

Fun on the Run

IMPACTING OUR COMMUNITY THROUGH AN INNOVATIVE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

By Foy McNaughton

BOARD DIRECTOR, FAIRFIELD COMMUNITY SERVICES FOUNDATION

Amazing how a seed planted, nurtured by a volunteer community minded board and guided with dedication by city staff can grow from just an idea to something truly remarkable.

That seed was the idea for the mobile recreation program called "Fun on the Run." A program that comes right to the neighborhoods most in need, from 3 to 5 p.m. five days week. This is a public-private partnership between the Fairfield Community Services Foundation and the City of Fairfield.

The Foundation started with little money to launch such a program, but had a strong vision for the need to reach our children after school by providing a safe place to play, learn and build healthy lifestyle behaviors.

The budget was \$70,000 to launch the program for 52 weeks a year, five days a week. The Foundation quickly purchased a little yellow van (an old Wonder Bread van) for \$2,000. That put everything into high gear and the local fundraising efforts ramped up quickly. Within six months, they had the money, the van and a city organized program to launch Fun on the Run.

Nine years later, FOTR operates two vans and has won the coveted Helen Putnam Award, a prestigious statewide award of excellence given by the League of California Cities. These two vans generate more than 15,000 visits annually, bringing a safe and educational environment to Fairfield's neighborhoods.

The idea of reaching these children in the early ages in a safe environment is documented to fight juvenile delinquency. The board was determined to reach the children earlier rather than later, helping to create the type of community residents want to live and work in.

The trust levels among Fairfield residents for Fun on the Run is so high that the Fairfield Police Department brings the van to neighborhood meetings, allowing residents to send the children to play while they attend the meetings. Everyone knows that when you see the brightly colored van, the neighborhood is safe.

Fun on the Run, with significant support from Kaiser Permanente, has expanded its recreational offerings to promote healthy cooking and eating, an important part of keeping kids active and healthy. For example, FOTR will be able to offer soccer clinics this summer to promote physical fitness. Separately, FOTR, through the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano provides three to five pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables per child each week - 46,000 pounds annually.



Robinson Kuntz/Daily Republic file photo (2012)


Chavon Younger, left, Den'ella Wright, center, and Brenda Cruz set up games at the Fun on the Run event on Crowley Lane in Fairfield.

Though FOTR is a unique private-public partnership with the city, the Foundation is an independent body that runs on sponsor donations, grants and a huge contribution from the Fairfield Host Lion's Club through their Prime Rib in the Park event (held this year on Aug. 24). And yes, the Foundation remains a volunteer board with no paid executive director.

The Fairfield Community Services Foundation is proud of our community and is invested in creating a positive legacy of strong leaders shaping a healthy community.

If you would like to donate to help keep this vital program going, please make checks payable to the Fairfield Community Services Foundation and send to P.O. Box 147, Fairfield, Ca. 94533. All donations are tax deductible. ♦


Save the Date



9th Annual
Prime Rib in the Park
— Presented by Fairfield Host Lions


Saturday, August 24, 2013
5:00 pm Social • 6:30 pm Dinner

**For more information and to purchase your tickets
call (707) 427-6927**



FAIRFIELD HOST

All proceeds benefit



FUN ON THE RUN!