

2016 Wheaton Park District Early Childhood Report



Jamie Martinson
Preschool and Camp Manager
Wheaton Park District
February 21, 2017

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 2017.....	13



Introduction

Two great locations, the Community Center and Rathje Park House, the Wheaton Park District Wide Horizons Preschool program offers a play-based preschool approach also focused on academics and kindergarten readiness. Toohey Park and Safety City provide numerous educational and recreational opportunities for this age group in our community as well. 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	2014 - 2015	2015 - 2016
Rathje	32	37
Community Center	103	93
Total	135	130

Participation Summary

2014 – 2015: 135 participants

2015 – 2016: 130 participants

Variance: 5 participants; -3.7%

Justification: Decrease in participation due to one preschool class, Old 2's, cancelled due to low enrollment.

Community Center Early Childhood Classes and Holiday Events

Class	Winter 2015	Winter 2016	Spring 2015	Spring 2016	Fall 2015	Fall 2016
Cooking Classes	50	82	69	52	49	91
Kid Rock	38	36	23	16	34	38
Music Together	76	84	71	75	73	91
December Sing-A-Long	--	--	--	--	67	86
Santa Claus Home Visits	--	--	--	--	24	19
Princess Ball	165	176	--	--	--	--
Mom/Son Bingo	--	--	--	--	80	112
Total	329	378	163	143	327	437

-- Seasonal programs.

Participation Summary

2015: 819 participants

2016: 958 participants

Variance: 139 participants; +16.9%

Justification: Cooking classes continue to grow, we offered 2 new cooking classes, Christmas Cookie Bakers, this fall season. Mom/Son Bingo had a great turn out in 2016 as did the Daddy Daughter Princess Ball.

Toohey Park Early Childhood Participation Numbers

Name	Winter 2015	Winter 2016	Spring 2015	Spring 2016	Fall 2015	Fall 2016
Two's Go To School	11	8	14	14	13	10
Simply 3's	9	14	14	14	0	0
Tiny Tots 1	10	7	7	12	9	10
Tiny Tots 2	9	6	8	7	10	15
Afternoon Adventures	21	29	25	29	13	23
Friends and Fun at Toohey	0	16	13	16	13	12
Totin Two's	14	14	14	10	13	11
Explore More Mondays	16	17	16	14	10	8
Outdoor Fridays at Safety City	NA	7	16	12	9	0
A Taste of Toohey	--	--	7	28	0	8
Santa's Workshop for Tykes	--	--	--	--	53	49
Total	90	118	134	156	130	146

--Seasonal programs.

Participation Summary

2015: 354 participants

2016: 420 participants

Variance: 66 participants; +18.6%

Justification: Programs continue to grow at Toohey Park and Safety City. The staff have a very strong following with many returning students year after year.

Safety City Birthday Parties/ Field Trips by # of Groups

Type	Winter 2015	Winter 2016	Spring 2015	Spring 2016	Summer 2015	Summer 2016	Fall 2015	Fall 2016
Birthday Party	0	2	6	6	8	4	7	4

Party and Field Trip Summary

2015: 21

2016: 16

Variance: 5 parties; -23.8%

Safety City Birthday Parties/Field Trips by # of Participants

Type	Winter 2015	Winter 2016	Spring 2015	Spring 2016	Summer 2015	Summer 2016	Fall 2015	Fall 2016
Birthday Party	0	30	119	97	130	60	105	60

Party and Field Trip Participation Summary

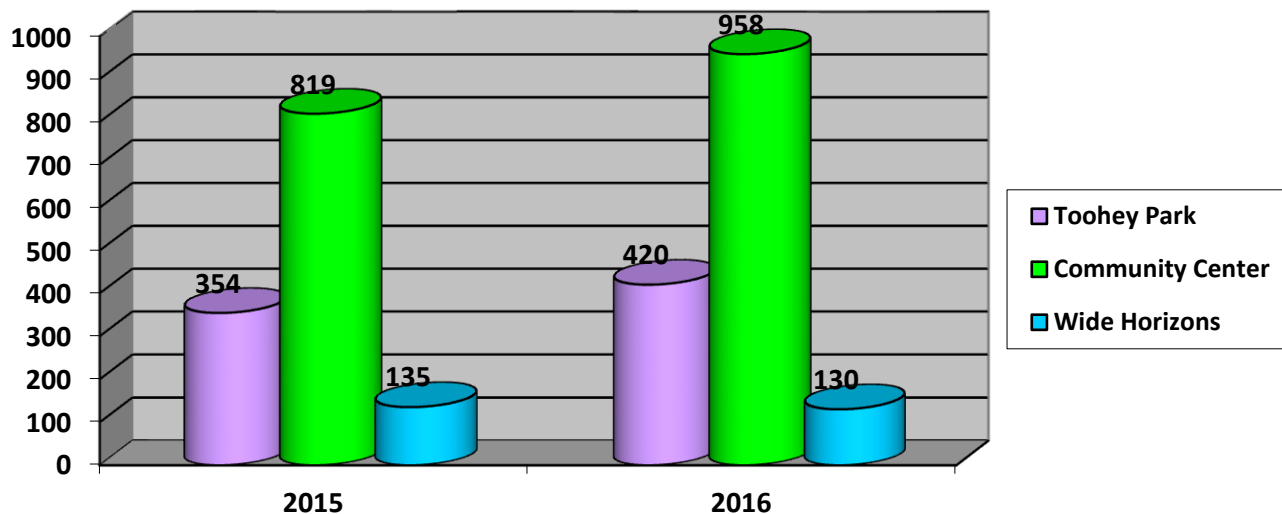
2015: 354 participants

2016: 247 participants

Variance: 107 participants; -30%

Justification: Decrease in party bookings along with cancelled parties resulting in decreased numbers.

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 2014-2015	71,682.01	2,356.81	1,033.13	152,466.04	74,688.37	77,777.67
Wide Horizons 2015-2016	68,357.56	1,518.82	819	159,161.59	70,695.38	88,466.21
Toohey Park 2015	21,965.67	789.41	0	33,603.10	22,212.14	14,003.68
Toohey Park 2016	21,726.47	1,040.85	0	37,378.35	22,534.48	13,434.87
Community Center 2015	615.06	267.15	34,972.83	48,833.00	33,874.41	14,958.59
Community Center 2016	2,490.14	680.02	32,992.20	54,384.88	36,162.36	18,222.52
Total 2015	94,262.74	3,413.37	36,005.96	234,902.14	130,774.92	106,739.94
Total 2016	92,574.17	3,239.69	33,811.20	250,924.82	129,392.22	120,123.60

Summary of Programming

The Wheaton Park District provides affordable, educational and recreational preschool and early childhood programming to the residents of Wheaton. Classes offer play based learning with components of their school day being structured and unstructured. The atmosphere in the classrooms, whether it is Wide Horizons or one of the early childhood classes at Toohey Park, emphasizes socialization, school readiness, motor skill development, arts and crafts, music, and indoor and outdoor play.

Teachers are required to develop their own curriculum and lesson plans. Monthly newsletters are sent home with parents to provide highlights on the upcoming months, special theme days, and class parties.

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 collected and donated over 600 pairs of socks to the People’s Resource Center.
- 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 serves on the Wheaton Warrenville Early Childhood Collaboration.
- Wide Horizons/Early Childhood staff and new Preschool & Camp Manager began having bi-monthly meetings to discuss areas of improvement and ideas for the upcoming school years.
- Wide Horizons students and staff hosted their annual Holiday Performance. Students perform various holiday themed songs and enjoy desserts and crafts with their friends and family afterwards.

Highlights for Special Events and Community Center Programs

- The 5th Annual Daddy Daughter Princess Ball took place this year with 88 couples; 176 participants. They enjoyed an ice cream sundae bar, a princess visit from Looking Glass Entertainment, photos and dancing. This is a 6.6% increase from the previous year.
- Mom/Son Bingo had a great turn out this year with 56 couples playing various versions of Bingo and enjoying pizza, dessert and many fun prizes and giveaways.
- Nineteen families took advantage of the Santa Claus Home Visits, with great feedback from parents expressing how “magical” the home visit was for their child.
- Expansion of cooking classes has resulted in great success for the early childhood culinary programs. Many new themed cooking classes have been offered and have proven to be very popular amongst registrants.



Highlights for Toohey Park Early Childhood Programs

- Explore More Mondays Philanthropy Feature- Children created special holiday crafts with candy for the families that are at the Ronald McDonald House in Winfield.
- 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- The programs and parties continue 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.
- 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.
- Toohey Park has a phenomenal group of staff who take pride in the programs they offer and also take pride in the facility they work out of.



New Programs at Toohey Park

- A Taste of Toohey gives patrons "a taste" of Toohey Park classes. Highlights include Safety City mini lesson, crafts, sensory play, and group games and activities. With a new theme offered each month, patrons can sign up for one or more classes. The goal 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 is a themed class that 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.
- Toohey Park staff offered Week of the Young Child classes which quickly filled and gave participants an introduction 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 29 – May 7, 2016. Week of the Young Child™ focuses public attention on the needs of young children and their families and recognizes the early childhood programs and services that are offered in our community.

- Staff partnered with Northwestern Medicine, Soccer Shots and the Wheaton Warrenville Early Childhood Collaborative for the event.
- Many families attended the Ice Cream Social at the Community Center to inquire about community and park district programs. Tables were set-up for patrons to get more information about programs we offer.
- Throughout the week, 250 children took part in free classes that were available at all park district facilities. We offered a wide range of classes that gave participants the opportunity to try something new!
- Week of the Young Child promotional materials were also used to cross-promote other park district events such as Go Fly a Kite, Taste of Wheaton and the Kids ½ Mile Run.





Marketing Initiatives

Marketing efforts continued to grow and improve the enrollment of preschool and early childhood programming. Special consideration has been taken for print materials used with the Wide Horizons Preschool Program. New preschool letterhead has been created for parent communication and notes home with students. Preschool and Camp Manager also began working on a new preschool informational folder used for new families interested in enrolling in our programs. Work was started in 2016 and recently finalized in 2017. Staff is very excited about the continued marketing efforts. E-blasts, Facebook posts, dedicated flyers, etc. have proven to be successful marketing tools to spread the word amongst our community members for other early childhood programs as well. Flyers are continuously updated and distributed amongst participants in our various programs to cross promote programs as well.

Recommendations and Action Plan for 2017

- To continue to work with Kidz Kingdom to promote programs and events- offer preschool “lunch bunch” programs that benefit both early childhood programming and Kidz Kingdom attendance.
- Encourage further collaboration of Toohey staff and Wide Horizons staff through bi-monthly meetings, group trainings and shared curriculum/project ideas.
- Continue to schedule/provide the opportunity for staff to attend trainings and workshops to further their development and education as a staff member. Work with WDSRA to provide behavior management trainings for staff members.
- Continue to expand on marketing initiatives; implement the new preschool promotional folder and continue to cross-promote our programs between Toohey Park and Wide Horizons.
- Offer Wide Horizons students the opportunity to use the Community Center gymnasium during the winter months so the children can stay active.
- Create and continually update a landing page that will inform and educate parents in regards to our early childhood programming.
- Expand on early childhood family programs and events.
- Implement new curriculum planning materials to better align our Wide Horizons curriculum with the expectations of District 200 Kindergarten teachers. By aligning our curriculum with District 200, we will be providing a better curriculum that further promotes kindergarten readiness skills.
- Offer multiple “Open House” opportunities to promote preschool registration.
- Further the renovations and improvements of the Rathje Park House in cooperation with the parks department.
- Track preschool/early childhood staff hours to better plan for new “pay agreements” for the upcoming school year.