$2.6 Million Investment in Youth

Filling the Youth Investment Funding Gap

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) 2022 budget included a historic $2.6 million increase in youth investment funded by a $1.3 million increase in the MPRB property tax levy and a $1.3 million allocation of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. This investment was made possible through the commitment of the Board of Commissioners, Mayor, City Council, and Board of Estimate and Taxation. There is also an ongoing commitment of gradual annual increases ($260,000) to the MPRB property tax levy from 2023 through 2027 to meet the full $2.6 million in youth investment requested by the Board as well as an ARPA funding for 2023 and 2024 ($1,092,000 and $875,400, respectively). With ARPA funding ending in 2024 there remains a youth investment funding gap in 2025 and 2026 as property taxes won’t reach the full $2.6 million until 2027. The funding gap is $520,000 in 2025 and $260,000 in 2026 and will require either an accelerated property tax levy increase or the identification of another one-time source.

2022 and 2023 Highlights

2022 Hired 22 new youth-serving professionals to expand youth programming across the city and provide consistent, dedicated engagement of youth in safe environments and expose them to experiences that enrich their lives.

• Spark’d Studios – one Youth Technology and Career Skills Manager and six Youth Technology Specialists to provide afterschool mentoring and creative tech programming, career skills training, media literacy and teen spaces in recreation centers for youth primarily ages 10-19.

• Recreation Programming – five Program Lead positions and eight Youth Program Specialists to provide innovative programs that create a sense of belonging, expand Youthline programming and meet the diverse needs of all youth and communities equitably across the city of Minneapolis.

• Neighborhood Naturalist Program – two Naturalist Program Coordinators to lead engaging nature programs, restructure educational experiences to be learner driven, develop and deliver trainings and skill building opportunities for part-time Naturalists, and provide consistent staff and program evaluations.

• Teen Teamworks – additional funding to increase number of older youth served, enhance employment experiences providing more engaging projects for participants age 14-24, and improve wages (especially for adult site supervisors).

2023 Expanded youth programming and enhanced Teen Teamworks employment; see 2023 highlights on back.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spark’d Studios</td>
<td>10 programs, one camp, 298 participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youthline Recreation</td>
<td>128 programs, 11 camps, 2,923 participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Lead Recreation</td>
<td>185 programs, 1,682 participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Naturalist</td>
<td>22 programs, 41 camps, 3,806 participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teen Teamworks</td>
<td>2,383 program hours, 23,412 participants</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2,028 program hours*, 23,282 participants*</td>
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<td>141 youth, 21 adult site supervisors**</td>
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<td>167 youth, 25 adult site supervisors</td>
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*Two full-time staff hired in 2022 maintained similar hours and participant levels despite being short three PT naturalists for busiest six months of 2023.

**Reflects significant increase from 2021 when there were 91 youth and 14 adult site supervisors.
2023 Highlights

Spark’d Studios
- Three new Spark’d Studios opened for weekly after school drop-in studio time and creative arts programming with a Youth Technology Specialist.

- Launched new programs including Video Production, Graphic Design, 3D Design & Printing, Coding, Podcasting, Creative Writing and Band Practice.

- Offered 11 new summer camps in building hands-on technical skills and professional media portfolios.

- In a voluntary 2023 MN Youth Intervention Programs survey, participants selected these top four responses as outcomes of their Spark’d Studio involvement: Made me optimistic about my personal future; Helped me be a better friend; Gave me positive adult role models; Helped me plan and make good choices.

Recreation
- Due to the additional funding for eight Youth Program Specialists, MPRB provided 2,900 additional program hours for youth ages 12 – 17.

- Program Leads launched new programs including Eggstatic Incubation and Embryology, RC Chaos featuring drones and remote control cars, fishing nights, gardening, dance instruction from The Cowles Center, and bicycle mechanics, rodeos and free bike use at Perkins Hill Pump Track.

- Program Leads also solicited and received $53,918 in grants and donations.

- Youth Program Specialists and Program Leads were trained on the Youth Program Quality Assessment which evaluates the quality of programs and identifies staff training needs.

Neighborhood Naturalist Program (Nature Education)
- Expanded the “Wander with a Naturalist” series to include Bike, Bird, Garden, and Paddle options.

- Nature Play groups were formalized and expanded to more parks.

- After-school nature programs were led at Emerson Dual-Language School (near Loring) and Marcy Holmes.

- Certified and part-time Naturalist staff completed professional development in BEETLES (infusing outdoor science programs with research-based approaches and tools to improve science teaching and learning). This is the gold standard for Environmental Education.

Teen Teamworks
- A second Power Crew was added to serve south Minneapolis parks. Teens ages 16+ learned to use and maintain power tools and equipment, develop problem solving skills, and gain leadership skills.

- Young adult interns (ages 18 to 24) helped develop and test an app to document the shoreline conditions of Lake Nokomis.

- Adult site supervisors’ wages increased to be competitive with those offered by other youth serving agencies.

- Funds were used to purchase additional tools and materials to provide more meaningful and complex projects such as installing wood rail fences, repairing wooden stairs, enhanced plantings, and more.