

REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL



DATE: November 05, 2019

TITLE: L.E.A.D. (Leadership, Education, Action, and Development)
Group 2 – Community Project

Prepared by: LEAD Team Members

Reviewed by: Doria Wilms, Assistant City Manager

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION:

The City of Desert Hot Springs implemented a new staff development program called LEAD - Leadership, Education, Action and Development.

The purpose of this program is to help employee development and promote connection and collaboration between employees and their respective departments.

Throughout the course of the program, City staff learned how each department functioned, both independently and cohesively, and were taught different philosophies and strategies for better leadership, public service and community involvement.

The second LEAD Team began their program on July 10, 2019 and consisted of the following employees:

- Ana Morales – Administrative Assistant, City Manager's Office
- Richard Min – Building Inspector/Plans Examiner
- Viviana Gonzalez-Orsorio – Finance Management Analyst
- Monica Guerra – Payroll & HR Specialist
- Klarrisa Vera – Administrative Assistant to the Chief of Police/Cannabis Compliance
- Tiyler Messer – Code Compliance Officer
- Kenneth Talley – Animal Control Officer
- Maddison Phillips – Police Officer
- Craig Barnes – IT Technician
- Ramy Beshara – Associate Engineer

Human Resource Director Pamela Meuse conducted the LEAD Orientation, which included the program expectations. We started by electing a team leader whose duties were to make sure all members attended the sessions, worked with the team to coordinate questions for the facilitators, encourage participation, and be the liaison between the team and the Assistant City Manager for the community project. Ana Morales, Administrative Assistant was elected by the team for this role.

The team then had to prepare two general core questions that were asked universally, and three to four questions that were tailored to each Department Director. The Directors were then able to prepare their presentation with these questions in mind, while explaining their duties and responsibilities. The Department Directors that gave presentations were, in order of appearance:

Doria Wilms – Assistant City Manager
Luke Rainey – Deputy City Manager
Daniel Porras – Public Works Director

Rebecca Deming – Community Development Director, with Keith Hightower – Building Official
Pamela Meuse – Human Resources Director
Jerryl Soriano – City Clerk
Charles Maynard – City Manager
Jim Henson – Chief of Police
Geoffrey Buchheim – Finance Director

Once the sessions were complete, we began discussions about what we would like to achieve for our community project. After discussing several great ideas, we felt that we could make the biggest impact on the community by helping FOOD NOW and their Children's Backpack Feeding Program. After meeting with Dana Johnson, Executive Director of the Food Now program, we made it our main goal to raise awareness in the community of the Children's Backpack Feeding Program.

The Food Now Children's Backpack Feeding Program is a cooperative between Family Services of the Desert (FSOD), and the Palm Springs Unified School District. They help to provide selected chronically hungry children with additional nutritional support on the weekends. The schools that receive this assistance are Julius Corsini Elementary, Two Bunch Palms Elementary, Cabot Yerxa Elementary, Bella Vista Elementary, and Bubbling Wells Elementary School. The children that receive the backpacks are chosen by the school's Student Services Community Liaisons.

Volunteers prepare about 125 backpacks each week with healthy, nutritional meals that a child would receive from school, but is missing on the weekends. The backpacks are filled with a weekend supply of nutritious, shelf-stable food based on USDA recommendations, enough for two lunches, two breakfasts, two snacks, and two servings of milk. The pre-assembled backpacks contain foods designed to provide age appropriate nutrition for chronically hungry children on the weekend and consisting of child-friendly foods that require no preparation. Kids can just "open and eat." (Information provided by FOOD NOW)

A typical backpack contains items like:

Protein (2 servings)

Peanut Butter cups and a sleeve of crackers
Beans and Franks (pop-top can)
Beef stew (pop-top can)
Tuna

Grains (2 servings)

Cereal (1-ounce bowl)
Packets of instant oatmeal

Fruits (5 servings)

Fruit cups (peaches, applesauce, etc.)
Fruit juice boxes (apple, orange, or other 100% juice)
Raisins (snack size boxes)

Vegetables (2 servings)

Vegetable cups (corn, green beans, etc.)
Vegetable juice boxes

Dairy (3 servings)

Milk; both white and chocolate (do not require refrigeration)
Cheese (string or hard cheese which require no refrigeration)

Snacks (2 servings)

Sunflower or pumpkin seeds, Pudding cups
Snack/trail mixes, Cereal bars or granola bars
(**Information provided by FOOD NOW)

Executive Director of Food Now, Dana Johnson, met with LEAD Group #2 and provided us with the above information so that the team would know which items would most benefit the program. With this in mind, our team purchased 984 Trailmaker Classic, 17-inch backpacks through Bags in Bulk. Additionally, our team purchased 780 single-serving packages of oatmeal, 360 cartons of milk; 300 single-serving cups of peaches, 360 single-servings of goldfish crackers, 485 individually wrapped granola bars, and 192 packs of canned tuna. In total, 984 backpacks, and 2,477 pieces of individually wrapped food items were provided to the Food Now Children's Backpack Feeding Program.

Not only did LEAD Group #2 help purchase items for Food Now, we spent time volunteering at Food Now to pack 125 backpacks. We had to make sure that each backpack was packed correctly with some of the specific items listed above, including peaches, tuna, crackers, pudding, milk, raisins, granola bars, and honey buns. The Food Now volunteers would then pack fresh fruit in the backpacks later in the week before distributing them to the schools.

Lastly, the LEAD team had the opportunity to meet with the Community Liaison's from Palm Springs Unified School District. During the meeting their testimonies were shared in reference to the Backpack Feeding Program. We are certain that raising awareness about the Children's Backpack Feeding Program could really make a difference. For more information on how to volunteer and get involved with this program please contact Dana Johnson, Executive Director of Food Now at (760) 288-7878 or visit their website at www.FoodNowDHS.org.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The LEAD Group #2 started with a budget of \$5,000.00, drawn from the Human Resource Education Budget 001-41-16-4240. With that said, \$3,233.79 was used for 987 backpacks purchased from Bags in Bulk and \$950.11 was used for 2,477 pieces of individually wrapped food items from Costco. These purchases totaled \$4,183.90 and left a balance of \$816.10 in the Human Resource Education Budget. As a team, we decided to donate the remaining \$816.10 to Food Now.

Bags in Bulk: \$ 3,233.79

Costco: \$ 950.11

Total: \$ 4,183.90

Remaining: \$ 816.10 (Donation to Food Now)