms. Carolina Esteva

The Mexican Cultural Institute offers a summer arts program that includes drawing, dance, music, puppets, and handicrafts.

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### **National Air and Space Museum**

Office of Public Affairs MRC 321  
6th Street and Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20560  
(202) 357-2700

The National Air and Space Museum periodically publishes a calendar of events, many of which are geared towards families. The museum holds a monthly Family Star Watch as well as other special family events.

### **National Geographic Society**

17th and M Street, NW  
Washington, DC  
(202) 857-7588

The headquarters of the National Geographic Society offers free exhibits for families. Explorers Hall contains a permanent exhibit (Geographica: A New Look at the World) and a science center with interactive computer displays and hands-on exhibits. The National Geographic Society also hosts a number of lectures and special events in its auditorium. Call (202) 857-7700 for current information.

### **National Museum of Natural History**

MRC 106  
Washington, DC 20560  
(202) 357-2700

The National Museum of Natural History offers a number of special events throughout the year. It has a discovery room to enable families to explore objects from the museum's anthropological, biological, geological, and paleontological collections.

### **National Postal Museum**

2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE  
Washington, DC 20560  
(202) 357-2700

The National Postal Museum publishes a biannual calendar of events, many of which are family-oriented. For instance, the Postal Museum recently held a *Family Adventure Day*, which included a

workshop enabling children to create their own stamp collections.

### **“National Youth Sports”**

University of the District of Columbia  
4200 Connecticut Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20008  
(202) 274-5031  
Director: Ms. Lucille Hester

National Youth Sports Program is designed to motivate disadvantaged youth to earn and learn self-respect through sports instruction and competition. Youth are given information on career and educational opportunities, personal health, drug and alcohol abuse, and nutrition, as well as free medical examinations and meals. The program serves youth ages 10–16.

### **National Zoological Park (National Zoo)**

Smithsonian Institution  
Washington, DC 20008-2598  
(202) 673-3717

The National Zoo provides recreation for the whole family. In addition to the regular family-friendly exhibits of animals, the zoo offers a number of special events. From June 29th through August 3, “Sunset Serenades” are presented.

### **Parklands Community Center**

3320 Stanton Road, SE  
B-Level  
Washington, DC 20020  
(202) 678-6500  
Director: Brenda H. Jones

The Parklands Community Center is a community-based, nonprofit organization serving residents of Ward 8. It offers children and families positive alternatives in the form of recreational activities. Its mission is to enhance the quality of life for children, youth, and families living in at-risk communities. Parklands Community Center offers activities such as pool, ping-pong, table box games, outdoor sports, talent shows, and regular

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field trips to museums, skating rinks, bowling alleys, cultural activities, and other places.

### **Salvation Army**

3335 Sherman Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20010  
(202) 829-0100  
Director: Lt. Livengood

The Salvation Army provides Bible teaching, swimming, arts and crafts, exercise, sports, field trips, and recreation.

### **Sign of the Times**

Cultural Workshop and Gallery  
605 56th Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20019  
(202) 399-3400  
Executive Director: James L. Greggs

The mission of the Sign of the Times Cultural Workshop and Gallery is to offer year-round, affordable cultural workshops to the residents of Ward 7 in order to provide artistic avenues for expression of energy and creativity. The center offers at-risk residents an opportunity to gain self-esteem and cultural/educational enrichment. In addition, it offers many after-school workshops at many D.C. public schools in Ward 7.

### **Smithsonian Institution**

Smithsonian Information  
SI Building, Room 151 MRC 010  
Washington, D.C. 20560  
(202) 357-2700

The Smithsonian Institution includes 16 museums and the National Zoo. The Smithsonian offers a guide for kids and adults, and offers ongoing exhibits and events for families. For example, the National Museum of American History has a "Hands-On History" room. The National Air and Space Museum has a demonstration "Forces of Flight," and a paper-airplane contest on Saturdays and Sundays at 2:30 p.m. The National Museum of Natural History has a

Naturalist Center and a Discovery Room. The National Postal Museum also has a hands-on Discovery Center. The National Zoological Park has over 3,000 animals for families to enjoy. In addition, the carousel on the Mall is a great place to take children.

### **"Southeast Super Leagues"**

East of the River CDC  
3101 Martin Luther King, Jr., Avenue, SE, Third Floor  
Washington, DC 20032  
(202) 561-4974  
Executive Director: Peter Clare  
Contact: Bruce O'Neal

Southeast Super Leagues involve Ward 8 youth in T-Ball and softball leagues based at public housing facilities. In the fall, the Southeast Super Leagues will offer a football league.

### **"Summer Science Camp"**

"The Saturday Academy"  
University of the District of Columbia  
Science and Engineering Center - CPSET, MB 4201  
4200 Connecticut Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20008  
(202) 274-6283  
Director: Dr. Winson R. Coleman

The University of the District of Columbia (UDC) offers a Summer Science Camp for academically talented seventh and eighth grade students from the Washington metropolitan area schools. The camp is designed to provide technical exposure for minority students, emphasizing instructional and practical experiences in mathematics, electrical engineering, and computer science. UDC also offers The Saturday Academy, a precollege program for academically talented minority students, grades 4-8, from Washington area schools. This program also emphasizes mathematics, electrical engineering, and computer science. (A parent or guardian must attend two Saturday sessions with their child.)

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### **“Therapeutic Recreation Services”**

D.C. Center for Therapeutic Recreation  
3030 G Street, SE  
Washington, DC 20019  
(202) 645-3993  
Chief: Theresa Green

The department’s Therapeutic Recreation Program addresses the recreation and leisure needs of young children, teens, and adults who are mentally, physically, emotionally, or socially challenged. The department offers a number of camping opportunities: Camp Enterprise, Community Camp Program, aquatic classes, Joy Evans Therapeutic Recreation Center, Sharpe Health Therapeutic Recreation Center, and Shady Hill Day Camp.

### **U.S. National Arboretum**

3501 New York Avenue, NE  
Washington, DC 20002  
(202) 245-2726

The U.S. National Arboretum offers several special events for children and families including an outdoor workshop to teach children how to identify common trees using simple leaf keys.

### **Very Special Arts**

1331 F Street, NW  
Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20004  
Voice (202) 628-2800  
TDD (202) 737-0645  
Acting Chief Executive Officer: Eileen Cuskaden

Very Special Arts is an international organization that provides opportunities in creative writing, dance, drama, and the visual arts for children and adults with disabilities. The organization was founded in 1974 by Jean Kennedy Smith as an educational affiliate of The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

### **Washington DC Youth Orchestra**

Brightwood Station  
P.O. Box 56198  
Washington, DC 20011  
(202) 723-1612

The DC Youth Orchestra provides musical instruction by professional musicians.

### **Wo’se Summer Performing Arts Camp**

633 Allison Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20011  
(202) 882-4649  
Contact: Mr. Aidoo Holmes

The camp’s primary focus is on dance, voice, and drumming. Students make sets and costumes and present a children’s musical.

### **YMCA**

1711 Rhode Island Avenue, NW (main branch)  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 862-9622

The National Capital YMCA has been serving adults, families, and kids since 1978. It offers various aerobic classes, pools, basketball courts, an indoor track, racquet ball and squash courts, weight training equipment, free weights, treadmills, bikes, and other machines. The YMCA offers several family centered activities such as parent/child Tae Kwon Do classes and family swim time.

### **YWCA**

624 Ninth Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001-5303  
(202) 626-0710

The YWCA offers various aerobic classes and a pool. It has several family-centered classes including the Parents ‘n’ Babes/Tots swimming class.

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### **“Youth Intervention”**

D.C. Department of Recreation and Parks  
3149 16th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20010  
(202) 576-6361  
Acting Liaison: Vandale Campbell

Youth Intervention is a referral service intended to keep kids off the streets. With a staff of 12 counselors, the branch tries to place at-risk children into structured programs such as summer camp, prevention programs, tutoring programs, etc.

### **“Youth on the Grow”**

D.C. Department of Recreation and Parks  
Robert F. Lederer, Sr., Youth Gardens  
4801 Nannie Helen Burroughs Avenue, NE  
Twin Oaks Youth Gardens  
14th and Taylor Street, NW  
Washington Youth Gardens  
National Arboretum  
3501 New York Avenue, NE  
(202) 727-6373  
Director: Lorn Hill

The D.C. Department of Recreation and Parks provides gardening opportunities for children and teens through a horticulture program conducted at three sites. Activities are supervised by expert horticulturists who assist children in growing their own organic products.

### **“Youth Sports”**

D.C. Department of Recreation and Parks  
3149 16th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20010  
(202) 576-6361  
Director: Luna Harrison

The Youth Sports Office is dedicated to working with families and neighborhood groups to form various sports leagues including Intergenerational Slow Pitch League for players as young as nine years old.

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# D.C. Family Policy Seminar

## Recreational Professional Organizations and Research Institutions

### **American Association for Leisure and Recreation**

1900 Association Drive

Reston, VA 22091

(703) 476-3472

Executive Director: Christen Smith

American Association for Leisure and Recreation is a professional organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life of Americans through the promotion of creative and meaningful leisure and recreation experiences.

### **Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development Task Force on Youth Development and Community Programs**

2400 N Street, NW

Sixth Floor

Washington, DC 20037-1153

(202) 429-7979

Executive Director: Ruby Takamishi

The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development is an operating program of Carnegie Corporation of New York. In 1990, the Council established a Task Force on Youth Development and Community Programs to assess the potential of national and local youth organizations in contributing to youth development.

### **Center for Youth Development and Policy Research**

Academy for Educational Development

1225 23rd Street, NW

Washington, DC 20037

(202) 862-8820

Director: Karen J. Pittman

Contact: Shepard Zeldin

The Center for Youth Development and Policy Research (CYD) was established in 1990 at the Academy for Educational Development in response to growing concern about youth problems. CYD's goal is to transform concern about *youth problems* into public and private commitment to *youth development*. CYD sees its roles as strengthening the capacity of national, state, local, and community leaders—both public and private—to craft public and private policies, programs, and practice standards that are supportive of the country's young people. CYD has worked extensively on how to build supportive communities for youth, and currently is working on a long-term study of the impact of Boys and Girls Clubs on communities.

### **Children's Safety Network**

2000 15th Street, North, Suite 701

Arlington, VA 22201-2617

(703) 524-7802

Director: Diane Doherty

The Children's Safety Network (CSN) is a network of technical assistance centers working to assist state and other injury prevention agencies combat the leading public health threat facing children and adolescents today—injury and violence.

### **National Recreation and Parks Association**

2775 South Quincy Street

Arlington, VA 22206

(703) 820-4940

Executive Director: R. Dean Tice

The National Recreation and Parks Association seeks to unite park and recreation practitioners

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and citizen advocates into a force for health and wellness. NRPA seeks to advance research and scientific knowledge, ease community tensions, prevent and cure urban and rural deterioration, and ameliorate social ills by enriching individuals' lives through recreation, parks, and leisure.

### **National Therapeutic Recreation Society**

2775 South Quincy Street, Suite 300

Arlington, VA 22206-2204

(703) 820-4940

Director: Rikki S. Epstein

The National Therapeutic Recreation Society, a branch of the National Recreation and Parks Association, is a membership organization with the belief that leisure and recreation should be available to all people, especially those with disabilities or limited conditions. People with disabilities or limitations may require assistance in using their leisure to enhance their physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual abilities. The society promotes the development of therapeutic recreation in order to ensure quality services and to protect and promote the rights of persons receiving services.

### **President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports**

701 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Suite 250

Washington, DC 20004

(202) 272-3430

Contact Person: Matthew Guidry, Ph.D., Deputy Acting Executive Director

The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports (PCPFS) encourages schools, business and industry, government, recreation agencies, and youth service organizations to develop and maintain physical fitness and sports programs. The council disseminates information, provides technical assistance, conducts clinics, and distributes publications on physical fitness and sports for all U.S. populations. The President's Council recently created a Family Fitness Award.

### **D.C. Recreation and Parks: Important Numbers**

Office of Public Information (202) 673-7660

Adult Sports/League Activities (202) 645-3939

Before and After School Care (202) 576-7132

Camping/Day/Residential (202) 576-6298

Cooperative Play (202) 576-7278

Cultural Activities (202) 673-7663

Day Care (202) 576-7226

Hispanic Liaison (202) 673-2088

Permits/Special Services (202) 673-7646

Senior Citizens (202) 576-8677

Stagecraft & Logistical Services (202) 673-6854

Swimming (202) 576-6436

Therapeutic Recreation Services (202) 645-3993

Transportation (202) 673-7711

Volunteers-in-Action (202) 576-6630

Youth Intervention (202) 576-8570

Youth Sports (202) 576-6361

Youth and Urban Gardens (202) 727-6373

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