

Outdoor Play at Findlay Community Centre

Halifax Regional Municipality, Nova Scotia

RATIONALE FOR INITIATIVE:

- There is a need for innovative ways to promote unstructured/loose parts play and connecting to nature
- Staff wanted to create opportunities beyond existing programming
- The mandatory closures and restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have presented many challenges, both for recreation staff and community members. Children and families continued to utilize the community center property as a safe place to socialize and be physically active.
- Given restrictions around indoor gathering limits, enhancing the outdoor spaces was ideal

POPULATION SERVED:

- Children and families; primarily children aged 5-13 years old

PROJECT COMPONENTS:

- The mural painting/placemaking project at the Findlay Community Center has been used to host community outdoor movies for the past 3 years.
- Offered exclusively outdoor summer day camps at Shubie Park
- Sunday afternoon open play project at Findlay started in October 2020
- Installed an outdoor basketball court after youth requests and community consultation
- Initiated harm reduction strategies by setting up barriers in unused parking lot space to increase outdoor play spaces
- Submitted grant application for outdoor concrete ping pong table
- Arranged pylons in the parking lot dividing up paved areas to support diversified play

FINANCES:

- Total cost for basketball court \$21k. Funded by HRM parks and area councillor
- No fees for participants
- Applications to Community Health board and possibly Communities, Culture and Heritage

EVALUATION:

- No formal evaluation
- Basketball, ground hockey and bicycle lessons are popular activities
- Many families and young children use playground and large green space
- Youth from outside the community are accessing the space and participating
- Busiest times are after school during the school year, and throughout the day and evening during summer
- Wait lists for outdoor day camps and documented interest for future outdoor programming

SUCCESS FACTORS:

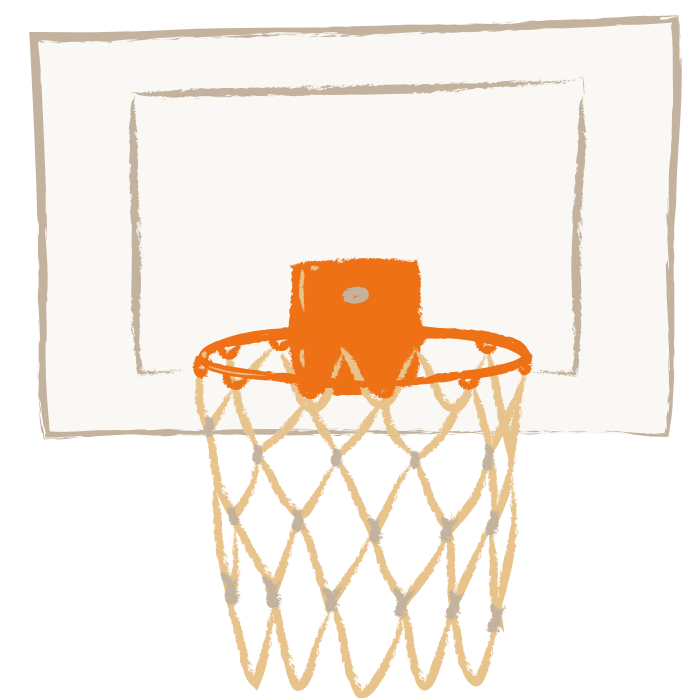
- Having an enthusiastic and knowledgeable champion like Scott in place
- HRM staff knowledge of resources and funding opportunities
- Coordinated efforts across multiple internal HRM departments

CHALLENGES:

- Liability and insurance regulations

WHATS NEXT:

- Snow day activities
- Sustainability



FURTHER INFORMATION: SCOTT PENTON PENTONS@HALIFAX.CA