



BE HAPPIER -- FEEL GREAT!

Practiced in clinical, residential and community settings, the profession of therapeutic recreation uses treatment, education, and recreation services to help people with illnesses, disabilities and other conditions to develop and use their leisure to enhance their health, independence and well being.

Outdoor adventure activities for people with limited physical ability give participants feelings of success and improved feelings of confidence.

There is no greater opportunity for people to experience self-actualization and the spiritual renewal, creative expression, discovery and stimulation than leisure offers.

BUILD FAMILY UNITY

Family bonds are improved by the sharing of leisure time. Families that recreate together tend to be closer, more cohesive and improve their chances of staying together. This is true with both parent-child relationships and married couples.

Families are the cornerstone in promoting well-being and healthy development in children.

TAKE CARE OF LATCH KEY CHILDREN -- EDUCATE CHILDREN AND ADULTS -- PROVIDE CHILD CARE

Recent studies show disturbing trends about children who regularly come home to an empty house: higher than average drop-out rate, drug abuse, truancy and depression.

Good news for working parents! Many communities' parks and recreation agencies provide after school and summer child care.

In Fort Myers, Florida, 80% of the adolescents who enrolled and participated in the STARS (Success Through Academics and Recreational Support) program improved their grades.

CONTROL WEIGHT, LOOK BETTER, BUILD STRONG BODIES

Sports participants had significantly lower body mass index values, lower blood pressures, and lower resting pulse rates.

The physically fit person is less prone to injury, and is less likely to experience depression.

DIMINISH CHANCE OF DISEASE -- DECREASE INSURANCE PREMIUMS -- LIVE LONGER!

Childhood participation in organized fitness and sports programs helps attain higher bone density establishing a strong health base to combat osteoporosis in later life.

An estimated 66,000 U.S. deaths from coronary heart disease, colon cancer and diabetes could be prevented annually if one half of the sedentary people became active on a regular basis.

BUILD SELF-ESTEEM

When young people feel good about themselves they operate more effectively and productively in our communities, families and schools. Adventure programs teach the importance of trust, appropriate risk taking, supportive social interaction and personal challenge while creating valuable life long memories.

Leaders are trained, developed and nurtured through leisure organizations such as teen clubs, camps and programs.

REDUCE STRESS -- RELAX!

In Nationwide polls, 89% of all Americans report that they often experience high levels of stress and 59% claimed that they feel great stress at least once a week. Positive and enjoyable recreation experiences can decrease stress and psychological tensions. Leisure activities provide people with the opportunity to expel energy and emotion not being released in other aspects of their lives. Psychologists found that activities such as a walk in the woods gave a boost to the immune system that lasted two or three days. Each additional mile walked or run by a sedentary person would give him or her an extra 21 minutes of life. According to the Gallup Poll for American Health, Americans who exercised regularly were 2.5 times more likely to report that they were happier than Americans who didn't exercise at all.

PROMOTE SENSITIVITY TO CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Social interaction through recreation breaks down unfamiliarity, fear and isolation, factors associated with racism; and promotes positive contact between different ethnic groups and the broader community. The strength of a community is increased through recreation activities that allow people to share cultural and ethnic differences.

ELIMINATE LONELINESS -- CONQUER BOREDOM!

Land and water parks enhance the quality of life and contribute positively to the mental health of its citizens. Both mild and clinical depression can be reduced with activities such as water aerobics and swimming. "Active Living" is a concept that connects the mind, body and spirit in physical activity.

INCREASE COMMUNITY PRIDE -- STRENGTHEN NEIGHBORHOOD INVOLVEMENT

Community pride is generated through leisure and park facilities. When communities compare themselves to one another, eager to improve, they almost always evaluate their levels of open space, recreation facilities, and leisure program development.

REDUCE CRIME, DIMINISH GANG VIOLENCE, PROVIDE SAFE PLACES TO PLAY

Juvenile criminal activity dropped 24% in Cincinnati, Ohio during the first 13 weeks of their late night basketball program. Summer late night weekend recreation activities costing only 74 cents per person reduced juvenile crime by 52% in Phoenix, Arizona where it costs almost \$40,000 to jail one teen for one year. The bottom line: it costs 100 times as much to incarcerate that to recreate.

MEET FRIENDS -- CREATE MEMORIES!

A child develops social skills, problem solving and creativity through early play experiences. The best opportunities are those that are planned and supervised. Physical activity is intellectually stimulating and enhances the learning process and the development of cognitive skills.

GENERATE REVENUE

Upon opening a National Bowling Stadium, Reno Nevada generated \$238 million in the first 6 months. The 1995 Monet exhibit at the Art Institute of Chicago generated \$389 million with visitors spending \$31 million on hotels, \$31 million on shopping, \$22 million in restaurants and \$18 million for transportation. One adult softball tournament is estimated to generate \$50,000, when 50 teams outside the city participate. Under these circumstances, the capital costs of building a one million dollar softball complex could be repaid after only 20 tournaments. Every tournament after that is profit that could be reinvested into other community needs. Golf was responsible for creating over 12,000 full and part time jobs in Phoenix, Arizona.

LOWER HEALTH CARE COSTS

Physically active older people typically benefit from lower blood pressure, increased muscle strength, joint flexibility, and lower total cholesterol levels than do less active people. Leisure activities can provide for the creation of new social relationships for Seniors after the loss of a loved one. Someone turns 50 every 8.4 seconds. By 2005, it is estimated one in five Americans will be 65 and older.

BOOST ECONOMY -- REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT!

When choosing business sites, employers strongly consider the quality of life provided by an area's Parks, Recreation and Cultural programs.

CURB EMPLOYEE ABSENTEEISM -- BOOST EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY

General Electric found that employees who exercised were absent from work 45% fewer days than those who didn't. Union Pacific Railroad found that their exercise programs helped employees to be more productive at work and achieve higher levels of concentration.

Firms that provide for employee fitness and health programs experience decreased employee turnover.

INCREASE TOURISM

Two of the fastest growing segments of tourism are festival and event driven tourism. A recent study indicates the fondest memories people have of their past tend to involve family outings and vacations.

INCREASE PROPERTY VALUE -- ATTRACT NEW BUSINESS

In Salem, Oregon, urban land next to a greenbelt was worth \$1,200 more per acre than urban land 1,000 feet away. Cities such as Baltimore, San Francisco, Seattle, New Orleans and Spokane have proven that investments in waterfront and other open space development have succeeded in attracting new business and boosting tourism with subsequent increase in tax revenue.

Location of a business on the San Antonio Texas Riverwalk is considered very desirable. It provides a retreat for employees at lunch and offers a valuable greenspace in the central business district.

PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

Trees help deal with the serious pollution problem caused by the use of fossil fuels. Clean water is essential for the protection of humans and animals.

Americans rank clean air and clean water number one and two when choosing qualities for "The Best Places to Live" - Money magazine 1995.

PROVIDE SPACE TO ENJOY NATURE -- CLEAN AIR AND WATER

Membership in environmental groups is soaring and a trend toward natural environment based recreation activities indicates strong emphasis and learning.

Gardening is at an all time high in popularity. Working with living plants, and seeing them grow and mature brings personal satisfaction and relaxation.

Without increased amounts of natural habitat, forest lands, wetlands, cultural sites and recreation lands, the continued degradation of habitat will continue and undoubtedly lead to additional Endangered Species listings.

"We should exercise foresight in conserving and wisely using the property which contains the assurance of well-being for us and our children." –Theodore Roosevelt, 1908.

ENHANCE RELATIONSHIP SKILLS -- TEACH VITAL LIFE SKILLS

After school sports, as well as Arts and Craft classes enlighten children about the concept of team play: Together Everyone Achieves More.

Positive conflict resolution is a skill which can be applied all life long. Appropriate risk taking, and a healthy sense of competition and sportsmanship can substitute for violent confrontation related to gang activity.

OFFER PLACE FOR SOCIAL INTERACTION

The social need for recreation has been identified as a means for community involvement and an expression of citizenship. A sense of community and social contact is fostered in order to combat urban social problems like loneliness and isolation. Our National Parks attract 88% more people than Disney World and Disney Land. Visits to state, regional and local parks exceed on billion annually.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association

www.wpraweb.org