



## City of Santa Fe Youth Program Served 423 Campers

August 4, 2021 -- After a 2020-21 school year that was disrupted by the pandemic, the City recognized an urgent need to provide families with childcare, and children with fun, safe environments for in-person activities. This summer, City personnel cared for, played with, and entertained 423 children in our community. The City of Santa Fe Youth Program partnered with Santa Fe Public Schools, which provided five school sites, and utilized the Genoveva Chavez Community Center.

Summer camp '21 was a seven-week program focused on recreational socializing, with programming designed to keep kids active and engaged for up to nine hours a day, five days a week. Educators from Art Smart and the Community Educators Network rotated from through the sites doing art projects with campers.

Fifty-eight staff members, including 50 seasonal employees, were assigned to the various sites. Thanks to their strict adherence to the COVID-safe guidelines in place -- the children were required to wear masks -- the entire seven-week summer program was completed with *zero* positive COVID cases for any of the 423 participants. That's one way to spell *s-u-c-c-e-s-s*.

"This summer's youth program was more important and more meaningful than ever," says Mayor Alan Webber. "Coming out of COVID, the City's team gave Santa Fe's young people both jobs and fun. Thanks to everyone who made it happen."

"To redesign the youth program in the transition to reopening after a year in COVID-19 quarantine says a lot about the City's commitment to our youth," says Gino Rinaldi, Acting Recreation Division Director.

“Providing the youth in our community with a safe, fun, educational environment to stay active and promote positivity for themselves and among others is the greatest service we can provide,” says Melissa Bustos, Youth Program Manager.

In addition to implementing COVID-Safe Practices, this summer was also the inaugural effort at leveraging the resources and programming of the Community Services Department and Recreation Department GCCC Summer Youth Programs, now together under one City of Santa Fe Youth Programs banner. This merger has been fantastic for the youth in our city, as it has allowed us to bring consistent, engaging programming to a wide demographic of youth and families in need of affordable, dependable childcare. This summer’s transition to utilizing a sliding scale meant that no families would be excluded from the Youth Program for financial reasons.

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, the combination of resources, staff, programming, and infrastructure allowed the summer of '21 to go smoothly, and will allow for exciting opportunities in the years to come for the youth in our community.