

## PARKS, RECREATION AND NEIGHBORHOODS FUND DEVELOPMENT REPORT

### **Summary**

On February 25, 2003, Council approved the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhoods Fund Development Program which is managed by PR&N. The Department regularly accepts donations from service clubs, foundations, private citizens and local businesses on behalf of various programs and projects within the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhoods Department. These donations are typically given to the City for specific parks related purposes.

In Fiscal Year 2008-2009 the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhoods Department made great strides in implementing the City Council Approved Fund Development Plan. The Department successfully hosted several special events, including a finish stage of the Amgen Tour of California and the Celebration of Lights Parade. The Department has been successful in expanding its Invest in Modesto program, and launched a new Friend of the Park program. Staff has also worked with multiple community organizations to build and maintain playgrounds, gardens, and more.

### **Marketing Plan**

In Fiscal Year 2006-2007 the Department worked with William Koegler, Director of Development at Oglebay Park, as a consultant. Mr. Koegler recommended that a comprehensive marketing plan be developed. One of the Department's core beliefs is that quality collateral materials allow prospective donors and potential sponsors to see the quality of our park resources and programs. There is an important collaboration that has taken place with the Department's Public Information staff and the Fund Development Specialist to create quality collateral materials to showcase sponsorship opportunities.

In Fiscal Year 2008-2009 the Department produced a new series of Marketing Materials that changed its focus from long-term legacy gifts to direct funding of parks and programs. This was done in response to the current economic crisis. These materials have been successfully distributed to the community through City of Modesto's utility bills, service clubs, direct mail and more.

### **Programs**

#### Invest in Modesto

The "Invest in Modesto" campaign encourages prospective donors to give toward Parks, Recreation and Neighborhoods programs with an emphasis on Leisure Bucks. The piece highlights what the different levels of giving can do and explains that Department programs encourage healthy lifestyles, offer positive recreation opportunities and enhance the quality of life for the entire community.

The Invest in Modesto campaign will be instrumental in helping the Department strive towards its goal of raising \$20,000 for Leisure Bucks in Fiscal Year 2009-2010.

#### Friends of the Virginia Corridor

The community has embraced the Virginia Corridor Trailway. This marketing piece offers citizens the opportunity to give to this project at any monetary level. For as little as a \$50 annual contribution, donors receive a commemorative pin. All donors to the Virginia Corridor Trailway receive a bi-annual newsletter and the sense of pride that comes with contributing to the community.

#### Friend of the Park

The Friend of the Park promotes giving opportunities to City of Modesto Parks. Money raised is used for beautification projects, volunteer events, play equipment and more.

#### Save Mart S.H.A.R.E.S Program

The Parks, Recreation and Neighborhoods Department has two funds eligible for Save Mart's Supporting Humanities, Arts, Recreation, Education and Sports (S.H.A.R.E.S). These funds are the Leisure Buck Program and the City of Modesto Golf Fund. Each fund is eligible for a 3% donation of a shopper's transactions when they use their pre-registered S.H.A.R.E.S Cards. The Department has distributed over 3000 S.H.A.R.E.S cards.

#### Virginia Corridor Trailway Newsletter

With the assistance Hi-Tec Sports, the Department releases quarterly newsletters. These newsletters share stories of giving, update citizens on construction progress and offer current and prospective donors the opportunity to give to the project. The newsletter is a way to keep the citizens informed on how their donations are continuing to support the project.

### **Special Events**

#### Amgen Tour of California

Much of the focus in late 2007 centered on developing collateral materials for the Amgen Tour of California, Stage 3 Start-Modesto. Comprehensive marketing materials were developed to detail sponsorship packages for both cash and in-kind sponsors. Several sponsorship levels were created to offer individual sponsorships as well as corporate opportunities.

#### Celebration of Lights Parade

The 2008 Celebration of Lights Parade saw an increase in donations from \$3000 in 2007 to over \$8000 in 2008. This was due in large part to the successful solicitation of a Presenting Sponsor for the event. The 2008 event was hosted by Crystal Dairy.

## **Community Partnerships**

### Lions Park

The Modesto Lions Club is near completion of a community park located on the Virginia Corridor Trailway at the corner of Morris and Virginia Avenues. Park amenities include a play structure, water tower spray ground and several climbing boulders. The Modesto Lions Club has raised approx \$50,000 for the project. The relationship building between the Fund Development Specialist and the service clubs are key to the success of these meaningful projects.

### Hope Blooms Garden

In Fiscal Year 2008-2009, the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhoods Department partnered with the Memorial Hospital Foundation to beautify the trailhead at Monterosso Park. The Hospital Foundation donated and planted over 4000 daffodils and 45 trees. The Hope Blooms Garden represents a serene place where cancer patients and their families can visit. The ShadowChase running club donated \$5000 to the project.

## **Maintenance Agreements**

### River City Bank

In honor of opening their first branch in Modesto, River City Bank has chosen to sponsor maintenance of the Virginia Corridor Trailway located in the section between Orangeburg and Granger Avenues. This is two-year agreement for \$7500 per year. This agreement ensures that this section of the Virginia Corridor is maintained and well cared for, without impacting the City of Modesto's general fund.

## **Special Events**

### Amgen Tour of California

The third annual Amgen Tour of California returned to Modesto on February 17, 2009. However, the fundraising effort began nine months before the event arrived. Staff was able to raise over \$103,000 in cash sponsorships and an additional \$200,000 in in-kind services. The relationships made as a result of the Amgen Tour of California through the sponsors as well as the volunteer are continue to be nurtured and grow into other areas of the Fund Development Program.

### Celebration of Lights and Downtown Extravaganza

The annual Celebration of Lights Parade and Downtown Extravaganza has experienced varying levels of sponsorship throughout the last five years. The Department was able to

successfully raise nearly \$10,000 for the event, including the solicitation of Crystal Dairy as the presenting sponsors. The parade also has valuable partnerships with local media including The Modesto Bee. The committee has also done a tremendous job in partnering with local business to obtain in-kind services such as radios, food and beverages and more. The Downtown Improvement District and the Modesto Convention and Visitors Bureau are both heavily involved in the planning process. Staff has been working with the parade committee to bring new cash sponsors and additional in-kind resources to the event.

### National Trails Day

The Department partners with Royal Robbins on an annual basis to promote the community's trail system. For the second year in a row Royal Robbins hosted a trail clean-up on the Virginia Corridor Trailway. As part of the event, the Department solicited event sponsors. Over 50 residents removed garbage and debris from the trail, and \$1000 was raised to maintain and preserve the Trailway.

### **Training**

#### Marketing for Non-Profits

The Fund Development Specialist position is also tasked with coordinating the marketing campaign for special events and donations. The Non Profit Center in Sacramento offered a free marketing course in Modesto with local professionals in the field. The Fund Development Specialist attended this presentation.

#### Association of Professional Fundraisers

On several occasions this past year the Fund Development Specialist attended the local chapter of the Association of Professional Fundraisers' quarterly training sessions. Topics have included local philanthropists giving insight on why they give, solicitation of donors and donor maintenance.

### **Challenges**

#### Economy

With the current economic climate facing our region, businesses have reduced their donation and sponsorship budgets. There have been countless responses that groups are receptive to our events, parks, and programs, but are financially unable to give at this time.

#### Competitive Market

The Department is also in a competitive market when it comes to benevolent giving. There are no shortages of charitable options for perspective donors to contribute to. This community alone has two hospital foundations, a junior college, symphony, not to mention the newly opened Gallo Center for the Arts.

#### Public Perception

In the past, public perception dictates that citizen tax dollars should be able to cover the costs of maintaining the community's resources. However, the reality is that Council is forced on annual basis to make tough financial decisions on what areas to allocate funding to while trying to provide quality park resources, superior public safety and meet the communities growing transportation needs.

This climate makes our relationship with the Stanislaus Community Foundation vital to our success. Donors are weary about giving money directly to the City. By having the Stanislaus Community Foundation act as our fiscal agent, we assure donors that their money will be used for the purpose it was intended and gain instant credibility.

### **Summary and Looking Ahead**

The Virginia Corridor Trailway, Hope Blooms Garden and the Lions Junction park are prime example of what we can do as a community when we have an excellent product and a comprehensive plan. In the next year the Department will look to expand our marketing materials to include other parks and projects.

The Department will be examining ways to increase awareness and expand the Invest in Modesto Campaign. For every \$100 donated to this program, a child in Modesto will have the opportunity to participate in youth sports, take an art class or experience the outdoors. Recent cuts have reduced funding levels from \$75,000 to \$20,000. The Department seeks to raise a minimum of \$20,000. To do so, Parks, Recreation and Neighborhoods will be partnering with the North Modesto Kiwanis Club and Sunnyside Farms to host the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Breakfast with Santa. All proceeds from this event will benefit the Leisure Bucks program.

The Department also looks to build on the success of the 2008 and 2009 Modesto stages of the Amgen Tour of California. As we found out a finish stage is bigger, more exciting, and ultimately carries a higher price tag. Staff will need to raise \$100,000 in cash and another \$100,000 in in-kind services.

As mentioned earlier, the City's relationship with the Stanislaus Community Foundation provides instant credibility for our fund development campaigns due to its 501c-3 status. In the next year the Department will initiate its first steps in creating a new 501-c 3 whose sole purpose will be to advocate for Parks, Recreation and Neighborhoods programs. The City of Modesto has a rich history of philanthropic giving. For the future of the community's parks and programs, it is essential that we establish our own foundation.