

City Council Citizen Development
and Enrichment Committee
City Council Chambers
Torrance, California

Members of the Committee:

**SUBJECT: Community Services – Proposed Marketing Plan for Cultural
Services Classes**

BACKGROUND

At the May 15, 2012 Budget Hearing, the City Council allocated \$25,000 for increased marketing efforts for classes and facilities at the Cultural Arts Center. The Community Services Department is responsible for coordinating classes at the Cultural Arts Center, and the General Services Department is responsible for renting out facilities at the Cultural Arts Center. Staff are assuming that each department will be allocated 50% or \$12,500 of these funds to increase marketing in their specific areas. This item addresses use by the Community Services Department for their half of these funds. Development of a marketing strategy by the General Services Department is also underway and will be presented jointly to Council to address the total \$25,000 budget allocated.

The Cultural Services Division of the Community Services Department, has run a very successful program of classes in a broad range of disciplines at the Cultural Arts Center for many years, including dance, music, exercise, ceramics, and fine art, for youth and adults. Although each division within the department historically has marketed their programs individually, the department has recently implemented a formalized and unified Marketing Plan to strengthen branding identity and insure consistency with information being distributed within the department.

ANALYSIS

Currently the following approaches are utilized to market classes at the Cultural Arts Center offered through the Cultural Services Division:

- Season's Guide – 68,000 printed quarterly; mailed to 63,000 households; 5,000 distributed via libraries and public counters throughout City.
- City Website - hits to Season's Guide and Class Registration Page average 4,277 visits per month.

- Fliers –Fliers are only created under special circumstances. For example, if we start a new series of classes, such as the Noon Time Exercise Classes. We will also create fliers to promote classes which need an extra push.
- Special Workshop Fliers – these are created for special workshops, such as the annual Spring Ceramics Workshop.

Within the last six months staff has started quarterly Email Blasts directed at current students and those for whom we have email addresses to notify them of upcoming enrollment dates. To date, two blasts have been sent. The first included 1,019 email addresses and the second 1,438. Analyzing the report for these Email Blasts, staff have found that the bounce rate is very low (4%); the opened rate is high (53.3% and 55.4%); and the number of times opened rate is also high (1,327 and 1,759). As the Registration Office continues to urge patrons to provide their email addresses, our current email list has grown to 1,893 and the next email blast is scheduled to go out August 14, 2012.

In order to increase the marketing efforts for classes, staff proposes to draft a Request for Proposals (RFP) to hire a Marketing Consultant. Consultant would be requested to develop a one year plan and implement these strategies with a not to exceed budget of \$12,500. It is expected that this will build on the marketing activities detailed above and expand upon them. Eligible expenses would be for their services and creation of marketing materials (both hard copies and virtual).

Staff would expect to see strategies, such as the following, which target both students who have taken classes in the past, but are not currently doing so, and new participants by:

- Creating a presence on Social Media, including Facebook, specifically for classes.
- Insuring that the City of Torrance classes be ranked high in any related Google search.
- Creating banners to be installed prominently in the City, such as on the Madrona Bridge which sees an average of 38,000 daily traffic trips or at Wilson Park, which sees an average of 60,000 daily traffic trips.
- Emailing quarterly press releases to local newspaper calendar editors prior to registration opening which announces class registration dates.
- Cold calling previous students who have previously enrolled in classes but who are no longer enrolled. The first classes targeted will be those which could accommodate more students, and those in which enrollment has recently dropped off.

ACCOUNTABILITY

In order to track the Marketing Consultant's success, staff are recommending that the following 5 classes be used to specifically track changes in attendance attributable to the Marketing Consultant:

- Ceramics I
- Zumba Gold
- Exploring Watercolor
- Circuit Training
- Tap

These classes have been selected because of one of the following reasons:

1. There is capacity in the room to increase attendance and still provide a quality experience to the customer;
2. The program is new and could benefit from increased marketing;
3. The class historically has been robust but the numbers have been declining.

Staff have collected attendance data the past 3 years of the aforementioned classes for each quarter, and have identified the average attendance per session. At the conclusion of the contract with the Marketing Consultant, staff will compare the current attendance per session on each of the classes list above with our average numbers to see what, if any, difference, was made.

Upon review by this Committee, staff will draft a Request for Proposal, to be brought before City Council for review and approval. It is staffs intent to move this forward to that a Marketing Consultant can be brought on board as soon as possible.

Respectfully submitted,



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Community Services Director

CONCUR:



LeRoy J. Jackson
City Manager