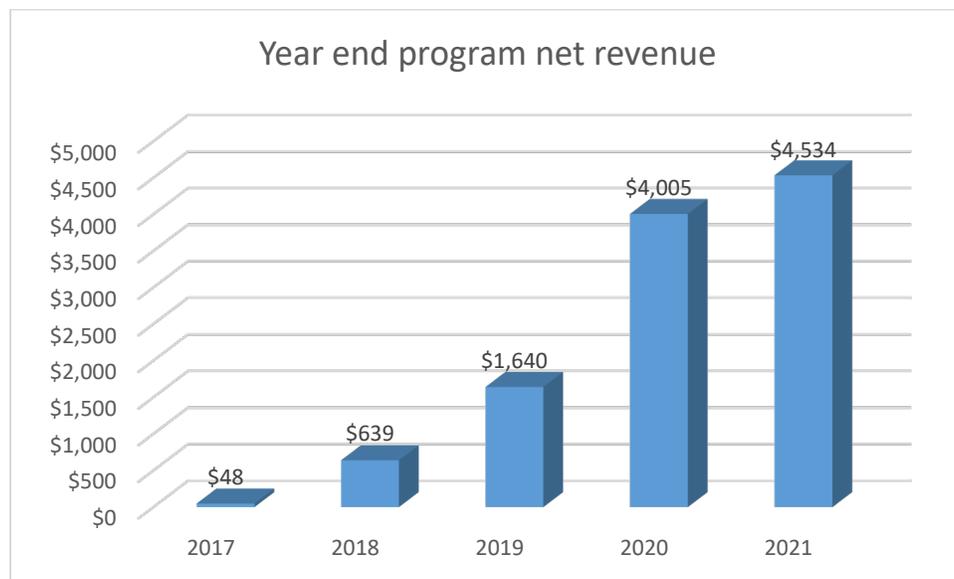


## Youth Outreach 2021 Annual Report

**By: Crystal Anderson, Recreation Program Specialist- Youth Outreach**

The Youth Outreach program is designed to provide teens with recreational programs and events that help them explore new interests and create friendships and to create a welcoming environment for teens to engage in their community and interact in a safe environment.

### 2021 Program Highlights



- Another busy year in Youth Outreach. Our year end program net revenues have been improving each year. This is commendable especially during the pandemic.
- Teen Center Membership restarted this year after a break during the covid shutdown. We restarted the free memberships in June. We are currently at 467 members. We had around 3,500 daily users this year.

Category	Total Participation 3 year average 2017-2019	Total Participation 2020	Total Participation 2021	Difference	percent +/-
Teen Programs	143	129	374	341	161%

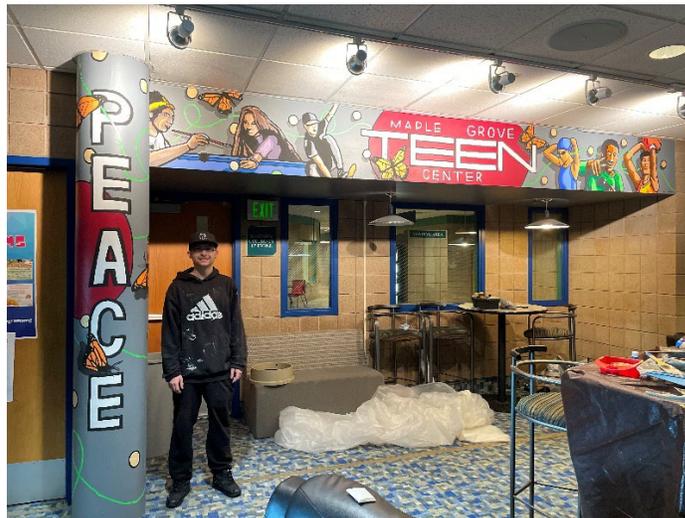
- Teen participation continues to grow as we add new program offerings. In 2021 we continued to provide distance learning day camp until summer break. Our Art Club continues to be popular and had successful participation for all four seasons. We offered outdoor programs including kayaking, archery, stand up paddle boarding, and a 3 on 3 basketball tournament as well as art, cooking and technology courses. The skateboarding camp in partnership with 3<sup>rd</sup> Lair continues to be popular and well attended.



- The Annual Ski trip to Trollhaugen was a little different this year. Instead of offering a bus and trip we simply offered discounted tickets for families to use on the same days as previous years. We had 23 people utilize this offering in 2021.
- Skate Park use was up again this year! We had over 8,900 users. The nice weather we had throughout October and November kept the skate park busy long past our usual season.
- Gym daily/group use is back up to almost pre-covid levels. We had over 9000 users this year.
- Teen Center and gym both had a bumpy ride this year with increased teen and adult disruptive behaviors unfortunately this is a growing trend around the country. A year of chaos affected the teens in a big way. In December we reduced our Saturday hours to attempt to get some control back to our staff. We have worked closely with the Community Center staff and with the Police Department. We had to trespass around 6 youth who were unwilling to follow rules or take direction. Since we have reduced our weekend hours we have seen a large decrease in teen center and hallway disturbance issues. We hope to start increasing our Saturday hours back to 8 p.m. once our new Youth Outreach Assistant is trained in and ready.



- Teen Center got a new paint job by one of our regular teen users. A huge Thank you to Jacob for sharing his talents with us!



- With the pandemic staff discussed and concluded to discontinue offering dances at the schools. The increase in facility rental, staff supervision and cleaning fees from the schools the program revenue cannot recover the cost of the program. We felt that attendance would be substantially lower and the risk of spreading covid was too great to keep the dances going. We will re-evaluate this in the future with the possibility of creating a co-sponsored event with the school.
- We have turned the Movie Room into the teen center into an Esports lounge. We have six gaming computers set up and are working with Minnesota Esports club to run this program. They offer training and coaching for the youth and keep our gaming systems up and running. We received a donation of six gaming chairs from xRocker through Minnesota Esports Club.
- Recently we received notice that Amazon would like to donate \$6,000 to our Esports club. This donation will provide ten free youth admissions to the club per session.

In 2021 with the growing need for diversity, equity and inclusion programming my role and responsibilities grew and took me outside of general youth outreach and teen programming. I took the initiative to grow programming and events to meet these needs. In 2022 we increased our general fund budget to provide funding for some new initiatives that I am excited about. In 2021 with the current budget I was able to implement the following:

- **DEI traveling Library:** This is a staff development initiative where I purchased books with a D. E. I. focus and have them labeled in a tote and ready to be checked out by staff to help them learn more around these topics. Included in the tote are also QR codes to programs and videos for those who would rather learn through those methods rather than reading an entire book. These libraries will travel between the HR department library, Park and Rec offices, and the Public Works building. They have received a lot of good response.
- **Trauma Healing for African American Males:** We had the founder of Literacy for Youth come and lead a trauma healing session for 8 young men.
- **Sensory Santa:** This event was to provide children with Sensory needs a chance to meet Santa in an environment that was calm and gave them time to adjust to the new place and people. We had a wonderful turnout and all the parents were incredibly appreciative of the opportunity for their kids. Santa donated his time and is hoping we will offer this program again next year.



- **Intergenerational Garden:** The new garden planters were built at standing height with donations and discounts from Lowe's in Maple Grove. Teens and Seniors worked together to learn and grow vegetables, spices, flowers and more. Master gardeners donated a lot of time to help teach at these weekly club meetings. There were great relationships made between our Youth and our Seniors.

- Lowe's donated a lot of our Garden supplies and sold the wood to us at a discounted rate for our Garden. Lowe's is already preparing to help us with our garden again in 2022.
- We are receiving a \$2500 in a grant from North Memorial for our Intergenerational Garden so that we can make it larger to include more people. This was our first year of the garden and we had a full roster with 50/50 Teens/seniors! We even had 3 people on our waitlist for this amazing program. Senior Programmers worked closely with the Youth Programs to run this 5 month program.
- This program also had support from Master Gardeners, Bobby Jensen with Grow with Kare on Kare 11, and Byron Emmons, from Heidi's Growhaus in Corcoran. They both plan on returning to volunteer next year.

