



# Gabriola

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## RECREATION SOCIETY

### GABRIOLA RECREATION SOCIETY - Annual Report for 2019

- Submitted to Hannah King, RDN Superintendent of Recreation Services – February 14, 2020

#### Administration

- Continued to revise and expand our program offerings in response to needs expressed by the community. Our ongoing participation in the monthly meetings of the Gabriola Health and Wellness Collaborative, which includes members of Gabriola's key organizations, helped us support more inter-agency co-operation on programs and projects, and avoid duplication of services.
- Refined areas of our website to enable easier administration of our online program information and registration systems.
- Acquired much needed new office and program equipment. For years, this budget has been very low. Our desktop computer was 10 years old and had become outdated. The last 2 major equipment purchases were 2 used 420 sailboats in 2015, and portable flooring in 2017.
- Solicited support from local businesses and individuals, resulting in donations that allowed us to double the budget for our low income subsidy program, GabRec Access (GRA).
- Participated in meetings centred on a new initiative at Gabriola Elementary School, a 3 year project between SFU, GES, and SD68 focussed on place based learning and reconciliation. Future aspects of the project will involve a unique approach towards better community access to GES. In 2019, our own efforts towards this goal were directed at assisting the steering group of this project.
- Our board continued to evolve. We both gained and lost members in 2019, but remained without a treasurer. Interested candidates attended our last regular meeting of the year, including a potential treasurer. We will know early in 2020 if they will stay on.

#### Programs

- Our ongoing programs – for both kids and adults - are well established and continued with solid attendance in 2019. These included our physical literacy focussed programs – Run/Jump/Throw and Gym Jam for kids; and evening drop-in sports for youth/adults in the school gym.
- We had fewer programs for kids during the school year, and more focus on programming for pro-d days, spring break, and summer camps. Ever increasing numbers of community based recreation activities and new program venues continue to affect GRS attendance. We did have very good participation levels at school breaks, and higher than usual numbers in our summer camps.
- In comparison to 2018, overall participant numbers and program revenue for adult programs were down over 50%. We were not involved in summer kayaking programs in 2019, which had been a big draw in 2018. Also, the last of our fitness classes – the peer led exercise group – ceased at GRS in July, and moved to a larger venue. There were no new large scale adult programs established. A few smaller programs also dropped off, with instructors having moved away.

- At the same time, with more and higher cost kids' programs, revenue from kids' programs increased by over 40%. This helped us come closer to the program revenue estimates in our budget. New and longer kids' summer camps included film school, farm camp, and Nature Kids. We hosted a small sailing program for the first time in 2 years, led by a volunteer instructor, and also had good turnouts for soccer, Gym Jam, and other new summer camps.
- The biggest boost came from Nature Kids, an outdoor education program based in local RDN parks. The provider was not able to run her programs independently, as there is no commercial activity allowed in RDN parks here. Given the connection between the RDN and GRS, the RDN approved GRS as the sponsor. Nature Kids had solid groups of homeschoolers attending during the school year, and was close to full during several weeks of summer camps.
- In November, we were finally able to successfully re-start adult basketball. It had been a stable evening drop-in sport, but went dormant for several years due to a lack of participants, despite several efforts to resurrect it. There was a great turnout, and it looks to carry on with a very strong following.
- Adult volleyball continued to be the most popular evening drop-in program, with the highest regular attendance. In September, we also added indoor soccer to our roster of evening drop-ins. By the end of 2019, GRS sponsored programs were on 4 out of the 5 nights the school gym is available.
- We co-sponsored programs with People for a Healthy Community – Community Kitchen Kids, a free program for Gabriola youth; and the Gabriola Arts Council – Kids at Cultivate, a drama camp and live performance at the Cultivate Festival. We remained the co-sponsor and primary administrator for first aid programs here, in conjunction with the Gabriola Ambulance Society.

## **Staff**

- Our summer co-ordinator position was filled by a Gabriola student in Grade 12, who worked out very well. We anticipated that employee would fully start the job – at 30 hours/week - in May. As she was finishing her school year, she worked part-time May and June; full-time in July and August. She had previously worked for the Gabriola Arts Council and the Gabriola Chamber of Commerce.
- In June, our summer co-ordinator participated in 2 days of the RDN's training sessions for summer staff, the ones most applicable to her job. She and the GRS manager renewed their Emergency First Aid certifications in May.
- The GRS manager was on vacation or off sick for 4 weeks in 2019. Vacation pay is rolled into the wage; holidays and sick days are unpaid. The GRS office was closed due to snow closures and power outages at the Elementary school, where the office is located, for 5 days in 2019.
- We had difficulty securing casual assistants for our summer camps, jobs which are dependent on registration numbers and in the past, have been filled as needed. The roster established in May disappeared by July when they all got full-time summer jobs. We had to scramble to find other helpers, and as a result, they tended to be younger and less experienced than in previous years.

## **Budget Differences** (2019 budget vs. actuals for 2019)

- The 2019 budget submitted included \$8,000 of extra funding from the RDN, the amount originally requested to help offset wages for our summer co-ordinator. In previous years the difference between our minimal Canada Summer Jobs funding due to our status as a municipal agency, and the actual cost, came out of the GRS operating budget. In actuals, the RDN contributed \$6,336, and Canada Summer Jobs \$1,663.

- For the first time in 8 years, we increased the summer co-ordinator's wage from \$16/hour to \$18/hour. Though the employee was not available full-time until July, the increased wage actually put us slightly over the \$8,000 cost estimated for the job in our original budget.
- In actual financials for 2019, total payroll expenses were \$3,000 less than budgeted. As explained previously, this was due to fewer hours for the GRS manager; power outages and school closures further reducing work hours; and less casual staff than anticipated.
- We increased the amount of our low income program subsidy - GabRec Access - from a maximum of \$50 per person/per season, to \$100. We had 12 families and a total of 22 kids and adults utilize program subsidies in 2019. We were eventually able to double the original \$1000 budget to \$2,000, due to almost \$1,000 in one-time donations from the community.
- The purchase of office and program equipment not in our original budget included a new computer, and an AED machine. To our knowledge, GES is the only school in SD68 without one. As GRS is the main community user of the school, this acquisition was felt to be an important safety measure.
- Total program revenue estimates were 10% less than budgeted. As explained under programs notes, this was due to considerably less program revenue from adult programs.
- Paypal fees were included in bank and service charges in the original budget. No longer administering kayak programs reduced our online (paypal) charges.
- Though original budget figures were based on both 2017 and 2018 actuals, and best projections for 2019, there were modest differences in actuals for 2019. Overall, general and administrative expenses came in at 5% over the \$42,140 figure in the budget.

## **Grants**

- Grants-in-aid were awarded to: People for a Healthy Community; Gabriola 1<sup>st</sup> Scouts group; Gabriola Arts Council; Gabriola Dragonboat Society; Gabriola Chamber Choir and Ensemble; Island Futures/Gabriola Bike Club; Gabriola Lands and Trails Trust. A grant to the Sambattical Samba group was not claimed.

## **Parks**

- The long time custodian for Rollo McClay Community Park retired in October, 2019. The job is largely dormant until Spring, when ball season re-starts. The position will be filled in 2020.
- The skate park steering group, with several GRS board members included, retired their fundraising campaign for the skate park area at Huxley park, after successfully achieving the community based funding amount required by the RDN. This was due to the RDN having to delay initiation of the project's completion, beyond the anticipated start date of 2020.
- GRS sponsored the Nature Kids program, based entirely outdoors in RDN parks. With permission from the RDN, the program was held in both the 707 and Joyce Lockwood community parks.
- We were advised by RDN parks that the portable building at Rollo McClay park is nearing the end of it's useful life. It is a valuable asset, used for much needed storage and program space that is not available anywhere else. GRS strongly indicated we wish to pursue replacement options.