



Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee

Recreation Scholarship Policy Update

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Title

Recreation Scholarship Policy Update

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Briefing only; no action requested.

Report

Issue:

Oral report and discussion regarding the Recreation Scholarship Fund

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

Scott River, Director of Recreation and Facilities; Parks, Arts and Recreation; 360.753.8506

Background and Analysis:

The Recreation Scholarship Program was established by the Olympia City Council in July of 1996 through Ordinance #5614. This ordinance ordains that monies received from public or private donations shall be deposited for the purposes of providing scholarships to cover activity fees for low-income residents, predominantly youth. Because this fund is heavily depended on donations, available funds have tended to lag behind community need. Because of this reality, the fund has not historically been widely marketed out of staff concerns that it would result in turning away several qualifying requests per year.

Ina Fennell was a 37-year employee with the City, all of those years with the Parks, Arts and Recreation Department making her the longest continuous department employee at the time of her retirement. Ina spent the majority of her career working in customer service jobs at the old community center and The Olympia Center. During this time, she became aware of the need for scholarships to allow individuals to participate in a wide variety of recreation services. Whether it was a week of camp for a school age student, a month of fitness for an adult, or a kayak trip for a mother and son, she recognized the importance of equitable access. Ina was passionate about improving experiences for people, and especially loved her customers. And she was an advocate for them, regardless of their background. If you drew Ina as your customer service rep, you were sure to

be made to feel special.

Ina passed away in 2018. Through her estate, she left \$139,513.42 to Olympia Parks, Arts & Recreation “for the specific purpose of providing funds for scholarships for families and individuals to participate in recreational programs throughout the year”. Ina lived the values of the parks and recreation industry and has now created an opportunity for many more citizens to realize the benefits with her legacy gift. By doubling the annual amount of funds typically available for qualifying participants to access, it is projected these funds will last until at least 2037.

As a result of Ina’s contribution, the scholarship fund (previously referred to as the Fun Fund) has been rebranded as Ina’s Fund.

Attachments:

Ina’s Fund Application

Ina Fennell Recognition Plaque