

TO: PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

FROM: COMMUNITY SERVICES

DATE: September 29, 2015

SUBJECT: Summer Camp On-line Registration Process

RECOMMENDATION

CSD will be redesigning the summer camp registration process to include an online registration option for customers, permanently replacing, "The Draw." This report details the new procedure, and the reasons for the change, for the Commission's review and feedback.

BACKGROUND

Currently, the first day that a Palo Alto resident has the opportunity to register for a summer camp is through The Draw. To participate in The Draw, residents must submit completed registration forms to front desks at community centers, JMZ, or the Art Center by a certain date. (If residents miss the deadline to submit registration forms for The Draw, they must wait until a week after The Draw to register for summer camps.) Those registration forms are then compiled, randomized, and re-distributed to staff to process manually on the day of "The Draw." All three community centers close to the public on the day of The Draw to allow all staff resources to be allocated to processing the registration forms, troubleshooting the "problem file," and mailing out receipts. Customers receive mailed receipts within 3-5 business days that confirm whether or not their child got into the summer camp of their choice. While The Draw served a purpose for many years by eliminating long lines while maintaining equity and access for all residents, in this day of technology and expectations of immediate notification, staff and customers feel that the process is due for an upgrade.

In February of 2013, CSD upgraded their e-commerce system from CLASS to Active Net, a more robust system that provides a full service customer portal with a number of online options, and comprehensive registration, facility, membership, and reporting modules for staff. The upgrade in technology, tools and online options available to the customer, combined with staff desire to be more efficient in delivering services, contributed to the decision to update the summer camp registration process.

THE DATA

The City of Palo Alto's Summer Camp and Aquatics Season is the busiest and highest registration period taking in 5,208 registrations in 2015 and over \$1.2 million in revenue. Of the 5,208 registrations 2,293 or 44% of them came in through 'The Draw.' Of the remaining registrations taken in during Summer Camp and Aquatics registration season, 77% of them were done online.

Throughout an entire year (sample period of August 2014 through August 2015), the Community Services Department took in 15,556 registrations. Deducting 'The Draw' registrations, which can only be done in-person, 75.8% of all registrations were completed online. Our community is comfortable with utilizing our online registration system and actually prefers to register online when given the option.

To further validate our assumption that customers want an online option for summer camp registration, we sent an online survey out to everyone with an email address on file who had registered for an activity during our Summer Camp and Aquatics Season. The survey was emailed to 2,211 customers and 208 responded, a response rate of 9.4%. The survey asked nine different questions around online vs. in

person registration, including when they prefer to register for a summer camp, and what a good summer camp registration experience might look like. A summary of highlights from the survey is below (see complete results in Attachment A):

When asked about online or in person registration, an overwhelming 94.6% responded that they would prefer to register for activities online. Of those who filled out the survey, 88% had registered online through Active Net and 75% said their experience was a good one.

Additionally, if CSD went to an online registration process for summer camp, 62% would prefer it to open on a weekday and 37.5% on the weekend. If registration was only in person, 62% would prefer it to open on the weekend and 38% on a weekday.

Respondents also indicated when they would prefer summer camp registration to open and March was ranked the highest at 31% followed by April (23.6%) and February (19.4%).

We asked customers to rank their priorities, #1 being most important, when registering for summer camps:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	Score
Online vs. In-Person	40.63% 65	21.25% 34	11.88% 19	11.25% 18	6.88% 11	8.13% 13	160	4.53
Personal assistance with summer camp planning (concierge service)	8.81% 14	6.29% 10	4.40% 7	4.40% 7	18.24% 29	57.86% 92	159	2.09
Making sure child is signed up with siblings or friends	15.82% 25	13.29% 21	15.82% 25	22.15% 35	24.05% 38	8.86% 14	158	3.48
Immediate notification of registration success or waitlist status	16.97% 28	33.33% 55	24.85% 41	16.36% 27	4.85% 8	3.64% 6	165	4.30
alert for time/date conflicts in schedule	2.58% 4	7.10% 11	16.13% 25	29.03% 45	32.90% 51	12.26% 19	155	2.81
Convenience of process (time/date/location)	24.28% 42	20.81% 36	23.12% 40	12.14% 21	10.98% 19	8.67% 15	173	4.09

We also sent a survey out to neighboring cities to identify common summer camp registration practices in the industry. A total of 12 cities responded (see complete results in Attachment B) and of those who responded:

- 90% open registration online and in person at the same time. Of the two cities that did not, one of them does not have online registration capabilities; the other opens online registration at midnight and in-person registration at 8am the same day.
- 82% feel that their customers prefer online registration to in person registration.
- 33% open registration in February, and 33% open registration in March.
- 54% open registration on a Monday

ANALYSIS

The data from the survey clearly indicates that our customers are ready for an online option when registering for a summer camp. Our current process, The Draw, does not adequately address the top three priorities our customers have for a summer camp registration process: online, immediate notification, and convenience. We also researched the common issues customers experience with summer camp registration to ensure the new process will address those issues. They include:

- Being able to register a sibling or friend for the same camp
- Educating customers about optimal use of online registration module (creating wish lists, etc.)
- Avoiding long lines
- Providing age exceptions
- Educating staff and customers about the new process
- Equal access
- Online registration functionality (high volume capabilities, etc.)

By considering the data and the potential challenges of moving to an online and in-person summer camp registration process, we created the following components to support the new summer camp registration process: Education Campaigns, Active Net Functionality, and Day of Logistics.

EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS

Customers Education - Staff will offer summer camp registration workshops online and in person for customers in the months leading up to the first day of summer camp registration. Customers will be able to set an appointment to meet with a Camp Concierge who will teach them how to set up a Wish List in their account, and walk them through the steps of registering for camps from the Wish List (this is the quickest, easiest way to register for an activity online). Staff will also conduct targeted outreach to previous Draw participants by mail, email, and phone so that they are aware of the new process and prepared for the change. Staff will load screen shots and video clips on the cityofpaloalto.org/enjoy and [/enjoyonline](http://cityofpaloalto.org/enjoyonline) page, complete with a Frequently Asked Questions and Registration Checklist section, similar to Chicago Park District (see <http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/programs/registration-checklist/http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/programs/program-registration-faqs/>). Staff will also create professionally designed packets and Enjoy ads for the Education Campaign and will include a hands-on, interactive Wish List Workshop during the Summer Camp Registration Fair.

Staff Education – The Admin Team will create a workshop to walk staff through the process. All staff will receive training on the FAQ's and have a script that they can refer to when answering customer's questions. The Business Analyst will also meet with Programmers to set Active Net Best Practices for class entry to prevent errors in activities leading to registration issues (such as expanding the age range for camps that they know they would make age exceptions for).

ACTIVE NET FUNCTIONALITY

- Active Net now allows system administrators to customize the age range for each grade, so customers will not receive registration errors when they try to register their child for an activity with the appropriate grade.

- Registering children & friends together for same camp: Active Net allows account owners to add non-family members to their account, but if they do this, they must make sure the primary and emergency contact fields are appropriately filled out.
- High Volume – System Administrators can set “Peak Volume Periods” for periods that will have at least 60 transactions per minute. Reports module will not work during Peak Volume Periods.

DAY OF LOGISTICS

Customers will be able to register in one of two in-person registration sites, Lucie Stern (North PA) and MPCC (South PA). On-site staff will include at least 24 employees (activity supervisors and front desk personnel), 12 in each location, to assist customers with registration needs. Each Community Center will set up a Registration Center to include multiple registration desks, as well as computer station/s for online registration for community members who do not have access at home. In case of long lines, and to minimize processing time, staff will be assigned to greet customers in line, making sure that they have the forms they need, and answering any questions that can be addressed before getting to the registration table. Staff will also be assigned to answer phones and monitor email inboxes. An online chat function is being investigated. Registration sites will open at 7am, for best availability for working parents.