



go Play outside

FINAL REPORT 2021

ABBOTSFORD.CA/GOPLAYOUTSIDE



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INTRODUCTION

The Go Play Outside Program was initially developed leading into the Summer of 2020 as a response to the social isolation felt from restrictions of the corona-virus pandemic. The pandemic had a significant impact on mental health across our community due to increased fears, anxiety, financial stress, and increased loneliness resulting from the crisis itself as well as social distancing.

This program successfully engaged and supported residents with fun activities while following safety parameters required at that time. Go Play Outside participants provided an overwhelmingly positive response to the initial program; therefore, it was decided to continue the initiative again for the summer of 2021.

POP-UPS IN THE PARK

Go Play Outside was developed to enhance community connectedness while providing opportunities for recreating in outdoor spaces. Parks, Recreation and Culture activities were provided to not only educate but to also allow access to these services that were primarily available only at the recreation facilities.

It is the goal of this project to support self-care activities, personal development, community engagement, environmental stewardship, cultural opportunities, to bring fitness, sport and fun activities out into our parks as well as to support community connection building. The health and well-being of our community continues to be a priority of PRC along with accessibility of resources.

Go Play Outside was planned in four formats for 2021.

- Mill Lake Park Pop-Ups
- Neighbourhood Pop-Ups
- Spray Park Pop-Ups; and
- Skate Park Pop-Ups



MILL LAKE POP-UPS

This season the focus when choosing our pop up location was on creating consistency. This was achieved by hosting each Thursday at one of the Mill Lake Park playgrounds each week. Hours were adjusted based on 2020 feedback and were adjusted to run in the evening from 4pm to 7pm.

Thursday Pop-ups also included several community partners joining to provide activities including: The United Way, Abbotsford School District Early Years, Abbotsford Association for Healthy Aging, Heritage Abbotsford Society, Sema:th First Nation, Fraser Valley Regional Library and the Abbotsford Horseshoe Club.

"Everyone really enjoyed Go Play Outside. The older adults appreciated the City putting on this event and would like more events like this for them during the summer months. Our seniors liked the fact they could put the chairs in a circle and face each other and engage in more conversations. Overall the participation in the exercise equipment, an opportunity to walk around the lake, and the social interaction were the highlights after the pizza."

- Christina Ragneborg, Executive Director, Abbotsford Association for Healthy Aging

"We really enjoyed the event, and were specifically happy with the two locations we took part in. Heritage Abbotsford is always interested in participating in events like that which puts us in touch with the general public and especially with children and seniors. It's important to us that we are provided opportunities like these to drive home the message of how important culture is to a healthy, vibrant community, and to be able to make personal connections with new-to-us audiences." - Christina Reid, Executive Director, Heritage Abbotsford

Quotes from residents: "What did you like most about Go Play Outside?"

- Lots of age appropriate games/activities for families.
- The native games. Very informative
- Lots of room, activity options, good cultural diversity
- Me and my fellow seniors attended it and loved it The booths, coffee, snacks and activities were all good
- Staff are amazing! They were all engaging and super fun to hang out. My kids were shy at first but they did not want to leave. Lots of fun activities and goodies

NEIGHBOURHOOD POP-UPS

Neighbourhood Pop-Ups were hosted on weekends from 1pm to 4pm with locations including; Swensson Park, Eagle Mountain Park, Jubilee Park and Sema:th First Nation Soccer Field.

Activities included: an Obstacle Course, Scavenger Hunts, Ball Toss Games, Badminton, Drop-in Yoga, Soccer, Artist in Residence, and Culture Kits.

Staff were again encouraged to think about the quality of their interactions with the public to build connections rather than quantity of engagements.

The team was also able to move beyond the set up area and engage residents throughout the park and neighborhood to hand out sunscreen, culture kits, balls, hats and chalk.

My favourite aspect about the [GPO] program is that it's so flexible. We were able to set things up the way we thought would be the most successful and take our own initiative, which I thought was good for building our own leadership and creativity skills. - Rachel, Go Play Outside Staff

Quotes from Residents: "What did you like most about Go Play Outside?"

- Kids can play and make new friends
- Friendly staff, I am very grateful how they shared games with my kids. Emily and Hanna were super nice and energetic

 **1,700** people  **44** hours  **14** sites

SPRAY PARK POP-UPS

Together with the Go Play Outside team, Abbotsford Fire Rescue Services created Pop up Spray Parks for summer 2021 in THREE West Abbotsford locations; Swenson Park, Blue Jay Elementary School, and Harry Sayers Elementary School.

Each evening, firetrucks arrived at the community park or school parking lot with sirens and lights; then firefighters turned on hoses to transform it into a magical spray park. Other activities include giveaways of refreshing freezie treats as well as other children's games and activities. All promotions for spray parks were done through local signage and bilingual community targeted mail outs to encourage community engagement local to each site.

A total of 500 individuals attended these events over 3 hours.

Quotes from residents: "What did you like most about Go Play Outside?"

- *Lots of kids to play with for my young son*
- *Fire truck is cool! Free freezies the kids like.*
- *After covid, its really nice to be around people and getting to know them. Seeing people and kids happy is wonderful*

SKATE PARK POP UPS

The Go Play Outside team also hosted a youth focused engagement pop up at the Abbotsford Recreation Centre Skate Park. The purpose of this event was to connect with youth that frequent these spaces. Facility staff and leaders from the Abbotsford Youth Commission were invited to hand out water, freezies and focus on relationship building with the goal of making positive connections between staff and youth.

Replay Skateboard Shop joined us as well to provide music, mini skate and scooter competitions and donated several prizes for the youth participants. Their presence was a HUGE highlight for all.

Plans had included a second skate park pop up at Matsqui Recreation Centre but due to safety issues in the skate bowl with wet weather, this event was cancelled.

"We, Replay Boardshop, participated in the skate park event held at the Abbotsford Recreation Center skate park. The skate and scooter community enjoyed the event. The riders have commented, in their own way, that it was nice to have an event at the park after feeling constricted for well over a year. Everyone had a great time and I know that reaching out to these riders has the potential to build long term relationships that can completely change the path of their lives. We all like to have fun and it is great to see the City taking a keen interest in its youth!"

Our staff had a blast doing mini competitions with the skateboard and scooter riders. We know most of the kids at the park. So, to have a City sanctioned jam session is a real treat for us too."

- Greg Reinhart, Owner Replay Board Shop

"AYC really enjoyed the Go Play Outside partnership with the City of Abbotsford who coordinated and brought freezies and Replay who brought the energy and music! We especially loved the excitement and engagement from the youth when we wanted to see their best scooter or skateboard trick. It goes to show you don't need to be a skate boarder to connect with them. It was also a great opportunity to promote our Youth Centre Drop In programs to parents who didn't know there were free, staffed places for youth to hang out!"

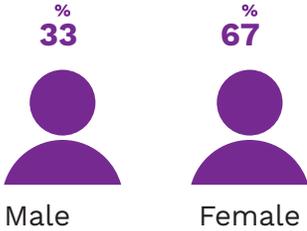
~ Alison Friesen, Supervisor of Recreation Abbotsford Youth Commission



GO PLAY OUTSIDE PARTICIPANT SURVEY RESULTS

A Go Play Outside Participant Survey was completed over the course of the summer at various park pop-ups and resulted in a total of 186 responses from participants. Our survey team attended 11 pop-ups including, Mill Lake Park Pop-Ups, Spray Park Pop-Ups and Neighbourhood Pop-Ups to ensure an accurate cross analysis of activities. By collecting data we are able to better understand the benefits of the program, the community's response to the program and areas for improvement. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with 76% of responses indicating that their overall experience was Excellent.

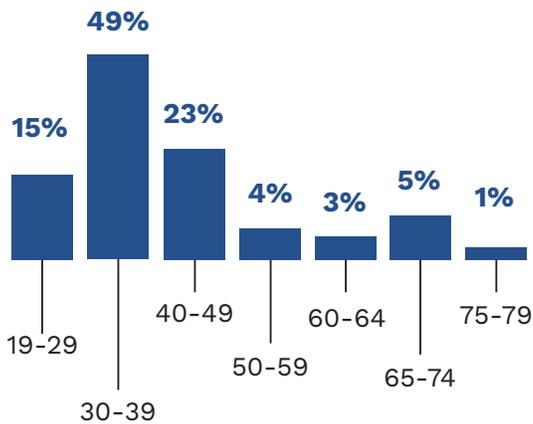
Gender



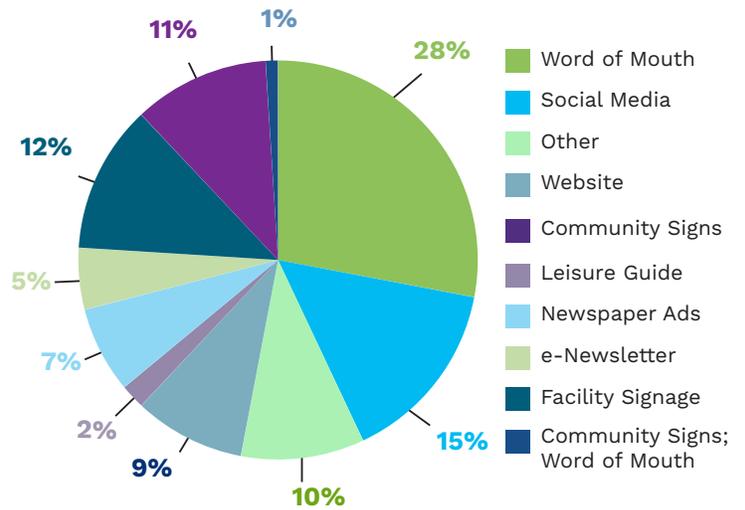
Did you plan on attending today?



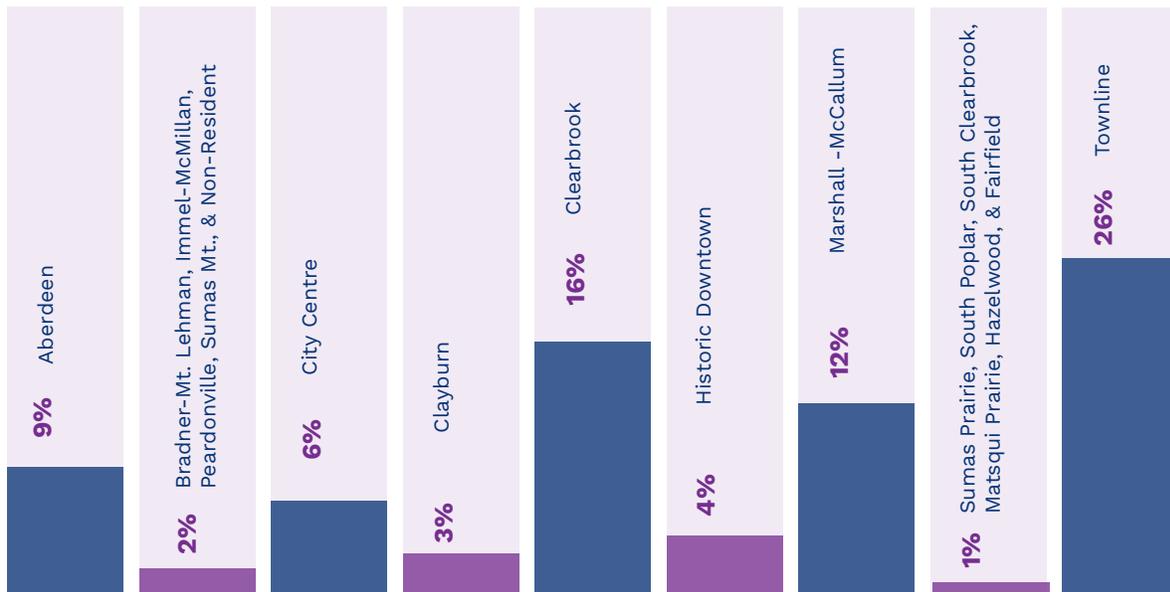
Age



How did you find us?



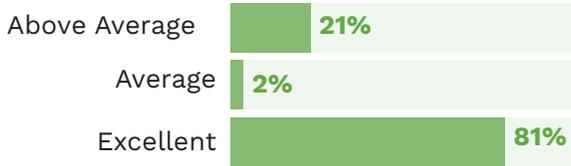
What Neighbourhood are you from?



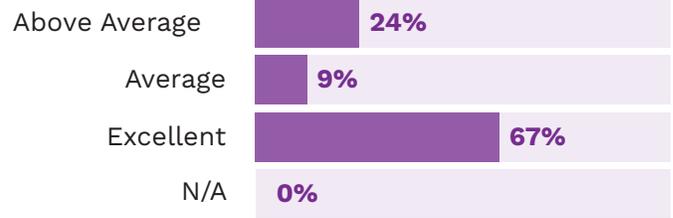
GO PLAY OUTSIDE PARTICIPANT SURVEY RESULTS

Satisfaction Level:

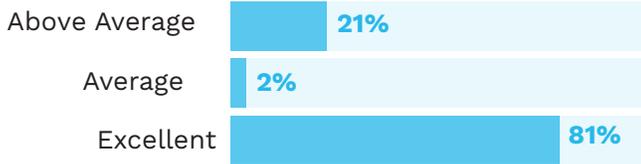
Location



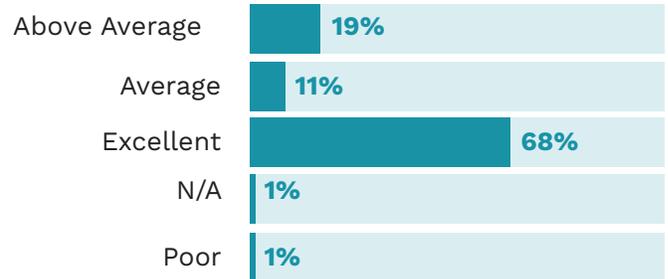
Activities



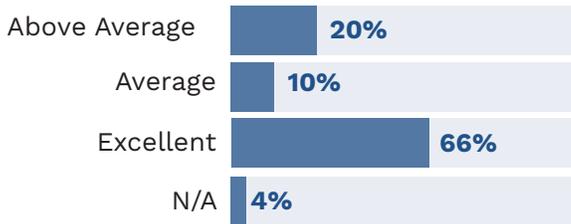
Program Staff



Equipment



Community Partners



Overall Experience



Excellent



Above Average



Average

Have you attended before?



Yes



No



Don't Know

Would you attend again?



Very Likely



Likely



Unsure

Would you recommend this?



Very Likely



Likely



Unsure

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

The Go Play Outside 2021 Artist in Residence, co-sponsored by the Abbotsford Arts Council, sought to support local culture and encourage thoughtful dialogue at the summer park pop-ups.

Emerging Artist and student, Zaira Ramirez, was the successful applicant for this year. A Venezuelan multidisciplinary visual artist, Zaira's first inspiration was her Canary artisan grandfather. Her approach explores nostalgia as a meaning of expression as she delves into the past, using history as a link in her themes. Taking stories or objects that contain inaccurate documentation, and based on that uncertainty, she creates dialogues and hypotheses with images, ultimately generating new stories based on her experiences.

This summer Zaira focused on connecting with people in our parks and learning about the birds that live near them. With her trusty bird book by her side, residents of Abbotsford were able to learn more about their avian neighbours and what this means for themselves as well as the environment.

Ramirez noted that,
"The impact this artist residency has on the community is significant as its primary focus is on conversations and interaction with people. During my stay, I saw people who needed to be listened to and who have a lot of concerns as a community. "

Connecting with the community Ramirez reflected on the impact of having cultural opportunities in accessible spaces. Two little girls commented on wanting to become artists after engaging with her and this encouraged Ramirez to get into teaching practices.

Ramirez' work will be exhibited at the Kariton Art Gallery in April 2022, along with other public spaces throughout Abbotsford.

It was also hoped that through this project, the City would be able to provide an avenue for artistic production and growth, both of which Ramirez agrees were achievable. Ramirez stated that, "...this residency gave me a lot of opportunities as an artist. I was able to experiment and improve in terms of investigation and practices." And "When I got chosen to be the artist in residence for 2021, I was so excited because after the pandemic I felt I lost interaction with people due to restrictions. This residency gives the opportunity to articulate new ways of interaction through conversations and artistic activities."

CULTURE KITS

This exciting, hands on art-making activity was developed by The Reach Gallery Museum Abbotsford. Based off of Sara Khan's exhibition "Roshni Key The Mein" (In the Fold of Light), residents were able to create their own movable puppet-creature inspired by the intricately patterned watercolour paintings. All materials were included in the kit so residents could make their artwork in the park or at home.

Bringing the Culture Kits into the parks allowed for spontaneous art making while inspiring residents to visit the current exhibition at The Reach Gallery.

In total **300 KITS** were given out at our various pop-ups.



BENEFITS AND FEEDBACK

The Go Play Outside initiative provided some new and unique challenges as well as amazing outcomes.

1 Positive Public Engagement

Not all communities have received positive feedback from the efforts they've chosen to support residents during this unprecedented time. The Abbotsford City Council's support of the forward thinking and innovative ideas of the Go Play Outside project allowed for unique engagement opportunities with residents and was without exception positively received by the community.

One moment that stood out to me personally this summer was when two siblings told me that they were at the GPO pop-up last summer at mill lake and they came back this year because they had so much fun. That made me realize how much of an impact we have on the community and that they look forward to these events. -Rachel

First of all I loved doing this! It was a safe way to give back to the community, introduce new members to what we offer and enjoy being outside. I liked the scavenger hunt and all of the chalk drawings that happened up on Eagle Mountain, reminded me of my childhood. - Wendy ARC Fitness Staff



When I thought about working GPO this summer, I didn't know that it would also help me grow as a student and as a person. I currently study Spanish and this program made me feel even more secure in my decision in studying Spanish. I was able to engage individuals who were new to Canada and give information to them. Engaging the community by meeting the 'incidirla' [Spanish word meaning to make an impact] where people are is so amazing. - Hannah, Go Play Outside Staff

2 Provide opportunities for social connections, health, well-being and self-care activities

The impacts of the COVID -19 pandemic are still being felt negatively across our community. Mental health challenges due to increased fears, anxiety, financial stress, increased loneliness resulting from the crisis itself as well as social distancing are ongoing factors. Creating opportunities for connection in our community aids in relieving this sense of isolation.

3 Continued Community Trust

Large Organizations like the City of Abbotsford are often afforded inherent trust by from the public they serve. In a time of uncertainty, it can be comforting to have access to services where trust is already established. This initiative safely engaged residents which further built on our established levels of trust.



“We felt that this year it was very important to incorporate our local Indigenous community. Training for Go Play Outside staff included an introduction to the Sema:th community with Councillor Chris Silver. Councillor Silver provided a brief history of the Sema:th people and taught us Slahal, an ancient hand game played by Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast. Councillor Silver also joined us at Mill Lake Park Pop-Up to share this game with the community. Our team also visited Sema:th to host a Neighbourhood Pop-Up. We received very positive feedback from staff and the community for including these elements.”

- Chrissy and Tara-Lynn, Go Play Outside Coordinators

Thank you for having me at the Go play outside event. I really enjoyed it. It's so amazing that we have a Seniors' Community Parks here in Abbotsford that provides free outdoor exercise equipment. I talked to lots of seniors at this event and many of them come to this park to do their exercises, they say they love it! It's fresh air, not crowded and free! It helps them stay mobile, healthy, and physically active in their communities.

I was happy to be a part of this event and be able to share my knowledge about fitness/outdoor equipment and general health/wellness. Such events help people to socialise, feel a sense of community, belonging and know that there are always help and resources in case they need it. People told me that they are very excited about such events and always wait for them. All workers there were great, very polite, open and ready to help. They provided lots of resources for people, free gifts, food and drinks. People who were there had a great time! ~ Nataliia ARC Fitness Staff

A story that contributed to my personal growth is when a girl at the skate park opened up to me about her panic attacks and we talked for a while about ways that help us in stressful situations. I thought that was helpful for me to be able to comfort people and try to relate and share my own experiences in those kinds of conversations. ~ Rachel, Go Play Outside Staff

4 Increased Exposure to Art and Culture

Culture programs, services and resources are essential to a vibrant and healthy community. Having cultural opportunities that are free and accessible allow for greater engagement and opportunities for knowledge sharing. Many residents were interested in learning more about our cultural facilities once they engaged in conversation with our Artist in Residence and were pleased to experience Culture in the park.

6 Provide Continued Fitness, Sport and Activity For All Ages

Parks, Recreation and Culture activities were provided to not only educate residents but to also allow access to these services that were previously available at the recreation facilities. By bringing these activities out into the community at no cost helps remove barriers to participation.



“We are always pleased to have the opportunity to work with PRC to share the exhibitions and programs at The Reach. The hands-on activities enrich the public’s enjoyment of our exhibitions, promote visual literacy, and are a lot of fun for kids and families. We’re grateful to work with the terrific summer team at PRC who get out to the parks to share this creative initiative in neighbourhoods across the city.

- Laura Schneider Executive Director The Reach Gallery Museum

Parks in general serve as the heart of all communities. That’s why it was natural for Abbotsford School District and our Early Years team to partner with Go Play Outside Pop-ups in the Park this summer. The feedback received from caregivers was extremely positive. Children were asking their caregivers to come every Thursday so they can pick up a new book. A Senior, that was invited for a workshop on how to use the gym in the park, came to us with questions about their grandchildren and great-grandchildren. They were excited to be able to take books home to read to them. By being a part of this event, we were able to connect with the families in our community, that we may not have had access to. We are very thankful to be a part of these events and to be able connect with caregivers and the children of our community.

- Andrea Senft, Manager of Community Partnerships and Early Learning, Abbotsford School District

I really enjoyed how we always had the support of a coordinator at every shift so that we could always have help if needed. I think that the leadership was awesome and they were so passionate about spreading awareness about culture and the programs we were offering.

- Rachel, Go Play Outside Staff

I think during my time at go play outside I grew as a person you being able to talk to others more comfortable and confidently. I this will help me in my leadership as a person and with the group of staff as well.

- Trey Go Play Outside Staff

4

Staff Development

The GO Play Outside program tasks its staff to be innovative, creative, and build on their personal development. Staff training includes a personal reflection on goal setting, strength building and personal development plans. Because of the fluidity of Go Play Outside activities, there are many opportunities for staff to stretch, grow and be challenged in building new job skills.



In partnership with:

Abbotsford Arts Council

Abbotsford Youth Commission

Abbotsford Association for Healthy Aging

Abbotsford Downtown Business Association

Haven Yoga and Wellness

Replay Board Shop

Sema:th First Nation

Abbotsford Fire Rescue Services

Abbotsford School District Early Years

Abbotsford Horseshoe Club

Fraser Valley Regional Library

Heritage Abbotsford Society

The Reach Gallery Museum

United Way

[ABBOTSFORD.CA/GOPLAYOUTSIDE](https://www.abbotsford.ca/gooutside)

