

# City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks WOW Camping Program

## Contact Information

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## WOW Brief Overview

The Wonderful Outdoor World (WOW) goals are to introduce inner-city youth to camping and outdoor recreation through a safe and controlled experience. The Department of Recreation and Parks was the first to offer the WOW Program to the children of Los Angeles in 1995. With an emphasis on utilizing our neighborhood parks, Los Angeles WOW engaged 42 youth, boys and girls in a well rounded first time camping experience. WOW takes a core group of young people ages 8-13 through a one and one-half day camping experience within the heart of their Recreation Center. Since 1995, the WOW program has now expanded nationwide to Arizona, Colorado, Washington DC, and Utah. For the past ten years, the Los Angeles WOW Program introduced over 5360 children from 81 recreation centers to the wonders of the outdoors right in their backyards.

Participants are required to pay a \$5.00 at the initial WOW I (yearly average cost of \$250.00 per child)

The Department of Recreation and Parks currently offers 8 WOW programs annually at local recreation centers in the City of Los Angeles. This is an increase from the 6 initial WOW camp programs that began in 1995. There are over 300 inner city youth that participate in the WOW programs at local recreation facilities each year.

At each neighborhood WOW outing campers will participate in interactive instructional activities such as:

- Conservation – Caring for the environment
- Basic camping skills - Tents setup, meal preparation, basic first aid and fire safety.
- Leave No Trace "philosophy"
- Ecosystem and urban plants - Natures and its many wonders
- Fishing – Casting
- Astronomy – Wonders of the night sky
- Camp fire Safety

Each campout concludes with the campers participating in a special community service activity, such as tree planting or a clean up event to show their appreciation and respect for their community and the outdoor world. At the completion of their campout, all participants receive:

- Sleeping bag
- WOW journal
- WOW t-shirt

## WOW Goals

1. Introduce underserved children and families to nature and an overnight camping program.
2. Expose children to different environmental / outdoor experiences within the Los Angeles city limits.
3. Introduce children to variety of outdoor, environmental and conservation programs.
4. Provide children and families various outdoor and overnight experiences
5. Progression program. Children and families will participate in programs that build on skills and opportunities.

## **WOW Program**

### **1. WOW Program at Recreation Center – WOW I**

Purpose - Introduce children to overnight camping at their local recreation center. Provide participants with the equipment and skills to go camping. Provide a safe opportunity for children to learn about nature. Participate in interactive instructional activities.

- A. 42 children ages 8-14 to stay overnight at Local Recreation Center.
- B. Provide continued educational opportunities for campers (such as camping skills, outdoor cooking, environmental and animal awareness, healthy lifestyles, conservation, etc).
- C. Introduce children to overnight camping, through program and practical experiences.
- D. Introduce children to community service and stewardship through specialize projects (clean-up, tree planting and care).
- E. 8-10 campouts – overall attendance up to 420 campers.

### **2. WOW II – Oak Flat Campground and Lake Castaic**

Purpose - Provide a safe opportunity for children to learn about water and boat safety, and well as having a safe camping experience. Water activities include, instructions in kayaking, sailing, capsizing drills and swimming. Through these experiences, children will develop a sense of independence and confidence for the outdoors.

- A. Provide children an opportunity to experience overnight camping at USDA Forest Service public lands in the Angeles National Forest.
- B. Participate in a community service project.
- C. Participate in educational workshops and activities during this event.
- D. Provide children time to explore the camp site.
- E. Complete the "Children Outdoor Bill of Rights."
- E. 1 event – overall attendance up to 55 campers.

### **3. Nature Day Programs – Community Service Outings**

Purpose - Provide children and families, from previous WOW I's, opportunities for community service. Increase family and camper participation through numerous activities, such as tree planting, clean up events, and volunteer projects with alumni participants. Participate in interactive instructional activities.

- A. Participate in a community service project.
- B. Participate in educational workshops.
- C. Provide children and families free time to explore nature.
- D. Provide RAP Staff & Park Ranger support for event.
- E. 1-2 events - potential attendance: Up to 50 participants per outing.

### **4. WOW III- Desert Discovery Center and El Mirage Dry Lake Bed**

Purpose - Continue to encourage children to explore camping and nature with equipment and skills to go camping in the desert. WOW Alumni and campers from our WOW I and II Programs, are invited to a primitive weekend camping experience on public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Campers visit the Desert Discovery Center where they learn about the natural resources on our public lands through hands on instructional activities, presentations, and numerous displays.

- A. Provide children (who participated in an overnight program and community service events) an overnight camping experience on Public Lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management.
- B. Learn safety rules on off-highway vehicles.
- C. Participate in Blo-Cart activities.
- D. Participate in a community service project.
- E. Participate in educational workshops and activities during event.
- F. Provide children unstructured downtime to explore the camp site.
- G. Provide RAP Staff and Park Ranger support for the event.
- H. 1 event – overall attendance up to 50 campers.

## City of Los Angeles – Demographics

470 Square Miles (1218 km<sup>2</sup>)

4 Million People - 244 Different Languages

46% Latino; 30% white; 11% Black; 10% Asian; 3% other

63% of population annual income under \$49,999

390 Parks, 176 Recreation Centers and 7 Residential Camps in Southern California

15,700 Acres (6350 Hectares) of Open Park Space

92 Miles (148 km) of Hiking Trails

## WOW Assets - City Of Los Angeles

### Direct Assets – WOW Program

1 Full-time staff

10 Part-time staff

Program Equipment – Tents, camping gears, program supplies, etc.

Contractual Services – Programs services and rentals – vans and toilets

Perishable Supplies – Food, sleeping bags, propane, batteries, etc.

Fleet – Trailer and vehicle.

Printing Services – Flyers and poster

### In-Direct Assets – City of Los Angeles Department's Support

Department of General Services

Office of Public Services – Overnight security

Fleet services – Vehicles and repairs

Police Department (LAPD)

Senior Lead Officers – Additional patrol at facilities

Recreation and Parks

Administrative Support - General Manager, Superintendent, and additional support staff

Public Relations – Photographer, photos, press releases, etc.

Park Rangers – Interpretive Unit and Fire Suppression Unit.

Griffith Park Observatory – Night Astronomy program.

Forestry Division – Trees and Tree planting programs

Recreation Division – Facilities, and program staff (Full and part-time staff)

Maintenance Division – Ground Maintenance staff (Full and part-time staff)

Citywide Facility Repair – Construction and maintenance of equipment.

Camping Division – Facilities, vehicles, & program staff support (Full and part-time staff)

Program Partners – In-kind support

USDA Forestry Services

USDI Bureau of Land Management

The Walt Disney Company

Sponsors - Financial

National WOW