# WORKTERM REPORT: CITY OF WHITE ROCK

Summer 2018

Recreation and Health Education | 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Student

### **Executive Summary**

My summer work term took place at the City of White Rock as a program leader of their summer camps. In this position, I organized and led six-weeks of summer camps for children aged six to nine. I also planned and ran a three-day leadership course to prepare teens to volunteer with the summer camp. As a member of this team, I was also required to run a sandcastle competition on Canada day and a craft table during Tour de White Rock. Through my work with the City of White Rock, I was able to work on and grow my skills in planning, communication, problem solving and patience.

My current RHED degree was very applicable to my work as a summer camp leader. I was able to relate course concepts such as leadership, program planning, outdoor education, social determinants of health, budgeting and adaptability to the delivery of camps.

Future recommendations for this position include finding a different room or location for camp as there were times where camp would be moved into a small room that would prove difficult to be fun for the kids. Along with this, proper training to use the work van would be appreciated for future camp leaders as the van was very large and I personally felt uncomfortable driving it without any training. The final recommendation for camp includes choosing a different out trip than Splash Down because this was by far the most expensive out trip and was not worth the large price. A trip to the Grandview Heights Aquatic Center could be used as a substitute for this out trip.

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## Introduction

This summer, I had the great opportunity to work for the City of White Rock as a program leader for the children's summer day camps that were based out of Centennial Arena. Myself along with one other leader ran the six-week summer day camp program for children aged six to nine. The program included a different camp theme each week and gave kids the option of signing up for all six weeks of camp if they wanted to. The camp themes included super safari, back to the Jurassic, under the sea, astronauts and aliens, beach explorers and pirates of the pacific. Along with this, I helped run a three-day leadership training program for summer day camp volunteers. This aim of this course was to teach 14 and 15 year olds leadership skills so they could then have an opportunity to volunteer with the summer day camps. I also had the opportunity to work during special events hosted by the City of White Rock including Canada day and Tour de White Rock. For Canada day, I had a booth set up with a sign-up sheet for a sandcastle competition. I was also in charge of judging the competition and choosing the top three best sandcastles. During Tour de White Rock I was in charge of the choosing and running the crafts at the children's craft table. Since Tour de White Rock is a bike race I decided on bike license plates, a craft that could be put directly on the children's bikes if they wanted to. Through the main objectives of my work with the City of White Rock, I have learned many skills that are applicable to my degree and future careers.

The main objectives of this work were to broaden my experience and knowledge in planning, organization and interpersonal skills for children and youth related programs in social and recreational settings. These objectives directly relate to my program because the basis of Recreation and Health Education is to prepare students to enter the recreation, wellness and

health promotion or leadership and administration fields. Therefore, by developing my organization and leadership skills through my work with the city of White Rock, I will further be preparing to enter any of the recommended professional fields following the completion of my degree. In addition, all of the possible future careers I can engage in through my program require me to work with people and have good interpersonal skills. I was able to learn these skills through my summer job not only working directly with children, but also working directly with their parents and the community in general. The career path that I hope to take would lead me to be a physiotherapist or an occupational therapist. Not only do these professions require a great level of proper interpersonal skills but they also require a large amount of planning which is another objective that I developed through my work with the City of White Rock.

#### Description

My employment for the city of White Rock was as a program leader, running the summer day camps that were provided to the community. With my position as a leader of the summer day camps, I was in charge of keeping the safety of everyone in the camp. Not only was I responsible for the children who were in the camp but I also needed to make sure the volunteers were safe as well during any activities and events we were doing. Along with this, the responsibilities that I was given for my work as a program leader included planning, scheduling, implementing and leading a six-week summer day camp for children aged six to nine. This involved planning the weekly schedule for each day that camp ran from 9am to 3:30pm. The typical weekly schedule for camp can be seen in figure 1. To plan for each day, I

had to find games and crafts that followed the themes of each week and had a \$300 budget to buy any supplies that were needed for the games and crafts. As can be seen in figure 1, our camp also included an out trip each week. For example, we went to the zoo for our safari theme and the aquarium for our under water theme. In order for this to happen, I was given \$300 to use for each out trip for the booking and payment for each trip.

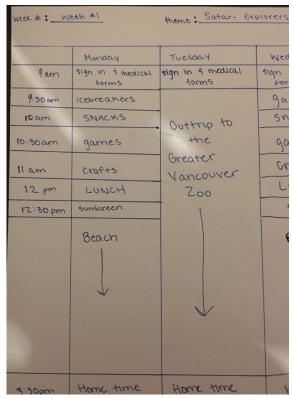


Figure 1. Sample weekly camp schedule

Further, I was asked to promote interest and participation in program activities through the media and through community groups. I did this by creating colourful and attractive posters for each week of camp. These posters were emailed to community members and posted on different social platforms for the City of White Rock. The camp descriptions were also posted in the city's 2018 leisure guide.

Along with this I was required to run a three-day leadership training program for 14 and 15 year olds with the goal of preparing them to help volunteer with our summer day camps. For this course, I was given a booklet with all of the information that needed to be taught over the three days but had the ability to choose how I would teach the information and what games I would incorporate. The information that was covered in the booklet included basic leadership

knowledge, scenarios about situations that may arise in camp and basic first aid. I created booklets for each volunteer in the course and left some pages as fill-in-the-blank that we went over as a group. The games I chose promoted leadership and communication skills and were incorporated throughout the three-day course. One of the games worked on communication skills by splitting the group into two teams. The teams were blindfolded with the exception of one member of the team. The goal was for the non-blindfolded team member to communicate and direct their blindfolded team to bean bags that had been thrown across the grass field. The team that was able to collect the most bean bags was the winner. This was a fun team, leadership and communication building activity for the group that I chose to play.

My work with the City of White Rock also required me to help run the sandcastle competition on Canada day as well as the children's craft table during Tour De White Rock. For the sandcastle competition, I was able to freely plan the event without much guidance. I first had to create signs with numbers up to 25 that would designate each individual plot. On the day of the event, I had to create the plots on the sand where the sandcastles would be built. Since the tide was out, I chose to draw out 10'x10' plots for community members to build their sandcastles in. I also created and managed a sign-up sheet for the competition and directed individuals to their plots in the sand. The sign-up sheet included the participant's names, emails and phone numbers so that they could be contacted if they won after I helped judge the competition. At the booth, while the sandcastle competition was running, I also handed out Canada day pins and temporary tattoos for people at the event.

The next event I helped out at was Tour de White Rock. For Tour De White Rock, I was asked to choose a craft to run at the event in the kids area. The craft I chose was making bike

license plates that the kids could put directly on their bikes. I brought construction paper, streamers, felt pens and stickers that were used for the craft and assisted kids in gluing or writing on their license plates.

## Professional Development, Reflection and Analysis

There were many things that my work as a program leader for the City of White Rock summer day camps taught me. The main things that I was able to learn and practice throughout my employment included planning for various events, working on communication and customer service skills, practicing problem solving techniques for different situations and working on my personal patience.

First, I had the opportunity to work on and improve my planning skills. Throughout my employment during the summer, I was required to plan many events, schedules and activities. One of my tasks included having to plan the weekly and daily schedule for each six-weeks of camp. I was required to create an agenda for every hour of camp from 9am to 3:30pm for each six-weeks. Each week of camp followed the same basic agenda with only the themes, games and activities differing. A sample camp schedule can be seen in figure 1. I also had to find backup games and crafts in case something was not going the way I had planned. For example, finding new games to play inside if it started to rain or different games to play if the kids were not enjoying the current game being played. This was also important to find backup games because there would be many times when games would be shorter than expected. When this happened, a game that we played to fill in for extra time and that the kids really enjoyed was called squirt. This was a fast paced game that required the kids, volunteers and leaders to be

quick on their feet and have quick movements. It required no equipment and the kids really enjoyed it so it could be played for long periods of time. With my experience in planning, I quickly learned that on top of the original planning, you need to plan for when things don't go the way they are intended to.

I also had the opportunity to continue to grow and develop my customer service and communication skills. This was done in multiple ways. First I was able to practice my communication skills while teaching the leadership course. I had content that I was expected to cover and teach and had to make sure my communication skills were at a high level so the volunteers would understand what I was teaching them. I also had a chance to work on and refine my communication skills through giving explanations of games to both the volunteers in their leadership course and to the kids in the summer camp. This was especially important during the summer camp because instructions that would seem to be easily understood by me, might have been difficult to understand to some six-nine year olds. By having the opportunity to give directions and explanations of games, I was able to practice clear and concise language. I also worked on my communication skills through having to talk to parents and resolve any issues that might have arose. For example, many of our camp participants and their parents did not speak very fluent English. It was important to learn how to communicate in ways that were understandable to both the child and their parents. There was one boy who spoke no English so before we would go on our trips to the beach, I made sure that he understood what stop and go meant so that he would not run across the road when he was supposed to be waiting. I did this by showing actions and body movements associated with the words stop and go so he understood what to do when they were said. I also printed and laminated photos that were

used as references to point at if he did not understand what I was saying. For parents that spoke no English, I made sure to show them what I was trying to say. This was done at the beginning of each camp when I collected the children's medical forms from their parents. Some parents did not understand what I was saying when discussing the medical forms so I went over the form with these parents and had extra copies for them at camp to fill in if they did not fill it in at home.

This job further allowed me to work on my problem solving skills because it was either my co-worker or myself that had to deal with situations first-hand. There were some times in camp where two boys didn't like each other and would be rude or fight. To problem solve in this situation, the boys were separated as to avoid any conflicts between the two. For example, the boys would sit at different tables during crafts or would be put on different teams while playing group games. I wanted to make sure that they weren't completely separated from the entire group so splitting them on separate teams kept the whole group together while separating them specifically. Another situation that required me to problem solve was when we went on our out trip to the Newton Wavepool. Prior to the trip, we had planned out groups for the kids, some with a leader or a volunteer and other groups who were old enough to be on their own. My job was to sit at the bleachers and stay with kids who did not want to swim as well as be a check in point for kids who did not have a volunteer with them. When we got to the Wavepool, we found out that one of our volunteers who was supposed to meet us there all of a sudden was unable to come. Since we needed another leader for one of the groups, I decided to not be a check in point and instead go with the group that needed a leader. Thankfully, the other leader brought a spare bathing suit so I was able to go in the water with

my group. Instead of having the check in point, each group was told to meet at the bleachers at noon for lunch and this would act as a group check in. As hectic as the trip first started, it ended up working out great and all the kids had fun.

Another skill I learned from leading the summer camps was to be patient. There were many times that kids would not understand instructions that were seemingly simple and I quickly needed to learn that as frustrating as it may seem in the moment, I need to remain patient and find new ways of instruction until they understood. This was also a virtue I needed to learn and practice when kids were misbehaving or were not listening. There were some times in camp where I would be giving instructions and kids would be talking over me and not paying attention. Instead of getting angry or yelling at them to stop, I first would calmly tell them to listen when I am giving instructions. If this did not work, I would simply stop talking until the kids realized I was waiting for them to stop talking over me, then I would continue talking after they had stopped. This worked a lot of the time but sometimes when it didn't work, I would ask the kids to repeat the instructions I gave and usually they would not be able to because they weren't listening and they would feel obligated to listen after being talked to. These were simple things I learned to do that involved working on my patience and staying calm.

One of the main goals I set for myself during this summer job was to be a leader and an authority figure who the kids, volunteers and parents felt comfortable talking to if they ever needed to do so. This was important for me to establish this from the beginning because the main goal of the overall camp was to have fun. I tried to create this comfortability by being a helpful and friendly face whenever I had contact with camp participants or their parents. I also

tried to establish this by learning all of the kids and volunteer's names and frequently using them while I was talking to make people feel comfortable. During camp I also made sure to play games and be involved in crafts as to create a connection as well.

Although in this job you can have a sense of if things are going well or if they are not going well, the main thing that showed me that my work strategies were good included receiving feedback from my boss and from the children's parents. One parent in particular emailed my boss at the end of camp to praise the work that I had done for camp. She said that her son had such a fun time and was very sad that it was over. Along with this form of confirmation, the registration rate for camp was at 99% which was very high. There were also kids who signed up for more than one week of camp and some who had even signed up for all six-weeks. It allowed me to see that people enjoyed the work I was putting in and thought I was doing a good job.

Something that I was unfamiliar with during this job was dealing with a child who would wet his pants. I have never had to deal with this situation before and at first wasn't sure how to handle it. The strategy I used to make sure he wasn't wetting his pants was that I first talked to his parents and made sure they knew this was happening. I found out that they were aware and that they packed an extra change of clothes in his bag every day in case it happened. I then kept aware of when he was going to the bathroom and if it had been a long time I would suggest that he go to the washroom or suggest a group washroom trip with other kids in camp. I also made sure that he would use the washroom before we would go outside to play games, go to the beach or go on out trips. This worked for him and he had much less incidence of wetting his pants as the weeks continued, although there were still a few instances.

The skills that I listed; planning, problem solving, communication and patience can be transferred to many other work situations. With my ideal career as a physiotherapist, all of these traits would be beneficial. First, planning would be important because as a physiotherapist you would need to create personalized plans for each client depending on their injury. Along with planning, it would also be important to have problem solving skills as the occupation of physiotherapy deals with people and sometimes situations can arise that need to be solved. An example could be if you planned exercises for your clients that turned out to not work or the client was unable to do them, you would then need to problem solve and have a backup plan. The third skill that relates to this occupation would be communication skills. A physiotherapist would need to have good communication skills so they can talk with all of their clients and give clear instructions of exercises. Finally, to relate the skills that I learned through my summer job to another occupation, patience would be important for a physiotherapist. This would be a valuable skill to have for situations where some client's may have difficulty understanding explanations or find difficulty in doing some exercises so the physiotherapist would need to be patient and realize that all clients heal and learn at different paces.

Through my work with the City of White Rock, the duties that caused me the most problems were when we went on our walks to the beach. This is because there were many times where some of the boys didn't get along and would fight over sticks or shells. Something I tried to do but could have managed better was splitting the kids in groups with one leader. This way the boys who wouldn't get along would be split up and could play in different areas of the beach without having conflicts with one another. The beach trips were also sometimes problematic because our camp was not the only camp at the beach. The YMCA was one of the

camps who would also be at the beach and often times their kids would play with ours and the groups would not get along. Something I could have done better to manage this problem would be moving our camp area at the beach further from the YMCA camp so the two camps would not have the opportunity to argue. This proved to be challenging though because our camp had a designated area at the beach that was close to the trail to go back to camp and was also close to the washrooms. If I moved our camp further down the beach it would have meant a longer walk for the kids to get back to camp.

Being a program leader with the City of White Rock allowed me to be exposed to many positive experiences. One most positive experiences happened during the last week of camp. One of the boys in camp was not getting along with another boy and his mom talked to me about how he wasn't wanting to come back and wasn't feeling happy in camp because of it. The next day when we went down to the beach, I played a game with the kids that they had made up and acted as a facilitator between the two boys in conflict. During the game, I made sure that both of them were having fun together and were getting along. On the walk back to camp from the beach, the boy who previously was not happy held my hand and told me how much fun he had that day. The next day his mom and sister came up to me before camp and told me that their sons attitude had changed and that he was very excited to return to camp that day. It was a very positive experience for me because camp is all about everyone having fun and the fact that I was able to change this boys feelings about camp and was able to hear that from his mom was great.

#### School and Academic

I have applied many of the concepts I learned in school to my work as a summer camp leader. The main two courses I drew from were leadership and program planning. My leadership course taught me how to be a good leader and what skills I needed to have to achieve this. Through this class I also learned about how to deliver programs to different age groups so I was able to take this knowledge and apply it to my work. In particular, I applied my knowledge on motivation from the leadership class to my work with the summer camp. This knowledge allowed me to think about the needs of the participant's and how these needs could be met through my leadership skills. For example, I learned about Herzberg's Motivation Model that showed how individuals are motivated by recognition, the task itself and responsibility. In the camp, I made sure to recognize and tell the kids when they were doing a good job which motivated them to put effort into the activity we were doing. For the task itself, I made sure that the games and crafts that were chosen were of interest to the kids and if they began to lose interest then a different activity was chosen. I further applied Herzberg's model to my work by giving the kids different responsibilities to increase their motivation. For example, this was done on our out trip to the water park when we divided the kids in groups and let some kids have a group without a leader. With these groups without a leader, they were told that they needed to be responsible and check in at the designated area every 30 minutes. Since the kids had this responsibility, they were motivated to prove to us leaders that they deserved it and checked in every 30 minutes as was agreed.

Along with leadership, the physical activity concepts that I have learned in class can be applied to the workplace. Specifically, I was able to apply my knowledge from the outdoors

course I took to this camp. This course taught me about all of the benefits that being in nature and outdoors can have for individuals. The benefits of being in nature include decreased chances of developing diseases, lowered rates of mental disorders and happier mood just to name a few of the many. I made it necessary while planning the schedule that the camp went outside every day. Some days we went outside for an hour and some days we were outside for the entire day but it was important to include this into the daily activities of camp. Along with the benefits of being outdoors in general, through my courses I learned about the benefits that unstructured play has for children. This is why when planning for the camp schedule, I included have at least 30 minutes of unstructured play or "free time" when we went into the forest and when we went to the beach the kids would have the entire time, usually two hours, for unstructured play.

The program planning course was also applicable to my work as a summer camp leader because I had to plan all of the activities and events throughout the entire length of my work. In this program planning course I learned about creating objectives for your programs. The main objective that was chosen for our camp was to have fun and be safe. All of the crafts, games and trips I chose had this basic premise of being both fun and safe for the kids. For example, when we went on our out trip to the Newton Wavepool, I had to first plan groups based on who was old enough to swim on their own, who had been in swimming lessons and what level they had completed, who needed life jackets and who needed to be with a leader or volunteer. This planning before we had even gone to the Wavepool allowed for the kids to be safe but also have fun. Along with this, at the end of the year I assisted in creating the end of year report about the positive and negative aspects of camp over the summer so that next year's camp

leaders could read over it and use it in their planning strategies. The report included the planning and implementation of events and activities that we had done and gave suggestions on how these could be improved. One of the activities I suggested was choosing a different out trip instead of going to Big Splash Waterpark. This was because Big Splash was the most expensive of all the out trips we had planned to go on and the manager who we had contacted was very unprofessional about planning our trip. I suggested that instead of going to Big Splash, the next year's camp should look into going to the Grandview Aquatic Center. This would save a massive amount of money for the camp that can be used towards more supplies.

My knowledge on the concepts of social determinants of health was also applicable to my work as a program leader. One important social determinant of health that I learned about is social inclusion. When individuals are a part of a social group and have a sense of community around them, it can be beneficial to both mental and physical aspects of health. This was important in our camp to promote this idea of social inclusion by making sure that everyone was being included in games or activities. There were some times when one of the children didn't want to play a game that everyone was playing and instead wanted to colour. In these situations, one of the leaders or the volunteers would sit and colour with the child so they had company and didn't feel left out. This was also important to incorporate this social determinant of health into the summer camps so that the kids felt they could talk to the leaders if they needed help or if any situations arose. I tried to establish this relationship by playing the games and doing the crafts with the kids so they felt comfortable and connected with me. Another social determinant of health is education. I incorporated education into our camp every day through the games we played as well as the instructions and rules I gave. This was done at the

beginning of each week of camp because I created a rules poster for the kids. This involved the kids choosing rules that they needed to follow which I wrote on the rules poster. These rules included things like: inside voices, respect each other and the equipment and no sharing food. This allowed children to learn about how to respect and share things with each other which are beneficial skills that can be used in school. The rule of no sharing food is also important because it teaches kids about allergies.

Further, learning about budgeting through school was applicable to this job because I was given a budget of \$300 to buy supplies for crafts and activities for the whole six-weeks. To make sure this \$300 was used to the best of its ability, I first counted and kept record of all the supplies that were available from the previous years of camp. From this, I created a list of new supplies that were still needed. From this list, items were chosen to be purchased from cheaper places rather than more expensive places. For example, paints were bought from the dollar store rather than from Walmart. I also budgeted by choosing crafts that we could do by using supplies we already had so more money didn't need to be spent on other supplies.

For the concepts of adaptability in relation to the summer camp, there was one child in the camp who was a high-functioning autistic boy. At the beginning of camp his mom told me that he was sensitive to light, heat, water and loud noises. To adapt to this, one of the leaders or volunteers would always be with the boy while we were at the beach so that he wouldn't feel left out for not wanting to go in the water. Throughout the camp, I also made sure that the noise levels were not too loud or overwhelming for the boy so I would tell the kids that we were having quiet time with crafts or we would play the silent game on the bus to our out trips to accommodate for the boy.

#### Conclusion

My work as a program leader of the City of White Rock summer day camps was very beneficial and applicable to my degree and possible future careers. I was able to develop key competencies throughout the job including planning, organization and interpersonal skills. I was able to work on these skills because I had to plan each weekly schedule for camp and within each week, organize different games and activities for the kids. My summer work gave me the chance to learn and improve beneficial skills such as planning, communication, problem solving and patience that all directly relate to my RHED degree. I was able to relate many course concepts from my degree to the work I did as a program leader including leadership, program planning, outdoor education, social determinants of health, budgeting and adaptability. After completing this experience, I feel as though I have learned many skills that will benefit me in my future schooling and career.

#### Recommendations

My work with the City of White Rock was very satisfying and I learned many more things than can be simply written on paper. With that being said, there were some things that could have been changed to benefit the employees and the participants. The first thing that could have changed was finding a better venue. Centennial arena is in a perfect area, however; our camp was kicked out of our main room every Wednesday at noon because there was a group that came in to play crib. When we got kicked out of the room we would go down to the beach and spend the rest of the day there but when we came back, kids who were in after care had to

spend the next few hours in the lobby because there was no other room to go in. This was difficult because this lobby was decently small and the main office was right beside the lobby so the kids would need to be quiet while playing so they would not disrupt the workers. Again, not an easy or fun task to accomplish while being in a small room.

Another thing I noticed during my work term was regarding the work van. Both myself and the other leader had the responsibility of separately driving the work van down to the beach when it was sunny so we could bring a tent that would supply the kids with shade if they wanted it. However, this work van was very large and included multiple rows of seats on both sides with an isle in the middle. I felt very uncomfortable driving this van as it was much larger than anything I had driven before so I ended up driving my own car down to the beach which required me to pay for parking out of my own pocket. I would have appreciated getting proper training for driving the van so I could have avoided driving my own car.

Along with this, in the final report for my supervisor I also suggested picking a different out trip for the week that the camp goes to Splash Down. As I mentioned previously, this out trip was extremely expensive for the actual activity itself. Although the kids did have a lot of fun, the price was not worth it and the kids would have just as much fun going to a place like the Grandview Heights Aquatic Center. These recommendations in the final report will hopefully be beneficial to future employees working in this position.

## **Appendix C- Camp Posters**







