

2015 Wheaton Park District Early Childhood Report



Megan Raitt
Preschool and Camp Manager
Wheaton Park District
March 5, 2016

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Wide Horizons Preschool Attendance.....	2
Community Center Early Childhood Classes and Holiday Events.....	3
Toohey Park Early Childhood Participation Numbers.....	4
Total Wide Horizons/Early Childhood Program Participation.....	5
Budget Summary.....	6
Summary of Programming.....	7
Highlights for Wide Horizons Preschool.....	7
Highlights for Special Events and Community Center Programs.....	8
Highlights for Toohey Park Early Childhood Programs.....	9
New Programs at Toohey Park.....	10
Highlights from the Week of the Young Child.....	11
Marketing Initiatives.....	12
Recommendations and Action Plan for 2016.....	13



Introduction

The Wheaton Park District Wide Horizons Preschool located at the Community Center and Rathje Park House and Early Childhood programming at both Toohey Park and the Community Center provide numerous educational and recreational opportunities for this age group in our community. Early Childhood programs are fortunate to have a staff of dedicated and caring teachers who strive to meet the needs of our participants. Wide Horizons teaching staff have degrees or are working towards their degrees in Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, and/or Special Education. This allows us to stay competitive within the Wheaton area, which is home to more than thirty different preschools.

Wide Horizons Preschool Attendance

Location	2013-2014	2014 - 2015
Rathje	31	32
Community Center	103	103
Total	134	135

Participation Summary

2013 – 2014: 134 participants

2014 – 2015: 135 participants

Variance: 1 participants; 1% increase

Community Center Early Childhood Classes and Holiday Events

Class	Winter 2014	Winter 2015	Spring 2014	Spring 2015	Fall 2014	Fall 2015
Lil Chefs	17	13	18	16	12	10
Kindergarten Cookery	10	15	15	20	12	18
Theme cooking classes	0	22	15	33	11	21
Kid Rock	49	38	24	23	25	34
Music Together	87	76	64	71	78	73
December Sing-A-Long	--	--	--	--	86	67
Santa Claus Home Visits	--	--	--	--	19	24
Princess Ball	157	165	--	--	--	--
Mom/Son Bingo	--	--	--	--	74	80
Total	320	329	136	163	317	327

-- Seasonal programs.

Participation Summary

2014: 773 participants

2015: 819 participants

Variance: 46 participants; 6% increase

Justification:

The increase in participation is due to increase in theme cooking classes and enrollment in the Daddy Daughter Princess Ball.

Toohy Park Early Childhood Participation Numbers

Name	Winter 2014	Winter 2015	Spring 2014	Spring 2015	Fall 2014	Fall 2015
Two's Go To School	14	11	9	14	8	13
Simply 3's	9	9	13	14	0	0
Tiny Tots 1	10	10	10	7	10	9
Tiny Tots 2	11	9	12	8	8	10
Afternoon Adventures	27	21	29	25	14	13
Friends and Fun at Toohy	16	0	16	13	0	13
Totin Two's	14	14	11	14	14	13
Explore More Mondays	16	16	17	16	14	10
Outdoor Fridays at Safety City	NA	NA	16	16	9	9
A Taste of Toohy	--	--	--	7	--	0
Safety City Class	8	7	7	--	0	--
Santa's Workshop for Tykes	--	--	--	--	48	53
Total	125	97	140	134	125	130

--Seasonal programs.

Participation Summary

2014: 390 participants

2015: 361 participants

Variance: 29 participants; 8 % decrease

Justification:

The decrease in participants is due to the cancellation of the Friends and Fun class in both the winter and fall.

Safety City Birthday Parties/ Field Trips by # of Groups

Type	Winter 2014	Winter 2015	Spring 2014	Spring 2015	Summer 2014	Summer 2015	Fall 2014	Fall 2015
Birthday Party	3	0	5	6	5	8	7	7

Party and Field Trip Summary

2014: 20

2015: 21

Variance: 1 Birthday Party; 4% increase

Safety City Birthday Parties/Field Trips by # of Participants

Type	Winter 2014	Winter 2015	Spring 2014	Spring 2015	Summer 2014	Summer 2015	Fall 2014	Fall 2015
Birthday Party	56	0	79	119	62	130	110	105

Party and Field Trip Participation Summary

2014: 207 participants

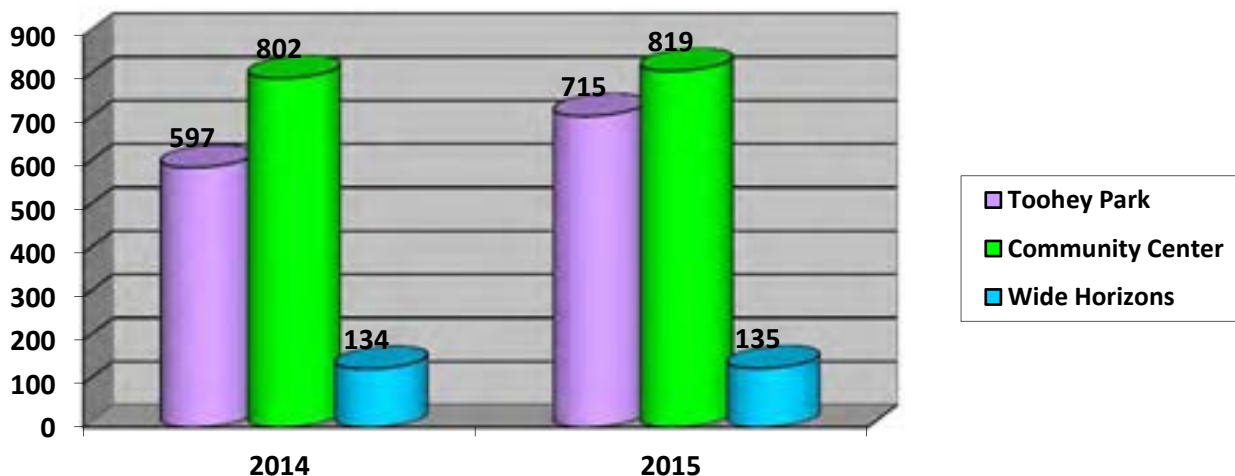
2015: 354 participants

Variance: 147 participants; 42% increase

Justification:

The increase in participants is due to the Safety City Birthday Parties averaging 15 participants.

Total Wide Horizons/Early Childhood Program Participation



Budget Summary

Program Group	Salaries (5000)	Supplies (7000)	Contractual (8000)	Revenues (4000)	Total Expenses	Net Revenue
Wide Horizons 2011-2012	66,495.00	2,303.35	449.99	125,598.00	69,248.34	56,349.66
Wide Horizons 2012-2013	69,574.65	2,261.46	884.97	129,667.75	72,721.08	56,946.67
Wide Horizons 2013-2014	69,987.53	2,674.73	1,348.43	140,792.27	74,010.69	66,781.59
Wide Horizons 2014-2015	71,298.43	2,356.81	1,033.13	152,466.04	74,688.37	77,777.67
Toohey Park 2012	23,922.11	773.32	0	37,433.00	24,695.43	12,737.57
Toohey Park 2013	23,318.86	871.84	0	37,350.00	24,190.70	13,159.30
Toohey Park 2014	21,902.58	957.63	0	40,919.10	22,860.21	18,058.89
Toohey Park 2015	21,965.67	880.81	0	35,969.35	22,212.14	14,003.68
Community Center 2012	17,130.64	1,952.74	42,109.32	79,332.40	61,192.70	18,139.70
Community Center 2013	17,208.55	1,039.59	40,003.27	74,374.00	58,251.41	16,122.59
Community Center 2014	2,117.47	1,548.56	35,717.28	58,657.82	39,383.31	19,274.51
Community Center 2015	615.06	267.15	32,992.20	48,833.00	33,874.41	14,958.59
Total 2012	107,547.75	5,029.41	42,559.31	242,363.40	155,136.47	87,226.93
Total 2013	110,102.06	4,172.89	40,888.24	241,391.75	155,163.19	86,228.56
Total 2014	94,007.58	5,180.92	37,065.71	240,369.19	126,667.05	104,114.99
Total 2015	93,879.16	3,504.77	34,025.33	237,268.39	130,774.92	106,493.47

*The Wide Horizons revenue increased \$11,673.77 due to increased program fees.

Summary of Programming

The Wheaton Park District provides affordable, educational and recreational preschool and early childhood programming to the residents of Wheaton. Classes are designed primarily on the philosophy of play-based learning. The atmosphere in the classrooms, whether it is Wide Horizons or one of the early childhood classes, emphasizes socialization, school readiness, motor skill development, arts and crafts, music, and indoor and outdoor play.

Teachers are required to develop their own lesson plans and fashion a classroom atmosphere that will change with each different unit themes. All teachers must send children home with newsletters to keep parents informed of classroom happenings.

Highlights for Wide Horizons Preschool

- Wide Horizons held an Open House for potential new students in March to meet with teachers and view the classrooms.
- Grove Dental Associates came to our classrooms to discuss with students the importance of dental care. Students were given “goody bags” with a toothbrush and coloring books.
- In April, Wide Horizons preschoolers took a field trip to Cosley Zoo.
- Wide Horizons classes participated in the “Take Five for Your Child” event during class time. Parents and/or guardians were invited to come and enjoy five or more minutes of their child’s preschool day: reading, making a craft or playing games and activities. This activity took place during the “Week of the Young Child”.
- Wide Horizons participated in a school fundraiser from “Art to Remember” and raised \$375.00. This fundraiser allowed the students to create a special work of art in class and then it can be made into a number of different items such as coffee mugs, book bags and calendars.
- In October the Wheaton Fire Department made a visit to the classrooms to talk about fire safety.
- Wide Horizons students took an on-site field trip to the Lincoln Marsh to explore the wetland habitat.
- The Preschool and Camp Manager continues to serve on the Wheaton Warrenville Early Childhood Collaboration.
- Wide Horizons staff attended a workshop conducted by the Lincoln Marsh entitled PLT (Project Learning Tree) Early Childhood.
- Eleven early childhood and Wide Horizons Preschool staff were recertified in CPR/First Aid.

Highlights for Special Events and Community Center Programs

- The 4th Annual Daddy Daughter Princess Ball took place this year with 80 couples; 165 participants. They enjoyed an ice cream sundae bar, a princess visit from Looking Glass Entertainment, photos and dancing.
- Twenty-four families took advantage of the Santa Claus Home Visits.
- Twelve families took advantage of the Easter Bunny Home Visits.
- The 1st Annual “Great American Family Campout” took place at Northside Park on Saturday, September 26 – Sunday September 27 with 37 families participating in a wide variety of activities including canoeing, night hikes, arts and crafts, scavenger hunts and campfire activities.
- The 2nd Annual Mother Son Bingo night was held at the Community Center in November with 80 people participating.
- Staff has partnered with the Winfield Park District co-op the Kid Rock programs which are held at the Community Center on Mondays.



Highlights for Toohey Park Early Childhood Programs

- Five Toohey Park staff was recertified in CPR/First Aid.
- Explore More Mondays Philanthropy Feature- Children created decorative felt mice with candy cane tails as a class craft project. The mice were delivered to Ronald McDonald House and put into the families' mailboxes as a cheerful reminder of holiday wishes from area preschoolers.
- Team Building-The Toohey Park staff gathered together to cook a meal for the families at Ronald McDonald House near Central DuPage. This well received activity acted as a team building event and continued our mission to help area families.
- Sensory Play- the Toohey Park staff understands the importance of providing young children with a variety of sensory experiences. Focus has been given to incorporate activities which meet both the regular developmental needs of our population, as well as, the needs of those with special needs whether or not they have been formally identified.
- Training and Education- Staff members spend time outside of work hours attending training and reading materials in order to better understand and serve the needs of children on the autism spectrum.
- Safety City Field Trip for Special Needs Children- Students and support staff from Owen School in Naperville visited Safety City for a modified field trip. The city gave the students an enclosed area to learn and roam in a street and city setting without the fear of harm. Several of the students were in wheel chairs which were easily maneuvered on the sidewalks and streets of Safety City.
- Safety City Birthday Parties- These parties continue to be a popular choice with preschool families in the area. Changes and modifications are made to the party plan when possible to fit any special needs that the families may have.
- Safety City- The program continues to develop and refine as staff takes into consideration the needs of children and appropriate expectations as updates are made. A strong working relationship has been built between staff members, as well as, the police and fire departments. These agencies make a visit each session during the camp in order to teach the campers about age appropriate safety topics.
- TerraCycle- Toohey Park continues their collection of empty juice and food pouches and glue sticks. Staff collects and cleans the recyclables and then sends them to TerraCycle to be upcycled into other usable products.
- Pop Tabs for Ronald McDonald House- Staff and families save pop tabs for Ronald McDonald House. The tabs are converted into funds for the house. Toohey Park has the long term goal of collecting a million tabs and having their name added to a house mural.

- **Publicity for Programs-** In an effort to reach more area preschool families, publicity flyers for programs and events at Toohey are delivered to the Wheaton and Warrenville Public Libraries, as well as, Pinwheel Toys in Rice Lake Square.



New Programs at Toohey Park

- **A Taste of Toohey -** This blended age Saturday class gives patrons "a taste" of all that Toohey Park classes have to offer. Some features include Safety City mini lesson, craft, sensory play, and group games and activities. With a new theme offered each month, patrons can sign up for one or more classes. The intent is to provide classes to families that have limited choices on the weekends, and also entice new families to enroll in other Toohey Park classes such as Safety City, birthday parties, and regular early childhood programming.
- **Winter Escape-** This winter themed class is a cold weather alternative for Outdoor Fridays which runs during both spring and fall sessions. The class was staff developed and promoted with the hope that the class will develop a following and become a yearly favorite for preschool families.
- **Week of the Young Child Toohey Park Class Offering-** Toohey Park had outstanding response to the new offering of a trial class during WOTYC. Classes filled quickly and participants were introduced to the programs at Toohey Park as well as the amenities of the grounds.

Highlights from the Week of the Young Child

The Wheaton Park District held its annual “Week of the Young Child” events the week of April 24 – May 2, 2015. The purpose of the Week of the Young Child™ is to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs.

- Staff secured \$425 in sponsorships or in-kind donations from Happy Family Organics, Meatheads, Soccer Shots and the Wheaton Newcomers Club.
- Over 326 people attended the Ice Cream Social at the Community Center to inquire about community and park district programs.
- Throughout the week, 345 children took part in free classes that were available at all park district facilities.
- The Scholastic Book Fair was a giant success with patron’s purchasing approximately \$865 in merchandise. In return, Wide Horizons Preschool and Early Childhood Education classes received scholastic dollars’ worth 55% of the sales to purchase new books or supplies for their classrooms.



Marketing Initiatives

In 2015 marketing efforts continued to grow and improve the enrollment of preschool and programming. Through the use of email blasts, dedicated program flyers and use of Facebook posts we have seen the growth of enrollment especially when the threat of class cancellation looms. These tools are a great asset to help to get the word out and ensure a class or special event will run. The monthly email blasts reach a total of approximately 38,000 households on average.



Recommendations and Action Plan for 2016

- To continue to work with Kidz Kingdom to promote programs and events.
- To work with the Marketing Department to secure more donations and sponsorships for Safety City, Mom and Son Bingo Night and the Daddy Daughter Princess Ball and the Great American Family Campout.
- Continue to secure Key Club volunteer from WWSHS and WNHS for various special events.
- Create more marketing opportunities for Toohey Park and Safety City field trips and birthday parties.
- Increase awareness of Safety City's field trip option for preschools and school groups in the area.
- To continue to encourage staff members to attend workshops and further their education.
- Targeted eblast to promote early childhood programs, specifically weekend and evening options for working parents.
- Create and continually update a landing page that will inform and educate parents in regards to our early childhood programming.

