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Upper Palmetto YMCA – Camp Cherokee

Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Grant Summary

The Upper Palmetto YMCA's branch, Camp Cherokee, received funding from South Carolina's Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management towards the new construction of a Recreational Hall facility. The Recreational Hall facility project has focused on improving accessibility, inclusivity, fostering partnerships, and generating sustainable revenue, while adhering to project timelines. This project focuses on benefiting the public, enhancing community engagement, providing access to facilities and programs and promoting the natural and cultural heritage of South Carolina.

Success Measures:

Project Timeline Adherence –

Throughout the duration of the grant project, ensuring project timeline adherence has been a top priority for the Upper Palmetto YMCA . As previously stated, the Recreational Hall facility project aims for completion by the end of August 2024. The Upper Palmetto YMCA has worked diligently with general contracting company, Morgan Construction, and established a construction timeline noting this time of completing. We are pleased to report that all project benchmarks and milestones have been successfully met, including all program enhancements on schedule as well. All parties have ensured minimal disruption to operations and maximum utilization of the Recreational Hall facility construction. Again, these steps have been measured by detailed project planning, regular monitoring and adjustments, effective resource management, stakeholder communication and budget utilization.

Accessibility and Inclusivity –

The Upper Palmetto YMCA and Camp Cherokee continue to prioritize enhancing accessibility and inclusivity within our facilities and programs. The Recreational Hall project allows for our program to further these enhancements by making tremendous strides towards improving both of these areas. Early on in the grant project, accessibility and inclusivity assessments were conducted, which identified areas needing improvement to better accommodate individuals of all abilities. Through these assessments, the Upper Palmetto YMCA and Camp Cherokee were able to determine specific infrastructure enhancements including accessible pathways, bathrooms and program spacing, improving signage, introducing adaptive programming equipment, and inclusive programming. With the completion of the Recreational Hall facility, YMCA Camp Cherokee will expand program offerings to be inclusive to diverse audiences – including benefits to the public.





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More inclusive programming includes specific activities and events that meet the needs of various abilities, experiences and backgrounds, which will promote a sense of belonging for all participants. In addition, the Recreational Hall project further enhances existing programs at YMCA Camp Cherokee, such as our Resident Summer Camp, A+ Scholarship, Environmental Education and Conference and Retreat programs. These programs foster a supportive environment to assist in identifying and recruiting youth and adults in our local communities who may historically face barriers with traditional outdoor programs. Through increased accessibility and inclusion efforts, YMCA Camp Cherokee has seen increased results in participation and increased enrollment of individuals within underserved households in our local communities. In addition, YMCA Camp Cherokee has reported improved satisfaction through participants that utilize the facilities and programs. YMCA Camp Cherokee has a strong sense of those that have been involved with our programs for many years and their excitement for the much needed facility improvements. The Upper Palmetto YMCA and YMCA Camp Cherokee again stay committed to promoting accessibility, inclusivity and a sense of belonging to all participants.

Partnerships and Collaborations -

In conjunction with improved accessibility and inclusivity, the Upper Palmetto YMCA and YMCA Camp Cherokee have pursued partnerships within the community to enhance our project and community impact. YMCA Camp Cherokee has established strategic partnerships with local non-profit and community organizations. These partnerships have allowed YMCA Camp Cherokee to expand program and impact efforts. The Recreational Hall facility project includes not only large indoor flex program space, but a new health center space for camp nurses. One of YMCA Camp Cherokee's top partnerships is with Camp LUCK, which is an overnight resident camp program who serves campers specifically with congenital heart diseases and defects. The new health center space will also assist Camp LUCK with their accessibility and inclusive offerings to their camper and staff populations. Since YMCA Camp Cherokee is located in Kings Mountain State Park, we have established a direct partnership with the SCPRD department and are working towards more collaborative partnerships within the State Park system. Lastly, YMCA Camp Cherokee has established partnerships with local school districts through the Environmental Education and A+ Scholarship programs. Local schools take advantage by sending students to YMCA Camp Cherokee to learn nature based learning opportunities that match state curriculum standards. Also, school districts have assisted YMCA Camp Cherokee in assisting with identifying and recruiting participants. Through these partnerships and other collaborations, YMCA Camp Cherokee has established joint initiatives, which has allowed the opportunity to share resources and mutually benefit many organizations in the local communities.

Revenue Generation -

With the Recreational Hall project, YMCA Camp Cherokee has focused on implementing strategies to generate sustainable revenue through diversified revenue sources.





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Through partnerships, membership and program fees and community events, YMCA Camp Cherokee has established increased financial and program sustainability. One main area of focus throughout the project has also been the increased amount of visitors to not only YMCA Camp Cherokee, but neighboring Kings Mountain State Park as well. This goal was set forth to not only ensure increased revenue generation for the YMCA, but for the State Park with increased day pass, visitor and program fees as well. We believe that these efforts not only provide a mutually beneficial partnership, but also aide in benefitting the public and residents of South Carolina. All programs (overnight resident summer camp, Environmental Education, and Conference & Retreat) have already seen an increased revenue with the construction of the Recreational Hall and we project for that trend to not only continue once the facility is completed, but to also be sustainable for the foreseeable future as well. In addition, increased revenue generation has also ensured the sustainability of our programs and community support.

Goals Accomplished:

Project Timeline -

YMCA Camp Cherokee will accomplish the proposed project construction timeline deadline of August 2024. Again, this goal has been accomplished by minimal delays and ensuring that all project benchmarks have been completed on time.

Financial -

The Upper Palmetto YMCA and Camp Cherokee are still currently raising funds for the Recreational Hall facility project. However, this fundraising effort is simply to offset costs/ funding provided to Camp Cherokee by the Upper Palmetto YMCA. All funding has been secured without financing from any banking institutions or other financial options.

Public Benefit:

The Upper Palmetto YMCA and Camp Cherokee believe that the public will directly benefit from the Recreational Hall project directly in various forms. As previously mentioned, the public will benefit whether through direct programs delivered by the YMCA, Camp Cherokee, Kings Mountain State Park or SCPRT, but also through other partnerships, community events, public access and mutual initiatives.





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Examples of these partnerships include Camp LUCK, South Carolina public school districts, charter schools, Kings Mountain State Park, SCPRT, Defend the Fatherless, Catawba Mental Health, NAMI, Boys and Girls Club, etc. We believe that the public will benefit from increased access, program offerings, improved facilities, economic impact, environmental conservation and health and well-being.

The financial support and partnership by South Carolina's Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management have provided a generational improvement to our local communities and played a big role in the success. The support also represents a investment in the local communities, which will benefit the public and program participants. The improvements by assisting to provide this facility in addition to our commitment to accessibility and inclusivity, will not only increase revenue and participation, but participant satisfaction as well. We are very grateful for the opportunity to enhance our programs and offerings through this grant, and we strive to maintain our position as a leading organization for youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. With our organizational board members, key stakeholders, donors, and alumni, we guarantee that the impact of this investment provided by SCPRT will be felt for years to come and again a generational improvement to our communities and youth.

