

Baumb, Nelly

From: Kyle Heller <kyleeheller@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, June 14, 2020 8:08 PM
To: Council, City
Subject: Letter : Teen Program Funding

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To the Esteemed City Council of the City of Palo Alto:

What currently faces us as a community is nothing short of a malstrom of poorly-timed coincidences and unfortunate accidents - in the coming months and potentially years, we are likely to be battered by recession, unemployment, and loss on a nearly unprecedented scale. Undoubtedly, we will be forced to cut spending in order to match the unfortunate loss in revenue we are slated to be matched by, and I'm not going to dodge this or attempt to paint a picture of a peachy-perfect world where things are not limited by expense or income. It's an unfortunate situation we find ourselves in, and I do not envy your job of making the difficult decisions required to keep our city running and to wisely subdivide the limited funds in a system that, simply put, cannot exist in its current state with a diminished incoming cash flow. The task ahead of you is certainly difficult, and will inevitably require some part of our city to take a hit in order to balance the budget, but I beseech of you to hear me out and use this as a form of public opinion to better guide your choice.

To make it clear, I understand that not everything will be salvageable after the budget cuts. I will not pretend like non-essential public services like the entertainment programs surpass the importance of departments like HHS or the Fire Department. Undoubtedly, funds will have to be properly managed, and obviously the non-essential services will be forced to take some hit in order to serve the greater good, but I ask you to reconsider *how much* they are disadvantaged by. I believe that the budget cuts to programs such as Cubberly's MakeX makerspace, the Palo Alto Teen Arts Council, and the Palo Alto Children's Theatre - while considerably better compared to an outright cancellation of these programs - still needs to be mitigated in order to better preserve these programs.

If it was not clear already, the exigence of me writing to you is found in a simple matter - as a teenager who will shortly be leaving in the coming years for college, I find myself in the unique position of someone who has experienced the wonders that the City of Palo Alto has to offer through its public outreach programs. But as someone who is leaving, I will likely not experience any changes brought to these programs through the budget cuts. While it would be assumed this would make me more apathetic to the changes - since I won't be around to be hindered by them, it would seem that I'm liable to not care - I can assure you it's the exact opposite. When I hear about these programs shutting down or being massively underfunded, let me be clear - I am not fighting for these to be preserved due to some misplaced sense of nostalgia or simply because I want to experience these for one last time before I outgrow them. I'm fighting for the next generation of students after me, who have not gotten a chance to experience these wonderful contributions that the city provides to the community. I am championing the children who have never gotten the chance to experience the joy of 3D printing something of their own design, of painting and erecting sets for a show, of experiencing the joys of acting on stage, or of meeting with their friends somewhere to enjoy small talk and the finer points of interaction.

I am championing the generation who are too young to know what they are missing out on, or are just beginning to become acquainted with these systems. While I understand that, as Council members, your job lies in serving the best interests of this community, I'd like to remind you that all actions taken in this day and age will not only affect the youth of this community *now*, but in years to come. An investment into the right areas of these programs is not an investment into the present, but an investment into the future. You find yourselves standing at a crossroad, with the opportunity to maximize the good done in the now, or maximize the public good in the future.

While the popular conception is that there are no services to be provided from these organizations while both shelter-in-place and social distancing are active, this could not be any further from the truth. Granted, some day-to-day operations of these groups *will* be severely hindered - obviously, the PACT would not be able to pack houses for its shows like it used to, and MakeX - with sawdust shavings and laser-cutting fumes - would not be the greatest place for those avoiding respiratory issues. But the misconception that these services are not capable of still serving a public good requires urgent

correction. As I've heard through friends and associates within and around the Children's Theatre, they are still managing to teach dance classes and acting classes online via Zoom, and the children are still capable of being entertained and enlightened even while confined to their homes - especially when confined to their homes - in a public service that has managed to provide a service that no others could while pre-school and daycare centres are closed. The Teen Arts Council has managed to provide escapes and getaways from the dreariness of lock-in by hosting Game Nights and Open Mics in formats that perfectly fit the online presences we have been subjugated to by this Virus. And, although not currently active, with time I'm sure that the MakeX community could discern a way to continue to service the community - obviously with mandatory mask-usage, but also perhaps via sign-ups to use the space or even virtual usage - such as no-contact 3D printing where the files are sent virtually and staged for an easy pickup once completed.

Make no mistake, these services provide an essential service to the community - especially during a time when we are itching from cabin fever and are looking for ways to relieve our boredom and stress from the tyranny of staying at home with our family. They have adapted rather quickly and are capable of serving this community in a time when civic programs and communal togetherness are needed more than ever. Our community desperately needs these services in order to entertain, to captivate, to teach, and to empower us with the skills needed for lives. While I could speak about the life skills that theatre has taught me in the nine-and-a-half years I've been attending the Children's Theatre, I'm sure you've heard it one thousand times before, and so I'll cut the cliché. My point is simply that these aren't programs that are some superficial investment in keeping the people mildly amused - they serve a real, social purpose that we need now more than ever.

We are facing a time when children are becoming more and more distant from each other due to social media. While I'm sure I could play the oft-used "Screenagers" card and turn this into a social examination on our incessant need to distract ourselves, I'd rather focus on the real good these programs do for our city. In a time when the country needs unification more than ever, I'd say these organizations are needed desperately. I can count on one hand the amount of friends and associates I've made through contributions such as the Fire Department or Police Department, but I can't even begin to explain the scores of people I have had the personal pleasure of meeting through these programs (obviously the comparison is a little unfair, but the point stands). These programs allow us to connect with people we wouldn't otherwise connect with, to broaden our horizons, and to learn to come together as a group. To remove or lessen these staples of our community would be to doom future generations to a more limited selection of activities and people they can perform.

These are community programs that we are dealing with. Not because they are intended for the community, but because they *build* a community around them. I'm sure you are familiar with the national motto, *E Pluribus Unum* - "Out of many, we are one" - it couldn't be more applicable here. The letters you are receiving from concerned citizens and students aren't some motley band of teenagers loosely rallying behind a small organization - they're from a community that is railing and rallying in an attempt to save the very things that formed it and brought it together. We aren't separate students who are each writing on our own to protect some pet cause - we are fighting for every foot, every inch we can to preserve the systems that brought us together, that gave us lives to live, that gave us purpose and gave us each other. We need these programs just as much as we need the fire department or janitorial services.

I understand the difficulty of the decision that faces you. You may be tempted to simply say "we're still funding them, just less so" and call it a day. You may think that funding these programs partially will suffice.

Every member of these programs is as much a member of the community as the brilliant young minds the programs produced. I've on countless occasions leaned on members of the Children's Theatre staff when I needed assistance in Letters of Recommendations, and I've had the pleasure of serving with them on internship assignments that gave me *tangible job experience* over the summer. You would be hard pressed to present to me a single staff member I haven't worked with or talked to, and one I wouldn't call a positive influence, adult mentor, or friendly face. The idea of any of them being removed from the equation that made me the person I am today is a concept that brings me on the verge of tears as I write this letter. They are hardworking, honest, caring individuals who have each contributed to these programs, who are each as essential to it as the children themselves, and who have put their hearts and souls into the jobs they have. If, for all their years of loyalty and dedication to these programs, they are rewarded with being given the slip at the first sign of trouble, I would call the system harsh and unfeeling; uncaring towards those who have given their all to serving a community that, when the time came, couldn't support them when they needed it most.

I understand that it would normally be customary to dictate the many services that these programs have granted me; to list the shows that I've participated in or the projects I've worked on, and to give a list of all the things this community has given me. To be frank, I think that's a little misguided. It's a fallacy to assume that the 14 shows that I've participated in at the Children's Theatre, the six projects I've produced at MakeX, and the 7 events I've attended at the Teen Arts Council are all that they've provided to me. The atmosphere, the people, the experiences, and the memories are all easily far more valuable than any monetary value or return produced by the shows or the investments by the council. They say you can't buy happiness, but if the money provided was really what allowed me to make such great friends and have such a good time, I'd say they were wrong. These programs are a fundamental part of who I am, and what I've been able to do. The idea of them being diminished in any capacity is a thought that shakes me to my very core, and the idea that a child in the coming days may never have the chance to experience what I did is a deeply disturbing thought. I'm not someone who is moved by many things, but the realization of how much these programs have served me, of how much they've contributed to my life, and how much I'll never be able to repay the people who served me in my formative years is bringing me to tears. The realization of how much I took these for granted and how they've managed to mold me into the person I am today, to give me memories and experiences I've never really understood the magnitude and impact until now, retrospectively, is deeply and profoundly moving. I would be a different person if it were not for these programs. I wouldn't be *me*.

I urge you to continue funding these programs as much as possible. I understand that keeping things the way they are now is impossible and I understand the difficult decisions that you will have to make in the coming years to balance the checkbooks and serve our community for the best in the coming years. But investing in these programs is investing in the future of so many children's lives, and produces people like me at the end, produces people like some of my best friends and closest confidants, and serves them for life. I urge you to preserve as much funding for these organizations as possible. This is not an investment in a program. This is an investment in the community. *Our community*.

I feel sorry that you have to make this call in the coming days, months, and years. That you are faced with such a difficult decision and that you will undoubtedly face some flak or outcry regardless of the decision you make. But I trust you will make the right decision.

Sincerely,
Kyle Heller

Baumb, Nelly

From: Joseph Hirsch <jihirschpa@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, June 12, 2020 10:52 AM
To: Council, City
Cc: O'Kane, Kristen
Subject: New PAUSD-CPA Lease Agreement re: Cubberley

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I sent the following this morning, but am not sure it was received, so I'm sending it again.

Joe Hirsch

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Mayor Fine, Vice Mayor Dubois and Council Members:

The Cardiac Therapy Foundation of the Midpeninsula (CTF), a cardiac rehabilitation program now operating under its program name of HeartFit For Life, is in our 50th year of continuous operation in Palo Alto since our inception at the Ross Road YMCA in 1970-1971.

After many years at the Terman JCC, CTF has been renting continuously at Cubberley since January 2003, first under the auspices of the JCC and for the past 10 years or so directly from the City. Our rental spaces (G5, G8 and Gym B) are listed in the definition of the rented Premises that are covered by the new Lease Agreement and are shown on the map of Exhibit B (Premises) attached to the Lease Agreement.

With the City's continuing support we hope to continue our mission of helping people with cardiovascular disease (or risk factors for cardiovascular disease) for many years to come.

Accordingly, we urge you to approve the new PAUSD-CPA Lease Agreement for the Cubberley site, which comes before you for your formal approval on June 15th.

Thank you, in advance, for the City's continuing support of the Cardiac Therapy Foundation, for which we are extremely grateful, and all of the other Cubberley tenants who will continue to have space, as many have had in the past, on the Cubberley site. That is very meaningful to all of us, and the people we serve throughout Palo Alto and the community at large.

Joe Hirsch
Georgia Avenue, Palo Alto
Cardiac Therapy Foundation ex-officio Board Member

Baumb, Nelly

From: Kenneth Dauber <kdauber@pausd.org>
Sent: Sunday, June 14, 2020 2:37 PM
To: Council, City
Subject: Error in Cubberley item on your June 15 agenda

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Dear City Council members,

I write to correct an error in your June 15 agenda item regarding the lease agreement between the City and PAUSD. The City Manager states, in his executive summary, that:

"Due to the negative impacts to the City's budget from the events surrounding COVID-19 **and the request by PAUSD to retain portions of Cubberley**, a new lease for Cubberley has been negotiated to reduce the City's use of the premises and the corresponding cost, while a new lease for the Extended Day Care sites has been created to extend the existing terms through the 2021-2022 school year" (emphasis added).

However, there was no request from PAUSD to the City to retain portions of Cubberley for the district's use. The Board of Education discussed the lease agreement at two public meetings. At both of those meetings Superintendent Austin stated that the decision to reduce the scope of the lease agreement was entirely at the request of City staff. At no point did the district ask the City to give up any of the space it leases at Cubberley. If you approve the amended agreement and the City does vacate space at Cubberley, I expect that the district will make use of some of it for educational purposes -- but that's in the nature of trying to make lemonade out of lemons.

In addition to the question of fact, I thought it important to correct the record in the light of the City Manager's statement, under the "Policy Implications" subhead, that "[a]mending the Lease Agreement at Cubberley Community Center is consistent with policies and programs in the Comprehensive Plan promoting City-PAUSD collaboration and the effective provision of community services." I'm not in a position to evaluate the City's policy tradeoffs, but while I think the district has been forthcoming in meeting the City's desire to cut back community services at Cubberley, I wouldn't say that the decision stems from our collaboration.

I'll also note that I'm writing on my behalf, and not on behalf of the Board of Education.

Best regards,
Ken Dauber
Trustee, Palo Alto Unified School District

Baumb, Nelly

From: Jeremy Erman <jeremy_erman@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, June 14, 2020 8:57 PM
To: Shikada, Ed; Clerk, City; Administrative Services; CSD; leConge Ziesenhenne, Monique
Cc: Council, City
Subject: Please discuss Cubberley earlier in the evening

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Dear City Manager Ed Shikada, City Staff, and City Council

I do not understand why the discussion of the proposed Cubberley Community Center lease is the second-to-last item on the City Council meeting agenda for June 15. This is a major issue which the Council has not discussed yet, and it is being shoe-horned in at the end of the meeting.

I urge you to move this item earlier in the evening, or call a special meeting just to discuss Cubberley.

City staff is supposed to follow Council's directives, not take matters into their own hands; yet your report to the Council on Cubberley says you have already sent eviction notices to the affected tenants, even though the Council has not discussed or voted on the new lease. You have apparently not even identified who these tenants are to the public or City Council.

This is outrageous and cruel.

The entire plan to divide Cubberley is the creation of City staff, yet your report to the Council misleadingly makes it sound as if it was partly prompted by a request from PAUSD:

"Due to the negative impacts to the City's budget from the events surrounding COVID-19 and the request by PAUSD to retain portions of Cubberley, a new lease for Cubberley has been negotiated to reduce the City's use of the premises and the corresponding cost, while a new lease for the Extended Day Care sites has been created to extend the existing terms through the 2021-2022 school year."

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?t=69053.63&BlobID=77073>

There was NO request from PAUSD to "retain portions of Cubberley" until City staff said they wanted to stop leasing the whole site. PAUSD was happy with the old arrangement and wanted it to continue. I have that in writing from multiple members of the School Board, so if City staff cannot stomach taking responsibility for their decisions, I advise you to tear up this terrible lease and apologize to the community for this poor decision which removes funding for PAUSD when it is most needed, and locks in a divided Cubberley through 2024, years after other proposed coronavirus cuts are intended to be in effect,

Thank you,
-Jeremy Erman

Baumb, Nelly

From: Lanie Wheeler <hswdw14@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 15, 2020 3:05 PM
To: Council, City
Subject: Cubberley Lease

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

I understand that you will be discussing the extension of the Cubberley Lease (and Extended Child Care agreement) this evening. I apologize for not being able to attend in person. Hence these written comments.

I also apologize that I have not followed this issue from the beginning and, therefore, did not make my sentiments known to the PAUSD Board of Trustees prior to their adoption of the agreements.

In short, I am terribly disappointed in the direction of both of these items although I will direct my comments tonight to the Cubberley lease portion. We have worked as a community, both City and School District to keep the Cubberley site in public usage to benefit our shared citizens. Cubberley has housed numerous nonprofit organizations which have served adults and especially children for decades, nonprofits that would not be able to deliver their services anywhere near our community without this affordable home. To ignore this reality and be satisfied with the statement that staff is looking for new accommodations is truly disappointing. I have had contact with one of those tenants and as far as they know at this point, two weeks prior to their eviction, they have nowhere to go but out of business. You should not be complicit in these evictions unless you do have space identified into which these tenants can move.

We are also past the point in time where the City and the School District formally pledged to work together to propose and hopefully adopt a plan for long term joint use of the property. Now it seems we are further apart rather than closer to the finish line on that project. COVID 19 is not and should not be used as the excuse to sweep the years of planning away.

The mathematics of tonight's action may look good on the City's ledger; maybe not so good on the School District's. Fundamentally we are the same community and the price to maintain Cubberley in public usage will be borne by virtually the same citizens. I would say to you...and the PAUSD...work harder, work together.

Lanie Wheeler