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A THIRD EDITION
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Programming for Parks, Recreation, and Leisure Services

A SERVANT LEADERSHIP APPROACH

Donald G. DeGraaf,
Debra J. Jordan, and
Kathy H. DeGraaf

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Programming for Parks, Recreation, and Leisure Services: A Servant Leadership Approach

Third Edition

Programming for Parks, Recreation, and Leisure Services: A Servant Leadership Approach

Third Edition

by

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Dedication

*To those striving to be their best, to live a life of servant leadership, and to make
a positive contribution to the world in which we live.*

Table of Contents

Preface.....	xi
About the Authors	xiii
About the Cover	xiii

Chapter One

<i>Programmer Profile: Robert Greenleaf</i>	<i>1</i>
---	----------

Basic Concepts..... 3

Definitions	4
Leisure as Time ♦ Leisure as State of Mind ♦	
Leisure as Activity ♦ Leisure as a Symbol of	
Social Status ♦ Leisure as a Holistic Concept	
Freedom ♦ Perceived Competence ♦ Intrinsic	
Motivation ♦ Locus of Control ♦ Positive Affect	
Recreation Programs.....	6
The Beginnings of Leisure Programming	
Beneficial Outcomes of Leisure Programs	9
Beneficial Outcomes of Leisure for Individuals ♦	
Beneficial Outcomes of Leisure to Society	
Leisure Services Professionals.....	18
Characteristics and Skills of Leisure Services	
Professionals	
Programming: A Servant Leadership Approach.....	20
Characteristics and Skills of Servant Leaders	
Summary	22
Programming from Here to There	
References	24

Chapter Two

<i>Programmer Profile: Jane Addams.....</i>	<i>27</i>
---	-----------

Service and Quality in Programming29

Understanding the Leisure Experience	29
Intangibility ♦ Heterogeneity ♦ Inseparability of	
Production and Consumption ♦ Perishability ♦	
The Characteristics of Experiences	
The Staging of Experiences.....	33
The Concept of Quality	34
The Need for Social Responsibility ♦ Strategies	
for Delivering Leisure Programs ♦ Marketing ♦	
Community Development/Empowerment	
Building a Strategy of Program Planning	47
Summary	49

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Programming from Here to There	
References	52

Chapter Three

<i>Programmer Profile: Winnie Wong</i>	<i>55</i>
--	-----------

Principles, Philosophy, and Planning57

Foundation, Direction, and Reflection (FDR).....	57
Principles, Values, and Traditions	58
Traditions	
Philosophy and Programming	63
Agency Mission: Its Impact on Programming	65
Agency Vision: Its Impact on Programming.....	67
Planning Processes	70
Constituent Involvement	
Planning Models	71
Logic Model ♦ Method of Eight Planning Cycle	
Gantt and PERT Planning Charts ♦ Outcomes,	
Goals, and Objectives ♦ The Cyclical Programming	
Process	
Interface of FDR Concepts	78
Implications for Recreation Programmers	
The Servant Leadership Perspective	80
Accountability ♦ Empathy ♦ Diversity ♦	
Community ♦ Integrity ♦ Empowerment ♦	
Service	
Summary	82
Programming from Here to There	
References	84

Chapter Four

<i>Programmer Profile: Carolyn Griffith</i>	<i>85</i>
---	-----------

Asset Mapping and Needs Assessments.....87

Definitions	87
Asset ♦ Asset Mapping ♦ Comparative Need ♦	
Need ♦ Normative Need ♦ Want/Desire	

Why Do Asset Mapping and Needs Assessments?	89
Service Orientation/Participant Empowerment ♦	
Desire for Quality and to Exceed Expectations ♦	
Program Management	
The Process of Asset Mapping	94
Accessing Information	95
Constituents ♦ External Inventory ♦ Internal Inventory	
The Process of Gathering Needs Assessment Information	98
People as Resources ♦ Records as Resources	
Summary	103
Programming from Here to There	
References	111

Chapter Five

Programmer Profile: Lydia Kuyvenhoven ... 113

Programming for People 115

Dimensions of Diversity	116
Sex and Gender ♦ Ethnicity and Race ♦ Sexual Orientation ♦ Physical and Cognitive Abilities and Qualities ♦ Age	
Developmental Assets	120
External Assets ♦ Internal Assets	
Life Stages and Age Groups	122
Young Childhood (5–7 years) ♦ Middle Childhood (8–11 years) ♦ Young Adolescence (12–14 years) ♦ Adolescence (15–17 years) ♦ Young Adulthood (18–25 years) ♦ Early Adulthood (26–40 years) ♦ Middle Adulthood (41–60 years) ♦ Older Adulthood (61+ years)	
Servant Leadership and Programming for People	128
Summary	128
Programming From Here to There	
References	129

Chapter Six

Programmer Profile: Barbara Cobas 131

Program Design 132

The Program Audit	133
Factors to Consider in Program Design	133
Program Areas ♦ Program Formats ♦ Equipment and Supplies ♦ Physical Environments ♦ Budget ♦ Policies, Procedures, and Rules ♦ Risk Management ♦ Staffing ♦ Program Goals and Objectives ♦ Writing Objectives ♦ Scheduling ♦ Program Life Cycle	

The Role of the Program Audit	158
A Servant Leadership Approach: Empowering Participants	158
Summary	161
Programming from Here to There	
References	162

Chapter Seven

Programmer Profile: Dana M. Bates 163

Creativity and Innovation 165

Creativity	165
Brainstorming/Brainwriting ♦ Discontinuity ♦ Forced Analogy ♦ Mental Imagery/Visualization ♦ Mind Mapping ♦ Unconscious Problem Solving	
Passion	172
Research and Resources	172
Adapting Resources ♦ People ♦ Professional Associations ♦ Written Materials ♦ Movies, Television, and Radio ♦ Electronic Media	
Summary	187
Programming from Here to There	
References	188

Chapter Eight

Programmer Profile: Jermel Stevenson 191

Program Promotion 193

Marketing ♦ Public Relations ♦ Promotion	
Promotional Tools and Techniques	195
Broadcast Media ♦ Technology ♦ Display Media ♦ Presentations ♦ Print Media ♦ Other Promotional Tools	
Factors to Consider When Promoting Programs	224
What Are the Promotion Objectives? ♦ Who Is the Target Audience? ♦ What Is the Budget? ♦ What Is the Program? ♦ At What Stage Is the Program within the Product Life Cycle? ♦ What Is the Time Frame?	
Coordinating the Promotion Mix	225
Developing a Promotion and Overall Marketing Strategy	226
Promoting Programs: A Servant Leadership Approach	227
Summary	231
Programming from Here to There	
References	232

Chapter Nine

Programmer Profile: Mark Freidline235

Pricing Program Services.....237

Step One: Understand Trends	237
Decrease in Tax Support: Doing More with Less ♦ Contracting Services ♦ Expanded Definition of “Cost” ♦ Risk Management ♦ Projecting Economic Impact ♦ Increased Competition	
Mission Driven and Benefits Oriented	
Step Two: Understand Budgets	241
Step Three: Calculate the Overall Costs/Understand the Price Potential.....	243
Indirect Costs ♦ Direct Costs	
Step Four: Determine the Cost Recovery	245
No Cost Recovery ♦ Variable Cost Recovery ♦ Partial Cost Recovery ♦ Full Cost Recovery	
Step Five: Consider Differential Pricing.....	248
Price Differentials Based on Participants ♦ Price Differentials Based on Product ♦ Price Differentials Based on Place ♦ Price Differentials Based on Time ♦ Price Differentials Based on Quantity ♦ Price Differentials as Incentives	
Step Six: Examine Alternative Funding.....	250
Gifts and Donations ♦ Grant Writing ♦ In-Kind Contributions ♦ Partnerships ♦ Scrounging ♦ Sponsorships ♦ Volunteers	
Step Seven: Consider the Psychological Dimensions of Price	254
Total Cost Versus à la carte Pricing ♦ Protection of Self-Esteem ♦ Price-Quality Relationship ♦ Establish a Reference Point ♦ Consistency of Image ♦ Odd Pricing	
Step Eight: Establish the Initial Price	255
Understanding Costs and the Price Potential of Programs	
Step Nine: Understand Price Revision Decisions ...	258
Tolerance Zone ♦ Customer Adjustment Period ♦ Changing the Perceived Value of the Service ♦ Anchor Pricing	
A Servant Leadership Approach to Pricing.....	259
Summary	260
Programming from Here to There	
References	262

Chapter Ten

Programmer Profile: Ron Coplin265

Facilitating the Program Experience.....267

Facilitating the Pre-Experience	268
Assisting Potential Participants to Make Wise Decisions ♦ Customer Friendly Registration Procedures ♦ Issues Related to Registration ♦ Prepared Staff ♦ Ease and Accessibility of the Registration Process ♦ Common Forms Used in the Registration Process ♦ Payment Methods	
Facilitating the Anticipation Experience.....	285
Facilitating the Travel To Experiences.....	286
Facilitating the Participation Experience	286
Staff Preparation ♦ Risk Management ♦ Activity Analysis	
Facilitating the Travel Home Experience	302
Facilitating the Reflection Experience	302
Summary	303
Programming from Here to There	
References	303

Chapter Eleven

Programmer Profile: Vicki Proctor305

The Essence of Program Evaluation.....307

Definitions and Terms	307
Evaluation ♦ Assessment ♦ Measurement ♦ Formative Evaluation ♦ Summative Evaluation ♦ Process Evaluation ♦ Product Evaluation ♦ Outcomes-Based Evaluation	
The Need to Conduct Evaluations	309
Benefits of Evaluation	
Influences on the Evaluation Process	
and Outcomes.....	313
Ethics and Professionalism in Evaluation ♦ Politics in Evaluation ♦ Cultural Biases in Evaluation	
Defining One’s Worldview.....	315
Quantitative Paradigm ♦ Qualitative Paradigm	
The Evaluation Process.....	316
Guiding Questions	317
Why? ♦ Who? ♦ What? ♦ When? ♦ Where? ♦ How?	
Evaluation Models	319
Intuitive Model ♦ Evaluation by Goals and Objectives ♦ Goal-Free Model ♦ Evaluation by Standards ♦ Systems Models ♦ Importance–Performance Analysis ♦ Cost-Benefit Analysis	
Summary	324
Programming from Here to There	
References	325

Chapter Twelve

Programmer Profile: You327

Evaluation Tools, Techniques, and Data Analysis 329

Sampling 329

Data Collection Tools..... 330

Reliability ♦ Validity ♦ Usability

What Do You Want to Know?..... 332

Quantitative Data Collection 332

Head Counts ♦ Questionnaires ♦ Using Existing
Instruments ♦ Web-based Data Collection Tools

Qualitative Data Collection..... 339

Review Documents and Records ♦ Observation ♦
Sociometry ♦ Focus Groups ♦ Interviews ♦
Triangulation

Data Analysis 341

Inferential Analysis ♦ Descriptive Analysis

Techniques for Quantitative Data Analysis..... 342

Frequencies ♦ Percentages ♦ Measures of Central
Tendency ♦ Measures of Dispersion

Techniques for Qualitative Data Analysis..... 345

Open Coding ♦ Enumeration ♦ Constant
Comparison ♦ Content Analysis

Interpreting the Analysis 348

Report Writing 348

Front Cover ♦ Table of Contents ♦ Front Matter:
Summary ♦ Section 1: Introduction ♦ Section 2:
Background Information ♦ Section 3: Methods
and Procedures ♦ Section 4: Analysis and Results
Section 5: Interpretations, Conclusions, and
Recommendations ♦ Appendices

Summary 351

Programming From Here to There

References..... 352

Appendix

Tournament Scheduling 353

Ladder Tournament 354

Pyramid Tournament 354

Single Elimination Tournament 355

Single Elimination with Placement 356

Double Elimination Tournament..... 357

Double Elimination with Limited Placement 359

Setting Up Elimination Tournaments..... 359

Placement of Byes ♦ Elimination Tournaments
and Servant Leadership

Round Robin Tournaments 363

Index 365

Preface

Dynamic programming is a must if parks, recreation, and leisure services organizations are going to thrive in the twenty-first century. Programming is the one common, tangible, visible medium through which parks, recreation and leisure services professionals touch people's lives. Yet we all know that quality programs do not just happen; they require careful planning and development. This book is about the art and science of the complete programming process. We strive to go beyond merely presenting the knowledge and skills needed to provide quality programs; we suggest the integration of values into this process. We do this from a servant leadership perspective.

In previous editions of *Programming for Parks, Recreation, and Leisure Services: A Servant Leadership Approach*, we noted the findings of the 1997 National Curriculum on Parks and Recreation (2005). In examining undergraduate education, skills, technical competencies, and values were identified as important components for a quality undergraduate degree in parks and recreation. The emphasis on values is noteworthy as the conference proceedings identified the need for students to have a clear sense of purpose and a vision for the field. "This vision should emphasize the contributions of recreation and parks to human well being and the quality of community life. There must be a realization that the field, and therefore personal action, are parts of the larger social system . . . Part of this involves sensitivity to human circumstances, compassion and a commitment to help others" (Sessoms, 1997, p. 8).

In completing the revision process for this edition of *Programming for Parks, Recreation, and Leisure Services: A Servant Leadership Approach*, we are even more convinced that the servant leadership approach offers our profession a model that makes serving and leading through programs possible. As recreation programmers, we see the world changing around us and must respond to those changes in the ways people live, work, and recreate. These can create

a sense of uneasiness in terms of how we serve and lead others in order to improve the quality of life of those involved in our programs. In response to this balancing act we often seek to take the easy route of selecting either serving or leading, but not both. Yet, the concept of servant leadership presented throughout this book challenges this approach and encourages us to disregard the *either* serving *or* leading option and instead live in the paradox of serving *and* leading.

The concept of servant leadership offers a solid foundation on which the knowledge and skills of programming can be developed. We feel it is a powerful model to guide the recreation programming process for it encourages leaders to listen and empower rather than dominate and dictate. It is our hope that even if you do not agree with our values orientation of servant leadership that the book will be a catalyst for discussing the types of values that professionals in park, recreation, and leisure services should emulate.

The book is organized into three parts. Part One lays the foundation for the book and is about the art of programming. It lays the foundation on which programs can be developed by introducing the concept of servant leadership, helping readers understand the planning processes necessary for effective programming, and examining the relationship between service and quality in the programming process. Parts Two and Three of the book are more about the science of programming—examining the process of designing, implementing, and evaluating leisure programs. New to this third edition:

- An instructor/student CD with supplemental information and exercises for each chapter. The CD is designed to encourage an active learning environment where students are challenged to think for themselves and to integrate theory with practice. The chapters noted on the CD correlate to each chapter in the text and include learning objectives, identification of key concepts

and terms, questions for reflection and study, and suggested applications and practice. Other resources included on this CD are practice exams, case studies, and program highlights on many different organizations and/or programs.

- Further integration of the concept of servant leadership into every aspect of the programming cycle.
- Expanded information on such topics as social capital, the experience economy, and developmental assets, as well as biographies on such leaders as Robert Greenleaf and Jane Addams.
- Added Programmer Profiles that highlight real people working in the parks, recreation, and leisure services profession as programmers.
- A reorganization of the book, including reordering some chapters, removing one chapter, and integrating this content into the rest of the book.
- Including ‘theory sidebars’ throughout the text to illustrate how particular theories of programming are implemented in various agencies.
- Updating facts and figures throughout the text.

In undertaking a project such as this there are a number of people to whom we are indebted. We would like to thank the many people who have assisted us (both directly and indirectly) in the completion of this text. Richard Yocum, George Lauer, and Andrea Puzycki at Venture Publishing worked long hours to pull our material together to form a quality product. In addition, the cover designer, Sigrid Albert, always gives us her best work and we are most appreciative.

The evolution of knowledge in a profession is an ongoing process; with this in mind we would like to thank the many authors of programming-related texts who have preceded us. They are numerous and have helped us to think and reflect on the many meanings of programming and its importance to our profession. Those individuals we profiled in the text provide a sense of grounding in the workforce for the ideas we present in the text. In addition, colleagues and students throughout the country have been supportive and willing to critique ideas and offer suggestions.

We also owe a debt of gratitude to the many leisure services professionals and organizations that

shared program ideas, promotional pieces, and other pertinent material to the programming process for the book. We would be remiss if we did not also recognize both Calvin College and East Carolina University for supporting this writing endeavor over the last year. Last, but certainly not least, we would like to thank our families and loved ones who continue to offer their enduring support, love and encouragement throughout the writing process.

—DGD, DJJ, KHD (2010)

Reference

Sessoms, D. (1997, October). *Proceedings of the National Curriculum Conference on Parks and Recreation*. National Recreation and Park Association Congress, Salt Lake City, UT.

About the Authors

Don DeGraaf has been involved with camps and other youth serving programs for over 20 years. In addition, Don has served as a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer in the Philippines, and he and his wife Kathy have lived overseas in Korea and Hong Kong. These international adventures have fostered a strong interest in cross-cultural experiences and a global perspective on a wide variety of issues. Don enjoys writing and has co-authored several textbooks and over 90 articles and book chapters on a variety of youth leadership, environmental, and management concerns; he has also presented almost 100 workshops in the areas of programming, leadership, and management. Don earned a B.S. from Calvin College, his M.S. from Indiana University and his Ph.D. from the University of Oregon. Currently, Don is a professor and the Director of Off-Campus Programs at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Deb Jordan has been involved in recreation leadership and programming for over 30 years. She has experience in outdoor recreation, special events, camps, military recreation, nonprofit organizations, public parks and recreation, and international settings, and has worked with a wide diversity of people in these settings. Deb has made over 120 presentations

to local, state, national, and international groups, and written books and articles about programming, leadership, diversity, inclusion, risk management, and outdoor recreation. Deb earned her B.S. from Slippery Rock State College in Pennsylvania, her M.S. from Western Illinois University, and her Re.D. from Indiana University. For fun, Deb reads, travels, and tries to kayak as often as she can. Deb is currently serving as Professor and Chair of the Recreation and Leisure Studies Department at East Carolina University in North Carolina.

Kathy DeGraaf has been involved with camps, schools and social service agencies for over 25 years. Currently, Kathy works for New Branches Public Academy in Grand Rapids, Michigan. She enjoys writing and has written a number of articles and books related to working with children in a variety of settings. Kathy earned her B.S.W. from Valparaiso University and has taken classes toward a Master's Degree in Education from Northern Illinois University. For fun, both Kathy and Don are avid and safe (not to be confused with good) outdoor enthusiasts, love to travel, as well as read about future adventures. Together they have two children, Isaac and Rochelle, and one dog, Lantau.

About the Cover

The cover uses a variety of visual elements to express the many different concepts discussed in this book. The central row of five paper cutout figures reaching out to each other symbolizes the concept of community and mutual support. The dominant green color represents the outdoors, parks, and nature. The textures represent personal expression and artistry, which are important components and possible positive outcomes of leisure services, but also acknowledge the increasingly urban environment in which many leisure

activities now take place. The spiral-shaped graph in the center contains a heart shape which symbolizes the caring, social aspect, as well as the scientific side of programming, which has to take data and statistics into account. The overall effect is meant to be that of a rich visual tapestry symbolizing human interactions and recreational endeavors.

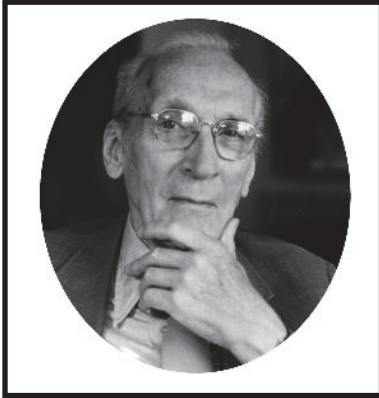


Photo courtesy of the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership

Programmer Profile



Robert Greenleaf and the Beginnings of Servant Leadership

Welcome to *Programming for Parks Recreation and Leisure Services: A Servant Leadership Approach!* We are excited that you will be joining us as we explore the process of delivering meaningful recreation programs. As you begin each chapter you will find a Programmer Profile of a parks, recreation, or leisure services professional working in one of the many diverse organizations offering recreation programs. The purpose of these profiles is to introduce you to *real people* who are planning, implementing, and evaluating actual recreation programs. In the profiles, the programmers will share a bit about themselves, where they work, how they use programs to achieve specific outcomes, and how they are putting into practice the principles of servant leadership in their work.

Our first profile is about Robert Greenleaf and, although he was not a leisure services professional, he was the driving force behind the concept of servant leadership that serves as the philosophical base of this book.

► What was Greenleaf's career path?

- Greenleaf was born in 1904; he attended college and joined the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T) in the mid 1920s. At the time AT&T employed more people than any other business in the world.
- In part, his decision to take a position at AT&T was influenced by a college professor who challenged his students during their senior year with the following:

there is a new problem in our country. We are becoming a nation that is dominated by large institutions—churches, businesses, governments, labor unions, universities—and these institutions are not serving us well. I hope that all of you will be concerned about this. Now you can do as I do, stand outside and criticize, bring pressure if you can, write and argue about it. All of this may do some good, but nothing of substance will happen unless there are people inside these institutions who are able to (and want to) lead them into better performance for the public good. Some of you ought to make careers inside these big institutions and become a force for good—from the inside. (Greenleaf, 1977, pp 1–2)

- He worked at AT&T for over forty years; during his time at AT&T he worked in a variety of human resources and management positions.
- After retirement, Greenleaf began a second career teaching and consulting at institutions ranging from Harvard Business School to the Ford Foundation, to scores of churches and nonprofit institutions. During the tumultuous 1960s, Greenleaf tried to understand why so many young people were in rebellion against America's institutions, especially universities. He concluded that the fault lay with the institutions: they weren't doing a good job of serving, therefore, they were doing a poor job of leading.

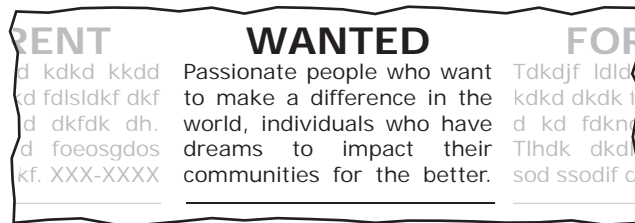


► **What book had a big impact on Greenleaf's life?**

- His quest for understanding young people in the 1960s led Greenleaf to begin to read Hermann Hesse's short novel, *Journey to the East*—a mythical account of a group of people on a spiritual journey. The central figure of the story is Leo who accompanies the party as the servant who does the menial chores, and who sustains the group with his spirit and song. He is a person of extraordinary presence. All goes well until Leo disappears. Then the group falls into disarray and the journey is abandoned; they cannot make it without their servant Leo. The narrator, one of the party, after some years of wandering finds Leo and is taken into the Order that had sponsored the journey. There he discovers that Leo, whom he had known first as servant, was in fact the titular head of the Order, its guiding light, and a great and noble leader. After reading the book, Greenleaf concluded that its central meaning was that a great leader is first experienced as a servant to others, and this simple fact is central to his or her greatness. "True leadership emerges from those whose primary motivation is a deep desire to help others" (Spears, 2002, p. 3).

► **Greenleaf's accomplishments and thoughts on servant leadership:**

- He wrote several books including: *The Servant as Leader* (1970), *The Institution as Servant* (1972), *Trustees as Servant* (1974). Many of his writings describe some of the characteristics and activities of servant-leaders, which show that individual efforts, inspired by vision and a servant ethic, can make a substantial difference in the quality of society. Greenleaf advocated that followers choose their leaders. He discussed the skills necessary to be a servant-leader; the importance of awareness, foresight and listening; and the contrasts between coercive, manipulative, and persuasive power.
- Until his death in 1990, Robert Greenleaf kept writing on the themes of management, servanthood, organizations, power, and spirituality. The Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership (<http://www.greenleaf.org>) has become a worldwide resource for those interested in applying the principles of servant leadership in their own work environment.
- Today, the ideas of Robert Greenleaf continue to gain importance, influencing leaders in business, education, ministry, and medicine. Servant leadership crosses all boundaries and is being applied by a wide variety of people working with businesses, nonprofit corporations, and churches, universities, health care institutions, and foundations. Perhaps the greatest contribution made by Greenleaf is the timeliness and universality of servant leadership.



Why are you interested in pursuing a degree in parks, recreation, and leisure services? What are you hoping to get from taking a class in recreation programming? Why did you choose a career in this field? How do you see yourself making a difference in this world through your choice of a major or career in parks, recreation, leisure services, and related fields? We begin this book with these questions because we feel that leisure services professionals can make a difference through the programs they offer. Programs are one of the primary means by which leisure services professionals provide value to people and make a difference for individuals, communities, and society at large.

Over 20 years ago, two professionals in our field defined programming; the definition still stands today. Carpenter and Howe characterized programming as a *continual process of planning, implementing, and evaluating leisure experiences for an individual or a group of individuals* (1985). Thus, programming is an important concept for all leisure services professionals to grasp and understand. Whether you are working for a municipal recreation department providing sport leagues for adults, for a nonprofit organization providing day camp programs for children with disabilities, as a commercial tour operator offering wilderness backpacking trips for inner-city youth, or an event coordinator planning a festival, programming is a central part of your job.

Most are well aware that quality leisure programming does not just happen—it is hard work. And, to complicate things a bit, programming can be viewed as both an art and a science. The art aspect of programming comes from experience and creativity while the scientific aspect of programming includes

the systematic study of preparing, delivering, and evaluating programs. The purpose of the early part of this book is to examine the philosophical and scientific aspects of programming to provide a strong foundation on which the intuitive (art) aspect of programming can be developed, nourished, and encouraged (see Figure 1.1 below).

Our goal is to explore both the art and science of programming, and to integrate a servant leadership perspective throughout the text (see the Programmer Profile at the beginning of this chapter). The importance of servant leadership is based on the premise that all parks, recreation, and leisure professionals serve their constituents through programs. Thus, a servant

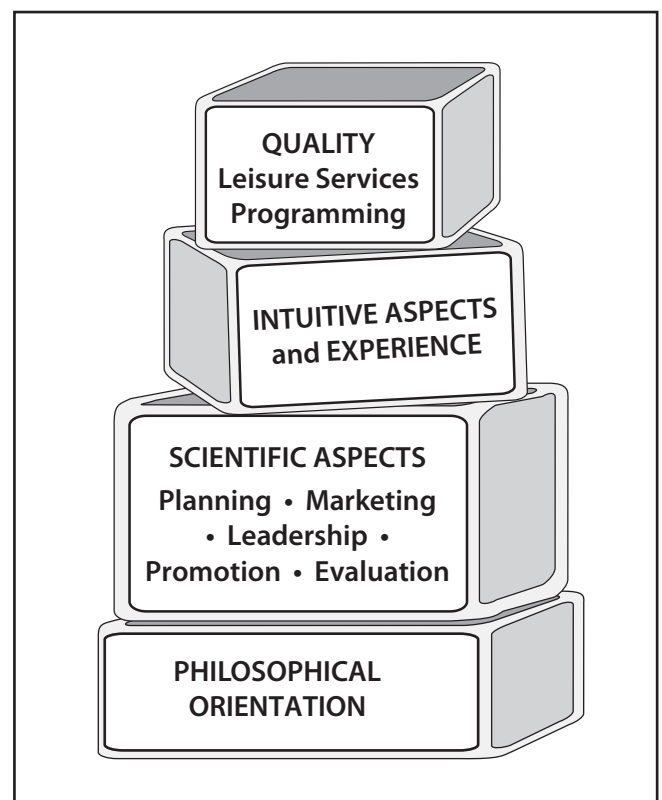


Figure 1.1 The building blocks of programming

leadership perspective is an integral aspect of programming. In describing the importance of servant leadership, Greenleaf (1977, p. 49) stated:

...if a better society is to be built, one that is more just and more loving, one that provides greater creative opportunity for its people, then the most open course is to raise both the capacity to serve and the very performance as servant of existing major institutions by new regenerative forces operating within them.

This chapter begins to lay the foundation for the remainder of this text. Operational definitions of leisure and recreation are presented along with a glimpse of the history of recreation programming and the relevance of programming in today's world. Individual and societal benefits of recreation programming are examined with an emphasis on helping the reader understand an outcomes-based management approach to programming. In addition, this chapter examines the role of the parks, recreation, and leisure services professional in the programming process, with special emphasis placed on helping the reader gain an understanding of the relevance and importance of servant leadership to programming. As the story about Leo and servant leadership in Greenleaf's Programmer Profile at the beginning of this chapter suggests, parks, recreation, and leisure professionals are often the *spirit and song* of society.

Definitions

An important starting point for understanding leisure programming is understanding the meaning of the



Figure 1.2 Leisure means different things to different people—variety is important in programs.

terms, *leisure* and *recreation*. Defining these terms is a complex task due to the individual nature of the leisure experience. In fact, semester-long courses in the history and philosophy of leisure are spent trying to understand these elusive concepts. Part of the difficulty is that what one person considers a leisure experience (e.g., gardening, jogging, reading) another might view as work. Although there is a danger of oversimplifying the concepts, we can see that throughout history, leisure has been identified in a number of different ways. These explanations have included leisure as time, a state of mind, activity, a symbol of social class, and as a holistic concept. Brief descriptions of these conceptualizations follow.

Leisure as Time

The easiest and most popular way economists and laypeople define leisure is by describing it as discretionary time; that is, time left over from work and other life maintenance activities. Discretionary time implies that individuals have choice, autonomy, and freedom to exercise their will to experience leisure.

Leisure as State of Mind

Defining leisure as a state of mind suggests the leisure experience is a function of one's subjective understanding of leisure. In this case, leisure is an attitude based on an individual's own perspective, feelings, values, and past life experiences.

Leisure as Activity

This definition pays no attention to the concept of leisure as it relates to what happens within an individual's mind; rather, leisure is defined by categories of activity such as sports, social activities, travel, and outdoor activities. This view is most closely aligned with the term *recreation*.

Leisure as a Symbol of Social Status

The evolution of a "leisure class" where people use leisure as a way of claiming or demonstrating social status in society by virtue of the products and services they consume or purchase can be seen throughout history. For example, the brand of athletic shoe and type of recreational equipment a person buys can express their desire to be aligned with a particular social group.

Leisure as a Holistic Concept

The holistic perspective suggests that leisure has the potential to be present in many forms of human endeavor. This focus of leisure is on an individual's ability to shape an integrated lifestyle in which opportunities to operate creatively, expressively, physically, and intellectually exist. Leisure as a holistic concept considers all aspects of one's life.



As can be seen from these explanations, no one definition of leisure can capture all that leisure represents. We do know, however, that leisure is a societally based phenomenon and is heavily influenced by culture. This means that there is no such thing as one universal definition that explains what leisure is in every society or in every situation. As can be imagined, this can present a challenge to those of us who program leisure experiences.

Whereas little consensus exists in defining the term *leisure*, the term *recreation* has commonly been viewed as an activity that is freely chosen and has the potential of many desirable outcomes. Further, most agree that recreation is an activity that takes place during one's free time, is enjoyable, freely chosen, and benefits the individual emotionally, socially, physically, cognitively, and/or spiritually.

Because these terms are closely related (and for ease of reading), we will use the terms *leisure* and *recreation* interchangeably throughout this text. Both terms will represent experiences that include the five factors explained in the following section. These factors have been shown to relate to satisfying leisure experiences (Neulinger, 1974; Samdahl, 1991), and are often achieved through recreation.

Freedom

To be free means to be able to act without interference or control from another, or to choose or act in accordance with one's own will. If we are free, no one else forces us to do something. We are free to choose to do anything. In order for a successful leisure experience to occur, participants must exercise some element of choice (freedom).

Perceived Competence

The perception of having skills and abilities necessary for successful participation leads to a satisfying leisure experience. Thus, in order for a successful leisure experience to occur, individuals must perceive themselves to have a

degree of competence equal to the challenges of the intended leisure experience. If not, they must freely choose to “stretch” themselves. Generally, people match their skill levels to their choice of participation in a particular game, activity, or experience.

Intrinsic Motivation

Beyond having the element of choice in leisure activities, participants must choose their involvement because they are moved from within and not because they are influenced by external factors. This means that the drive for leisure comes from within each person; the activity itself motivates an individual to act (rather than the motivation coming from a desire to lose weight, be with friends, and so forth).

Locus of Control

The concept of locus of control refers to the need to exert influence within the context of the leisure



Figure 1.3 Freedom is an important component in exploring leisure interests.

experience. Individuals need to have some control or influence within the leisure process in order for a successful leisure experience to occur. This does not mean that participants need to be involved in the planning of every aspect of every event, but they should feel some degree of control as the experience unfolds. For instance, participants might choose their teammates; influence the day, time, or place an activity occurs; or decide to modify rules.

Positive Affect

The remaining factor that relates to a satisfying leisure experience is that of positive affect. This refers to enjoyment—people who have positive affect are happy, upbeat, and pleasant. Recreation and leisure experiences offer inherent affect, and if they are truly recreation and leisure, result in positive affect for the participants.



Understanding these five factors as they relate to satisfying leisure experiences is very important if leisure services programmers are going to design and implement leisure programs and services to meet the needs and demands of a variety of people. When leisure professionals plan programs to help individuals experience these elements, they can facilitate a positive leisure experience.

Recreation Programs

Recreation programs are found in all areas of work and life in the public, nonprofit, and commercial sectors, which include the following types of leisure services organizations:

1. Public or governmental agencies at the federal, state, and local levels (e.g., National Park Service, City of Tucson Parks and Recreation Department, Mecklenberg County Parks and Recreation Department)
2. Voluntary nonprofit organizations, both nonsectarian and sectarian (e.g., Jewish Community Center, Boys & Girls Club of America)
3. Private membership associations (e.g., The Dunes Golf and Country Club, Green Valley Recreation, Inc.)
4. Commercial, profit-oriented recreation businesses (e.g., Schlitterbahn Waterpark Resort, Bar W Guest Ranch)
5. Armed Forces (although these are components of government, they constitute a distinct form of recreation programming) (e.g., Coast Guard Morale, Welfare and Recreation, Air Force Child Development Centers)
6. Campus recreation programs serving college and university students and staff members (e.g., University of California—Davis Campus Recreation and Intramurals, Boise State University Outdoor Program)
7. Corporate recreation programs serving company employees (USAA Insurance Employee Recreation and Fitness Centers, Yellowstone Co-Op Employee Recreation Program)
8. Therapeutic recreation services for people with special needs—both in clinical and community settings (e.g., Inclusion Programs, County of Maui Recreation and Support Division; Cincinnati Children's Hospital Therapeutic Recreation Division)

The scope and breadth of recreation programs in all of these settings continue to expand to meet the needs and demands of a variety of participants. For example, it is not uncommon to find senior citizens demanding high-risk activities like alpine skiing, adolescents wanting opportunities to travel, blended families who are looking for bonding opportunities, and singles flocking to wine tasting travel programs. The common tie between all these groups and activities is programming.

In addition to these types of organizations we have seen a continuous increase in partnerships between organizations to better meet the needs of participants. For instance, across the United States new programs are appearing as a result of collaboration between therapeutic recreation services and campus recreation programs. As an example, consider STRIVE, a nonprofit organization established 2004 with a mission to:

Enhanc[e] the quality of life for all our clients through the provision of world-class, enjoyable, and accessible recreational opportunities unlike any other available throughout Michigan. Through our dedication to professional development and advocacy for individuals with disabilities and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), we strive to

offer unique and excellent services through our programs, recreational therapy, consulting services and the rental, purchase, and construction of adaptive equipment. (STRIVE, 2007)

STRIVE partners with a wide range of individuals and organizations to provide leisure programs for people with disabilities (see Figure 1.4). They work with individuals as part of post-accident rehabilitation and assist in finding accessible recreation opportunities in a community. STRIVE also works with public parks and recreation departments to enhance programming for people with disabilities as well as with businesses and community organizations. They offer in-service trainings across the state of Michigan related to the ADA and working with individuals with disabilities.

Recreation programs have long been the lifeblood of leisure services organizations in that programs are the vehicle professionals use to deliver leisure benefits to both individuals and society. Programs are where people and parks, recreation, and leisure services organizations meet. *Recreation programs are purposeful interventions deliberately designed and constructed to produce certain behavioral outcomes (e.g., having fun with family and friends, meeting new people, learning new skills, increasing fitness levels) in an individual and/or group.* A key element to remember is that programs are not ends in themselves; rather, people (and the outcomes they desire) are the true reasons for the existence of leisure services organizations. This commitment to people through leisure can be seen throughout the history of the organized parks, recreation, and leisure movement in the United States, which dates back to the late 1800s. It is also the reason we call for a servant leadership approach to programming.

The Beginnings of Leisure Programming

Formal recreation organizations emerged during the late 1800s to address the tremendous social, psychological, and general welfare needs that grew out of the Industrial Revolution. Social reformers saw the potential of using play and recreation to improve people's quality of life. For instance, the Boston Sand Gardens (considered to be the first playground) were established to meet the play needs of disadvantaged children and give them a safe place to play. Also, many of the first organized camps were designed for and targeted at "sickly boys." Large city parks (e.g., Central Park in

New York) were designed in an attempt to regain the rural countryside in the middle of an urban area and give people who lived in crowded slum tenements a place to relax and "get away from it all." Further, the settlement house movement used recreation as a means to ease the transition of immigrants to living in large urban American cities (see the Programmer Profile for Jane Addams in Chapter Two). Sessoms and Stevenson have written that

Adult education, recreation, and social group work all have a common heritage. Each is a product of the social welfare reforms that occurred in our cities and industries at the turn of the nineteenth century. Their founders shared a belief—they were concerned with the quality of life and believed that through the "proper" use of leisure it could be achieved. (1981, p. 2)

Initially, many aspects of the recreation movement were focused on providing *places* for leisure—parks,



Photo courtesy of STRIVE RTS

Figure 1.4 A STRIVE program expanding the opportunities for people with disabilities.

playgrounds, and recreation centers. As the movement progressed the importance of organized programs was acknowledged. Curtis (1915) wrote, “the playground that has no program achieves little” (p. 163). Boden and Mitchell (1923) suggested that, “programs are necessary to make playgrounds more interesting and efficient” (p. 264). The expansion of leisure services programs has been a major factor in the growth and development of public recreation departments. As the profession matured and diversified, most public recreation agencies across the country adopted a philosophy that views leisure as an end in itself. In other words, public recreation drifted away from a social welfare model (with specific social service goals) and adopted a model of providing services to all.

Beginning in the last half of the twentieth century we have seen tremendous growth in all sectors of parks, recreation, leisure services, and other aspects of what is known as “the experience industry.” Public, private nonprofit, and commercial leisure services organizations continue to grow at a rapid rate. In addition, leisure services organizations have dealt with phenomenal social and economic changes. On one hand, the demand for leisure experiences has skyrocketed. People from all walks of life are seeking and demanding leisure experiences in their lives. At the same time, the environment in which these experiences can be created has also been changing. For example, both public and private nonprofit organizations are being asked to be more financially accountable and do more with less. Commercial organizations are being asked to be more ethically responsible (fuel/energy conscious) in the programs they offer (e.g., ecotourism). All organizations are being asked to respond to greater diversity in potential customer groups.

In examining the wide range of leisure services organizations that developed over the last 120 years, Godbey (1997) noted that three factors have shaped all forms of leisure services: the desire to help people; an entrepreneurial spirit; and changes in technology which facilitate or necessitate such intentions.

The Desire to Help People

Whether it be public agencies responding to the play needs of children by creating playgrounds, private nonprofit organizations developing summer camps to help children experience the great outdoors, or Thomas Cook (a commercial tour operator) creating traveler’s checks to help people feel secure when they travel, leisure services professionals have always demonstrated a desire to make people’s lives better. This is a vital element of the servant leadership philosophy that is even more important today.

Increasingly, leisure services organizations are being called upon to address a wide range of societal issues such as building community, encouraging healthier lifestyles, and preparing young people to be successful adults.

An Entrepreneurial Spirit

The entrepreneurial spirit may be defined as a belief in innovative ideas that result in quality products or services that will benefit both those who use the product and those who developed it. It also implies creativity, a willingness to take risks, and innovation. Putnam (2000) recognized this entrepreneurial spirit in the early social reformers who were instrumental in developing parks, playgrounds, and community centers. He said:

We desperately need an era of civic inventiveness to create a renewed set of institutions and channels for reinvigorating our civic life that fits the way we have come to live. Our challenge now is to reinvent the twenty-first century equivalent of the Boy Scouts or the Settlement House or the playground.... What we create may well look nothing like the institutions Progressives invented a century ago, just as their inventions were not carbon copies of the earlier small town folkways whose passing they mourned. We need to be as ready to experiment as the Progressives were. Willingness to err—and then correct our aim—is the price of success in social reform. (p. 401)

Changes in Technology

Successful parks, recreation, and leisure services organizations have always been able to respond to societal changes that are going on around them as evidenced by their entrepreneurial spirit. For example, in 1893, Jane Addams wrote, “the one thing to be dreaded in the settlement [house movement] is that it lose its flexibility, its power of quick adaptation, its readiness to change its methods as its environment may demand.” The environmental changes we have been experiencing in recent years include the technology boom. Technology has been (and is) growing and changing at an astonishing rate; it has been increasing in usability and accessibility for the masses, and because of this, it impacts leisure and leisure programming. Economist Jeremy Rifkin, in his book *The Age of Access* (2001), noted that we are headed for a new economic era where people will shift from a paradigm of ownership to one of experience. As experiences become more important, implications for leisure services organizations will become increasingly visible.

To be successful, leisure services programmers must build upon their past—by going forward—to meet and create the future. Recreation programmers will need to continue to respond to societal changes in innovative ways to empower individuals and communities to grow and develop through leisure programs.

Beneficial Outcomes of Leisure Programs

Today's complex world demands that parks, recreation, and leisure services providers understand societal changes as well as the specific beneficial outcomes customers expect from recreational programs and experiences. This knowledge is vital when planning and developing programs to meet constituent needs. In an attempt to accomplish this task, many leisure services organizations (especially public leisure services organizations) embrace a beneficial outcomes-based approach to providing services.

A beneficial outcomes approach to leisure has evolved from outcomes-focused management theory (Driver, 2008). This theory encourages recreation providers to consider a broad model for explaining outcomes in such a way that funders and managers understand the positive and negative outcomes of participating in leisure and recreation programs. Within such a model, benefits are defined as:

- an improved change in a condition. Individuals, communities, as well as biophysical and heritage resources can all experience these types of benefits. The gains can be psychological, physiological, social, economic, and/or environmental.
- maintenance of a desired condition, prevention of an undesired condition, or reduction of an undesired condition. These benefits include maintaining facilities, structures, and spaces; preventing social ills; and decreasing negative impacts on the natural environment.
- the realization of a satisfying recreation experience. Benefits one can accrue from participating in satisfying recreation experiences include a reduction in stress, increased physical fitness, and spiritual renewal. (Driver, 2008, p. 4–5)

In this regard, outcomes-focused management has become a major catalyst in helping to dispel a popular myth: that parks, recreation, and leisure agencies provide something of value, but only as long as the

pleasurable experience lasts. Outcomes-focused management, particularly the focus on beneficial outcomes, moves the leisure profession forward by integrating the concept that value is added to people's lives (and the environment) following on-site recreation participation. For example, Figure 1.5 (see p. 10) identifies a variety of immediate benefits and potential long-term benefits of a couple hiking together in a natural area.

According to Driver and Bruns (1999) the fundamental question raised by a benefits approach to leisure is

...[W]hy should a particular leisure service be provided? The answer to this question is formulated in terms of clearly defined positive and negative consequences of delivering that service with the objective being to optimize net benefits—or to add as much value as possible. To do this, leisure policy analysts and managers must understand what values would be added by each leisure service provided, articulate those values, and understand how to capture them. (p. 4)

Thus, it is important for programmers and managers to understand the immediate and potential long-term beneficial outcomes connected to their programs and work to maximize those outcomes. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has embraced the concept of outcomes-focused management starting in the 1990s with “The Benefits Are Endless” campaign. Although NRPA has moved on to other marketing campaigns, the message of these new promotions is consistent with an outcomes-focused management approach to providing services. Consider the recent efforts of the Florida Recreation and Park Association, which began the “It Starts in Parks” initiative to better position park and recreation in the future and to bring attention to the important beneficial outcomes and services provided by the profession. Through this campaign the following beneficial outcomes have been associated with recreation programs and facilities (see Figure 1.6, p. 11):

- **Achievement:** Big achievements in life start with small successes. Like learning how to be part of a team. Or figuring out that excellence comes from a daily commitment of time and hard work. Florida's parks give children a chance to learn those life lessons, to experience success early, and to dream big. Parks build future leaders by giving youth the opportunity to lead. Personal achievement. It starts in parks.

- **Community:** What transforms a crowd into a community? A chance for people to connect. Parks provide that chance. Florida's parks are where lifetime friendships are formed, where the gap between generations is bridged, where people discover what they have in common. How do you grow a hometown with a sense of community? It starts in parks.
- **Conservation:** Air. Water. Land. These are our greatest natural treasures. Yet, a growing population threatens the quantity and quality of these vital resources. Conserving green spaces and waterways for the generations to come is crucial for our very survival. Florida's parks hold a key. Preserving what's precious. It starts in parks.
- **Economic Development:** Parks offer the perfect venue for community and regional events—tournaments, concerts, exhibitions, food festivals—that draw visitors and new dollars into our backyard. A vibrant, growing community. It starts in parks.
- **Health:** Good Health—Physical activity is the key to maintaining a healthy body weight,

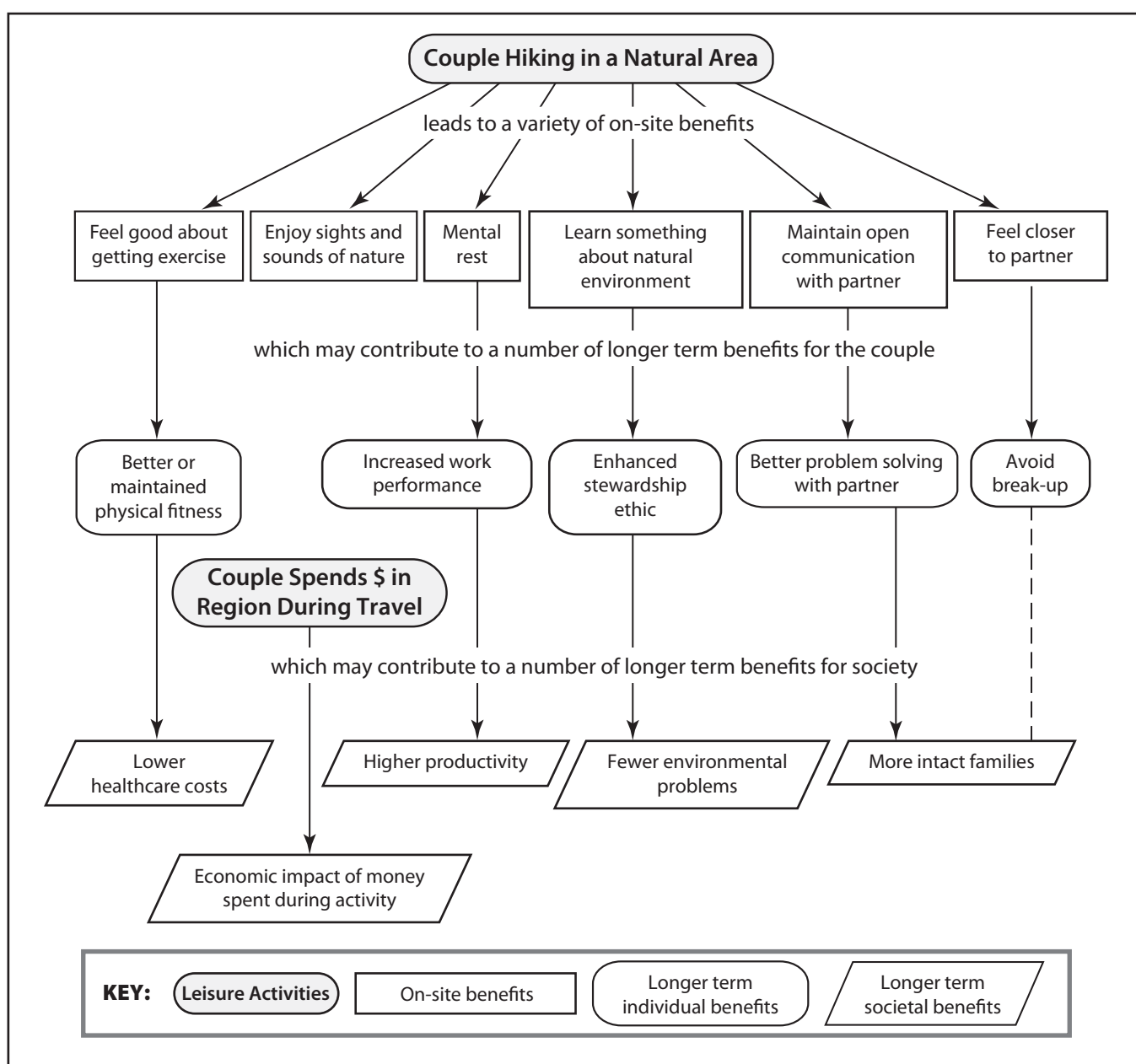


Figure 1.5 Benefits chain of causality (adapted from Driver & Bruns, 1999)

preventing disease and feeling better. A growing body of research shows that physically active adults and children are less prone to obesity, diabetes, heart disease—even depression. Florida’s parks offer a wide range of free and low-cost opportunities to get out and play. Physical activity and good health. It starts in parks.

- **Heritage: Ties to our Heritage...** One step brings you back in time to the days of European exploration (Spanish Conquistadors) and the Seminole Indians. Tour a reconstructed Seminole chickee, or a fort that has seen two wars and still stands today. Whether we were born and raised on the Florida peninsula, or just moved in yesterday, our rich heritage shapes who we are as Floridians and makes us proud to call Florida our home. Finding our shared heritage. It starts in parks.
- **Nature: Respect for Nature...** Whether it’s feeling the sun on your face, learning how things grow, or enjoying the awe-inspiring beauty of a summer’s day, nature’s innovation sustains us from the inside

out. Spending time outside reminds us of our unique place in the world. A connection to nature. It starts in parks.

- **Florida’s Future: 1,000 new residents a day.** With that kind of relentless population growth, people need a place to connect and form new relationships, to learn about Florida’s heritage and its natural treasures—a place to become Floridians. Florida’s parks are the place where it all comes together—a sense of community, an appreciation of history and place, respect for nature. How do you weave strangers into citizens? It starts in parks.

As one can see, the benefits of leisure are far reaching and can impact the well-being of both individuals and communities. With this in mind we now turn to examining each of these types of beneficial outcomes.



Figure 1.6 Example of a poster from the “It starts in parks” campaign

Beneficial Outcomes of Leisure for Individuals

Signs exist everywhere that people are concerned with improving the quality of their lives. We want a higher degree of life satisfaction—typically defined

as a stronger sense of well-being and more happiness. Understanding people's subjective level of happiness or well-being has drawn a lot of attention over the last twenty years (Weimer, 2008). Drawing from a wide range of research on happiness, Meyer has noted that

Table 1.1 Specific types and general categories of benefits (Moore & Driver, 2005)

Personal Benefits — Psychological	Personal Benefits — Psychophysiological
<p><i>Better Mental Health and Health Maintenance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holistic sense of wellness • Catharsis • Positive changes in mood and emotion • Stress management (i.e., prevention, mediation, and restoration) • Prevention of, or reduced, depression/anxiety/anger <p><i>Personal Development and Growth</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-confidence • Self-competence • Values clarification • Leadership • Adaptability • Spiritual growth • Problem solving • Tolerance • Environmental awareness/understanding • Balanced competitiveness • Independence/autonomy • Improved academic/cognitive performance • Sense of control over one's life • Prevention of problems to at-risk youth • Acceptance of one's responsibility • Cultural/historic awareness/learning/appreciation <p><i>Personal Appreciation and Satisfaction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of freedom • Flow/absorption • Stimulation • Challenge • Creative expression • Nature appreciation • Quality of life/Life satisfaction • Positive change in mood and/or emotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved control and prevention of diabetes • Increased bone mass and strength • Reduced spinal problems • Decreased body fat/obesity/weight control • Improved neuropsychological functioning • Reduced incidence of disease • Increased life expectancy • Management of menstrual cycles • Management of arthritis • Improved functioning of the immune system • Reduced or prevented hypertension • Reduced serum cholesterol and triglycerides • Reduced consumption of alcohol and use of tobacco • Increased muscle strength and healthier connective tissue • Cardiovascular benefits (including prevention of strokes) • Respiratory benefits (increased lung capacity, benefits to people with asthma)
Environmental Benefits	Social and Cultural Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental ethic • Maintenance of physical facilities • Stewardship/preservation of options • Public involvement in environmental issues • Maintenance of natural scientific laboratories • Preservation of particular natural sites and areas • Improved relationships with natural world • Understanding of human dependency on the natural world • Preservation of cultural/heritage/historic sites and areas • Environmental protection—ecosystem sustainability and species diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnic identity • Social support • Reciprocity/sharing • Cultural identity • Enhanced worldview • Reduced social alienation • Pride in community/nation (pride in place) • Community/political involvement • Social bonding/cohesion/cooperation • Conflict resolution/harmony • Support democratic ideal of freedom • Understanding and tolerance of others • Environmental awareness, sensitivity • Socialization/acculturation • Prevention of social problems by at-risk youth • Developmental benefits for children • Cultural/historical awareness and appreciation • Greater community involvement in environmental decision making
	Economic Benefits
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced health costs • Decreased job turnover • Reduced on the job accidents • Local and regional economic growth • Contribution to net national economic development • International balance of payments (from tourism) • Increased productivity • Less work absenteeism

Happiness depends less on exterior things than most suppose. Better clues come from knowing people's personality traits and the quality of their work and leisure experiences, knowing whether they enjoy a supportive network of close relationships, and knowing whether the person has a faith that encompasses social support, purpose, and hope. (2000, p. 65)

Weimer reported that “social scientists estimate that about 70% of our happiness stems from our relationships, both quantity and quality, with friends, family, coworkers, and neighbors. During life's difficult patches, camaraderie blunts our misery; during the good times, it boosts our happiness” (2008, p. 114). As a recreation programmer, it is important to note the role leisure plays in promoting a sense of well-being and happiness, and understand the role that recreation programs can play in promoting close relationships, social support, purpose, and hope.

In examining the benefits of leisure participation, Moore and Driver (2005) identified five categories of both individual (e.g., psychological, psychophysiological) and social benefits of leisure (e.g., sociological, economic, environmental). Table 1.1 (previous page) presents a few examples of specific benefits in each category. What additional benefits would you identify, and into which category would those benefits fall? In recent years parks and recreation professionals have worked hard to document many of these benefits through research and evaluation. The following are a few examples of studies documenting the role that recreation programs play in a person's well-being:

- Organized camping has had a positive impact on youth development. Reports from groups of children and young people, parents, and camp counselors indicate significant growth from pre-camp to post-camp in each of the following four domains: social skills, physical and thinking skills, positive identity, positive values, and spiritual growth. According to campers' self-reports at the six-month follow-up the gains realized at camp were maintained, particularly in the domains of positive identity (Henderson, Thurber, Scanlin, & Bialeschki, 2007).
- Physical benefits have been documented through evaluation results from the Heart N' Parks program. From eating more heart-healthy foods to being more physically active,

<http://www.sagamorepub.com/products/programming-parks-recreation-and-leisure-services-3rd-ed?src=lipdf>

participants in Hearts N' Parks programs across the country reported significant improvements in what they know, think, and do about heart-healthy eating and physical activity. A collaboration between the National Recreation and Park Association and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute of the National Institutes of Health, Hearts N' Parks is a community-based program designed to reduce the growing trend of obesity and to lower the risk of coronary heart disease in the United States. (Hearts N' Parks, 2004)

- In a literature review of leisure and subjective well-being, Estes and Henderson (2003) remind us of the central role that recreation and leisure play in fostering enjoyment for people in their day to day lives. They conclude: “with its focus on individual, community, environmental and economic outcomes, the ‘benefits’ movement has served the profession well as a foundation for documenting important extrinsic benefits of parks and recreation. Professionals shouldn't forget, however, that the outcomes related to enjoyment are still at the core of what makes our profession unique and valuable among other human service areas—we facilitate fun and intrinsically motivating experiences. Although the values of our profession go beyond ‘fun and games,’ enjoyment is, at all times, central to our work. Therefore, parks and recreation professionals would do well to remember the unique thing they do best—providing people opportunities for enjoyment” (p. 27).

Despite the many positive benefits of leisure, many individuals find obtaining them difficult—constraints interfere with experiences. Thus, leisure services programs are needed to help people experience leisure. Jackson (2005) have suggested that constraints are multidimensional, and noted that there is “...a stable range of categories of restraints to leisure, typically consisting of 1) cost of participating; 2) time and other constraints; 3) problems with facilities; 4) isolation (sometimes subdivided into social isolation and geographical isolation); and 5) lack of skill and abilities” (p. 7). Some of these factors can be addressed on an individual level, while others require collective action for an overall community or region. For instance, lack of time is often cited as one of the major constraints for individuals in experiencing leisure (Jackson, 1994; Jackson & Henderson, 1995). This seems to be related to what many sociologists have identified

as time famine for many Americans. Although some express disagreement over the extent of time famine for individuals, there is consensus that, real or not, people perceive that they are more rushed and believe they have less free time now than in the past. Many attribute this to the rapid pace of contemporary society. Regardless of the cause, people are feeling a time crunch, and this has led to a paradox inherent in leisure. In the past it may have been possible to allow leisure experiences to “just happen”; today individuals need to intentionally make time for leisure.

The implications of time famine for leisure services programs are diverse and include helping individuals create time for leisure, as well as preparing and educating individuals to use discretionary time wisely. According to Robinson and Godbey (1997), leisure services programmers can create programs that help individuals “back up and see what they have missed, accepting the gift of time” (p. 318). Likewise, Henry Ward Beecher’s advice over a century ago to “multiply picnics” by reconnecting with our friends and neighbors is still relevant today. “We should do this, ironically not because it will be good for America—though it will be—but because it will be good for us” (Putnam, 2000, p. 414).

Beneficial Outcomes of Leisure to Society

Leisure settings such as parks and community centers, and recreation programs such as sports leagues and art classes offer people the opportunity to connect with others and to build friendships. This is important because relationships play an essential role in our overall well-being. Weimer (2008) recently reiterated this in his book, *The Geography of Bliss: One Grump’s Search for the Happiest Place on the Planet*. Weimer reviewed the data on subjective happiness in countries around the world and concluded that,

Money matters, but less than we think and not in the way that we think. Family is important. So are friends. Envy is toxic. So is excessive thinking. Beaches are optional. Trust is not. Neither is gratitude...[Ultimately he concluded that] happiness is relationships and trustworthiness. Trust is a prerequisite for happiness. Trust not only of your government, of institutions, but trust of neighbors. Several studies, in fact, have found that trust—more than income or even health—is the biggest factor in determining happiness. (p. 92)

<http://www.sagamorepub.com/products/programming-parks-recreation-and-leisure-services-3rd-ed?src=lipdf>

In documenting the importance of creating places where trust can develop, Oldenburg (2000) coined the term *third place*. Third places are public places where people can gather and interact informally. In contrast to first places (home) and second places (work/school), third places allow people to put aside their concerns and simply enjoy the company and conversation around them. Third places include such places as parks, organized camps, sports fields, basketball courts, main streets, community centers, senior centers, fitness centers, pubs, cafes, coffeehouses, post offices, and other places that are the heart of a community’s social vitality and the foundation of a functioning democracy. They promote social equality by leveling the status of those present, provide a setting for grassroots politics, create habits of public association, and offer psychological support to individuals and communities.

An example of a third place that has incorporated recreation programs into their operations is the Green Bean, a nonprofit coffee shop in Seattle. The guiding philosophy of the Green Bean is simple hospitality:

When coffee beans arrive from their country of origin, they are jade green in color. As they are roasted a transformation occurs which brings them to their full potential and aroma. Just like the bean itself, the Green Bean Coffeehouse is here to promote positive transformation in the lives of those who share their time with us. It’s our hope to exist as a community center as much as a café; here you can expect a mean cup of coffee, a fantastically inviting atmosphere and programs that both encourage individuals and foster connections between all who enter here. (greenbeancoffee.org, 2009)

The owners say, “we want to provide a space where people can feel loved and accepted and have their gifts appreciated no matter who they are.” That means that besides serving up a great cup of coffee and fantastic treats and sandwiches, they also offer a wide variety of programs such as children’s story time, summer backpacking trips, concerts, community festivals, and classes that range from knitting to women’s self defense to hip-hop dance. They focus their programming on building relationships with customers and as one of the co-founders puts it, “saying yes to them. Yes to the homeless people who want to contribute something and offer to sweep or wash windows. Yes to the lonely students who offer to help do the baking. Yes to the

artists who want to display their work and the activists who want to publicize events” (“Serving up Yes!,” 2006).

Social Capital

Understanding and advocating for the societal beneficial outcomes of leisure demands that leisure services professionals are able to articulate these outcomes in contemporary terms. One such term that has been receiving increasing attention is social capital, defined as “features of social life—networks, norms, and trust—that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives” (Putnam, 1995 cited in Robinson & Godbey, 1997, p. 168). This is a critical element to the success of democracy. Yet, Putnam, in his book *Bowling Alone* (2000), documents the decline of social capital in the U.S. as reflected by decreasing membership in voluntary organizations such as the Boy Scouts, the League of Women Voters, and Parent Teacher Associations. Putnam (2000) also recognizes leisure services professionals and the programs they offer as important elements in rebuilding the social capital needed for us to move forward as communities.

L. Judson Hanifan, a young educator, first identified the idea of social capital in 1916 when he returned to his native West Virginia to work in the rural school system after being gone for several years. He observed that older customs, general neighborliness, and civic engagement (e.g., debating societies, barn raisings, apple cuttings) had been neglected and people had become less considerate of their neighbors. As a result, families were isolated and the community stagnated (Putnam & Goss, 2002). As the theory of social capital has developed, various distinctions of social capital have emerged; they include:

Formal versus informal social capital. Formal social capital refers to organizations that have recognized officers, membership requirements, dues, and regular meetings, like clubs and associations. Informal social capital refers to nonformal gatherings, like pickup games of basketball or people who gather at a pub or coffeehouse.

Thick versus thin social capital. Thick social capital is closely interwoven and multistranded such as a group of steelworkers who work, play, and worship together. Such strong ties are defined in terms of frequency of contact and closeness, while a weak or thin tie is someone

with whom an individual has a passing acquaintance and shares few common friends.

Inward-looking versus outward-looking social capital. Some social capital is inward-looking and tends to promote the material, social, or political interests of its members, while other social capital is outward-looking and concerns itself with public goods such as seeking the common good (i.e., what is in the best interest of all).

Bridging versus bonding social capital. These types of social capital are similar to the inward and outward-looking forms of social capital. Specifically, bridging social capital refers to the social networks that bring people together who are unlike one another. Bonding social capital usually brings together people who are like one another in some respect (e.g., ethnicity/race, sex/gender, religion; Putnam & Goss, 2002).

It is interesting to note the multidimensional nature of social capital as well as the connection between the various forms of social capital. For example, informal, thin, outward-looking, and bridging social capital all share some common characteristics; likewise the formal, thick, inward-looking, and bonding types of social capital appear connected. Although all types of social capital are important, Florida (2002) notes that

where strong ties among people were once important, weak ties are now more effective. Where old social structures were once nurturing, now they are restricting... our evolving communities and emerging society are marked by a greater diversity of friendships, more individualistic pursuits and weaker ties within the community. People want diversity, low entry barriers, and the ability to be themselves. (p. 269)

This type of informal social capital can be generated through recreation programs and may be best suited for knitting a society together and for building broad norms of generalized reciprocity. Hanifan, himself, documented the connection between social capital and recreation programs.

The community as a whole will benefit by the cooperation of all its parts, while the individual will find in his [sic] associations the advantages

of the help, the sympathy, and the fellowship of his neighbors....When the people of a given community have become acquainted with one another and have formed a habit of coming together occasionally for entertainment, social intercourse, and personal enjoyment, then by skilled leadership this social capital may easily be directed towards the general improvement of the community well-being. (cited by Putnam, 2002, p. 5)

The recent attention being paid to social capital has generated much debate over whether social capital has declined or is changing into new ways for people to connect. Certainly, technology has influenced the way people connect in the 21st century. As this debate plays out, many believe that significant attention in the United States needs to “be devoted to creating social capital that does a better job of bridging between the privileged and the marginalized” (Wuthnow, 2002, p. 102).

Likewise, it is important to understand the kinds of support that individuals and families will need in the future. We cannot be bound by the past and we must be willing to consider that “the life we think about as uniquely American—close families and friends, tight neighborhoods, civic clubs, vibrant electoral politics, strong faith-based institutions and a reliance on civic leadership—is giving way to something new” (Florida, 2002, p. 269).

From the context of an outcomes approach to leisure, the connection between social capital and recreation programs is an important one to explore. Early research on leisure and social capital is mixed and some caution must be used in directly correlating social capital and leisure. Hemingway (2000), in examining the role of leisure in building social capital, noted that the importance of social capital to a democratic society cannot be overlooked; in addition, research is needed to examine the role leisure can play in reinventing and encouraging social capital. The Viata program in Romania, an outreach of the New Horizons Foundation, is one example of a recreation program that is working on “developing caring citizens who feel empowered to act” (check the web at <http://www.new-horizons.ro>).

In an effort to document the benefits of its program, Viata initiated a study of 327 Romanian youth to see if there was a significant difference in social capital between campers entering and exiting one of their one-week programs. Social capital was measured by asking questions on four dimensions: interpersonal

trust, teambuilding, participant perception of their own qualities and abilities, and empowerment.

In their study Colyn, DeGraaf, and Certan (2008) found a significant difference in social capital between pre- and post-test scores for those who had participated in the one-week camp. This change in social capital could be a result of the interpersonal trust dimension, which has been identified as one of the most important components of social capital as it contributes to the development of other values and abilities (e.g., empowerment, teambuilding, cooperation). In this specific study, data indicated that interpersonal trust increased in campers by 23% following the experience. The other three dimensions (team building, self perception of their own qualities and abilities, and empowerment) also showed some increase over the course of a one-week camp experience.

A second finding by Colyn, DeGraaf, and Certan (2008) indicated that youth who had participated in previous experiences emphasizing cooperation among group members had a higher level of trust entering the camp experience than youth who had never participated in such activities. This suggests that the more youth are exposed to camp experiences like this one, the greater the opportunity to develop interpersonal trust with others.

Building social capital may be one of the major ways in which all parks, recreation, and leisure organizations whatever the service orientation—private, public, or commercial—serve society (Russell, 2002). Commercial leisure services organizations may be involved on an individual level, assisting individuals in building bonding social capital with family and friends. Public organizations, on the other hand, might be more involved at a community level, encouraging the development of bridging social capital. Strengthening the social fabric of communities through leisure experiences can help build neighborhood ties and strengthen intergroup and intergenerational relations. The American Planning Association has developed a series of briefing papers highlighting the community benefits of parks (2002). In one of their papers, staff



Figure 1.7 The New Horizons Foundation is working to develop social capital.

make three key points: “1) parks are one of the quickest and most effective ways to build a sense of community and improve quality of life; 2) parks provide places for people to connect and interact in a shared

environment; and 3) parks channel positive community participation by getting diverse people to work together toward a shared vision” (p. 1).

In addition to social capital, Russell (2002) identified the importance of leisure in building the cultural capital that people need to be successful in life. The more cultural capital an individual has, the greater her or his potential to succeed in school and occupations. In many ways, leisure pastimes and recreation experiences provide individuals the shared experiences they need to succeed in society. Russell cited the research of Downey and Powell (1993) as an example of the power of recreation to help children succeed in school. The researchers found that eighth graders who were most successful in school participated in scouting, hobby clubs, neighborhood clubs, Boys and Girls Clubs, nonschool team sports, 4-H, YMCA/YWCA activities, and summer and other recreation programs.

Crompton (2008) has also identified the importance of recognizing the community benefits of recreation programs, especially for public and nonprofit organizations, which compete strongly for tax dollars as well as grants and donations (Figure 1.8). Crompton argues that if recreation programs simply look to provide on-site benefits to those who participate in our programs (individual benefits), we run the risk of losing the support of the larger public who may not participate in these programs. “To gain the support of nonusers, an agency has to provide a convincing answer to the question, ‘what is in it for them?’ Broader community support is likely to be dependent on an agency being able to demonstrate in easily recognized, preferably quantifiable terms that tax payers and elected officials understand that park and recreation services are effectively and efficiently addressing issues of importance to the community. Widespread community support will be based primarily on the off-site benefits that accrue to nonusers, rather than on on-site benefits that accrue to users” (p. 192).

As a result of the emphasis placed on the beneficial outcomes of leisure over the last twenty years, the profession has quantifiable evidence of the impact of recreation facilities and programs. Crompton (2008) organized these beneficial outcomes into the following three areas: 1) economic prosperity, 2) environmental sustainability, and 3) alleviating social problems. Understanding the community benefits as well as such important concepts as social and cultural capital, provide a strong argument for more public support of recreation facilities and programs in the future. Yet, we cannot stop at simply

Each of the benefits listed in this figure are a result of research studies that demonstrate the role that recreation programs, services, and facilities play in the community.

Economic Prosperity: Recreation programs and services generate additional tax revenues, create jobs, and enhance economic development; these benefits can take the form of:

- Attracting tourists
- Attracting businesses
- Attracting retirees
- Enhancing real estate values
- Reducing taxes
- Stimulating equipment sales

Environmental Sustainability: Parks, open spaces, and other natural areas provide environments where natural resources can function as intended, and cost effectively. These services include:

- Protecting drinking water
- Controlling flooding
- Cleaning air
- Reducing traffic congestion
- Decreasing energy costs
- Preserving biological diversity

Alleviating Social Problems: A failure to invest resources in delivering services today often creates bigger issues for the overall community at a later date. Recreation programs, services, and facilities are a strong vehicle for facilitating the social process of enhanced social connectedness (social capital). These benefits include:

- Moderating environmental stress
- Regenerating communities
- Preserving cultural and historical resources
- Facilitating healthy lifestyles
- Reducing deviant behavior
- Raising levels of educational achievement
- Alleviating unemployment distress

Figure 1.8 Community benefits of leisure (Crompton, 2008)

understanding the community benefits of recreation programs and facilities; the key to sustaining this support is for public and nonprofit organizations to continually reposition themselves so they are perceived to contribute to alleviating a community's most pressing problems. According to Crompton, the key question is, "What can leisure services deliver more effectively and efficiently than other agencies or organizations, which contributes to resolving important community problems?" (p. 201). As discussed earlier in this chapter, the "It Starts in Parks" campaign is one attempt to connect recreation programs and facilities to many contemporary issues in our communities.

Leisure Services Professionals

Many people feel that the increasing number of leisure choices for participants, the concern about the lack of social capital in communities, and the growing time famine are just some of the challenges that must be overcome in planning, implementing, and evaluating leisure services programs. Addressing problems such as these takes a tremendous commitment on the part of leisure services organizations. In addition to organizational commitment, energetic and skilled professionals who desire to serve others and live with a servant leadership orientation are needed.

Leisure services programmers may be found working in a variety of agencies and organizations including public agencies (e.g., city, county, state, and federal governments), private, nonprofit agencies (e.g., religious sponsored organizations, youth serving organizations, organizations serving special populations [hospitals, treatment centers], relief organizations, social service organizations, conservation organizations, service clubs), and commercial organizations (e.g., travel tour operators, entertainment services, theme parks). Because of leisure programmers' widespread impact, our role as leisure services professionals is to understand the power and potential of leisure services experiences to meet desired ends (outcomes) of constituents. Whether we are involved in direct leadership, organizing a specific aspect of a program or event, or managing a leisure facility, programmers are pivotal to the success of leisure services organization.

Characteristics and Skills of Leisure Services Professionals

First and foremost, the leisure services programmer is a professional. This is true to the extent that we are members of a profession that has a statement or code of

ethics, an accreditation process for practitioner preparation programs, a professional association that seeks to provide continuing education and establish standards (e.g., ACA, NRPA, AEE), and individual certification (e.g., CPRP, CTRS, CRSS). We also exhibit various qualities that reflect our professionalism, including taking initiative, having integrity, and following through with tasks related to programs and services.

According to Edginton, Hudson, Dier, and Edginton (2004) the efforts of a professional are directed toward service rather than simply financial remuneration. The professional is concerned about the overall well-being of participants and works for their growth and development. In addition to serving constituents, programmers provide services to their communities, their organization, and work colleagues. In these capacities, programmers use a variety of skills. These skills are often grouped into three areas: technical skills, human relation skills, and conceptual skills (Jordan, 2007). Technical skills are those that are specific to accomplishing tasks. They enable a person to do a particular job or task. Examples include managing a pool at an aquatics center, leading a game, and recording a city festival on videotape. Human relation skills are those skills and techniques that involve relationships with people. Understanding group dynamics, facilitating cooperation and trust, and communicating with participants all fit within the human relations realm of leadership. Conceptual skills include the ability to analyze, anticipate, and see the big picture of programs and activities. Critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, and being able to handle ambiguity are commonly considered conceptual skills.

In looking at the kind of experiences that foster job skills in recreation organizations, Knapp (as cited by Knapp & McLean, 2002) identified five categories of developmental career experiences: 1) exposure to challenges, 2) networking, 3) involvement in professional organizations, 4) building a sense of community, and 5) interaction with mentors. Job-related experiences have long been a powerful source of learning for programmers and it is important for recreation organizations to develop strategies to help young professionals grow and develop. To ensure a meaningful and successful future, established parks, recreation, and leisure services professionals must move toward enriching jobs and empowering new professionals. This will take some planning, but will pay dividends as the next generation of qualified practitioners grow and develop. In developing these skills on an individual level, Godbey (1997) identified a number of strategies for those who will work in leisure services in the twenty-first century. Similar to

the factors that have shaped our field identified earlier in this chapter, the strategies center on being adaptable and innovative in serving others. These strategies include serving others, becoming an entrepreneur, seeking continuous learning opportunities, being flexible, and calling attention to the importance of what we do.

Serving Others

An ethic of service will continue to distinguish leisure services in the public, private nonprofit, and commercial sectors. A leisure services programmer emphasizes the people served and the beneficial outcomes provided rather than the program itself. Thus, leisure programs are not thought of as an end, but rather

...a means to an end—a higher quality of life, increased learning, better health, improved physical fitness, more appreciation and understanding of nature, improved morale, and less crime are among the many benefits....The worth of the profession (and the professional) is not linked to recreation, but to the benefits recreation, under some conditions and in some circumstances, can provide. (Godbey, 1997, p. 228)

Becoming an Entrepreneur

Peter Drucker, a noted management theorist, believes that entrepreneurship involves systematic innovation. According to Drucker (1985), systematic innovation consists of the purposeful and organized search for changes and systematic analysis of the opportunities such changes might offer for economic or social innovation. A new entrepreneurial spirit has emerged in the United States and Canada, reflected by the number of unique new jobs that emerged over the past few decades. These new jobs result from entrepreneurial ventures in the service and information sectors of society, with many in the leisure services area. “Entrepreneurs serve as pace-setters of opportunity, a challenging and demanding role. Their work is dynamic, diverse, inventive, and creative. Entrepreneurs produce new ways of meeting needs, work to improve existing products and services, and respond to changing demographic conditions” (Edginton, Jordan, DeGraaf & Edginton, 2002, p. 311).

Seeking Continuous Learning Opportunities

As the primary basis of the economy becomes knowledge (rather than manufacturing, for instance) parks, recreation, and leisure services professionals

will need to remain current with the world around them through lifelong learning. Professionals seek out these experiences at professional meetings, workshops, and conferences, as well as through opportunities provided by university extension programs and self-education (e.g., reading, watching training videos, webinars, and podcasts).

Becoming More Flexible

In a world of rapid and continuing change, the ability to adapt to changing circumstances is critical. One of the worst ways that professionals in leisure services sometimes lose flexibility is to assume that an issue does not concern them because “leisure” is not a central theme.

Leisure is among the more diverse and complex ideas in the world and, perhaps unfortunately, it relates to myriad issues that concern freedom, pleasure, human growth and understanding, health, nature, spirit, learning and other huge ideas. Becoming more flexible means the boundaries of what is relevant to you must become more flexible. (Godbey, 1997)

Calling Attention to the Importance of What We Do

Leisure services professionals must believe in the power and potential of leisure programs to affect change in the lives of individuals and society. We must be strong and vocal advocates, stressing the notion that leisure (and related) services are critical components of society, not just “frosting on the cake.” Leisure services can contribute to the creation of an environment that nourishes the human potential. Leisure services professionals must also believe in their own ability to make a difference in the world. Little things do matter.

In a wide variety of settings, leisure programmers blend these skills and strategies to design programs that facilitate leisure experiences for participants. In the programming process, programmers manipulate a variety of variables in the physical, natural, and social environments that help participants experience the conditions needed to produce a leisure experience (e.g., freedom, perceived competence, intrinsic motivation, locus of control, and positive affect). Within this framework it is important to remember that programmers do not produce recreation experiences and outcomes, but instead produce *opportunities* for recreationists to produce these experiences and benefits for themselves. Thus, leisure services managers produce recreation opportunities, just as teachers produce learning opportunities and doctors produce

health-restoring opportunities. Identifying the process of creating, implementing, and evaluating programs, and understanding how programmers can manipulate the variables associated with this process is a recurring theme throughout this text.

Programming: A Servant Leadership Approach

In designing opportunities for leisure, we believe there is a need for a new type of leadership and programming model, a model that puts serving others—including customers, employees, and the community—as the number one priority. As a result, we advocate a servant leadership approach as the foundation upon which leisure and recreation programming should be based for all types of recreation and leisure organizations. We believe this emphasis on serving others stresses the similarities between various commercial, private nonprofit, and public organizations rather than their differences. Although the philosophy of each of these types of organizations will impact programming decisions, the underlying desire to serve will remain constant.

In some ways the term *servant leadership* is an oxymoron, since people commonly view a leader as one who leads and a servant as one who follows. Yet, this is part of the inherent value of the concept of servant leadership; the importance of both leadership and followership are emphasized. All of us both lead and follow. One is not better than the other; in the course of our lives we are called to do both.

Leisure professionals must learn to be good leaders by learning to be good followers, by listening to participants and by helping them lead so we (as leisure professionals) can follow. This holds true in programming. We must truly listen to our constituents and follow their lead before we make global statements about appropriate programming. Thus, servant leadership offers a powerful foundation to guide the recreation programming process. Throughout the remainder of this book, we will examine how the characteristics of servant leaders fit into the overall planning process to help recreation professionals co-create programs. In this way, we feel the reader will be prepared to follow in the footsteps of the early pioneers like Jane Addams (see the Programmer Profile at the beginning of Chapter Two), to improve the quality of life of individuals, and contribute to the common good of society.

Characteristics and Skills of Servant Leaders

Spears (1995) identified servant leadership as an approach that

...attempts to simultaneously enhance the personal growth of workers and improve the quality and caring of our many institutions through a combination of teamwork and community, personal involvement in decision making and ethical and caring behavior. (p. 4)

The power of the servant-leadership model lies in the ability of its ideas to inspire us to be collectively more than the sum of our individual parts. According to Greenleaf, leadership should call us to serve something or someone beyond ourselves, a higher purpose. Thus, one of the most important aspects of leadership is helping organizations and staff identify their higher purpose. It is worth restating that the best test of servant-leadership is...

...do those served, grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society: Will he [or she] benefit; or at least will he [or she] not be further deprived? (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 24)

To achieve this higher purpose in our leisure services organizations, we must be passionate about our desire to improve our communities and ourselves. The process of becoming a servant leader demands that we understand our own strengths and shortcomings. To guide individuals in this process, we present ten characteristics of servant leaders in Table 1.2 (Spears, 1995).

When considering the ten characteristics of servant leaders, it is important to look at them in relationship to one another rather than as individual elements. Rather than a ladder or a cyclical process, where characteristics build upon each other or lead one to the other, it is more appropriate to view these characteristics as a weaving, with each strand supporting and shaping each other. As with any good weaving, the servant leader draws greater strength from the combination of these characteristics rather than their application in isolation. The servant leader who is able to combine these ten characteristics in a dynamic process when dealing with people and the environment will fulfill the potential of servant leader-

ship to make a difference in the lives of the people they serve. DeGraaf, Tilley, and Neal (2004) have identified three key themes that run through the ten characteristics and form the foundation on which they are built. These three themes are reflection, integrity, and passion.

Reflection

To commit to being a servant leader, one must create time to reflect in order to understand who he or she is and how he or she relates to staff, customers, and the larger community. This is referred to as being

reflexive. Being reflexive provides the opportunity to step back and understand the big picture of the organization while not forgetting the small integral parts that must come together to help achieve the mission. Self-reflection helps one to rejuvenate and find the inner confidence to move forward in dealing with staff and customers, as well as practice such characteristics as listening, empathy, healing, conceptualization, and foresight.

Table 1.2 The ten characteristics of servant leaders (Spears & Lawrence, 2002)

The ability to listen.

Listening is the first characteristic of servant leadership, for it is through listening that many of the other characteristics can be nurtured. When we listen, not just to others but also to our own internal voice we create a mindset that fosters such characteristics as empathy, awareness, foresight, and commitment to others.

The ability to empathize with others.

Empathy is the capacity for participation in another's feelings or ideas; it is important in dealing with staff and customers. People need to be accepted and recognized for their special and unique spirits.

The ability to offer healing.

Being a healer within our organizations starts with understanding the "matters of the heart." Learning to heal is a powerful force for transformation and integration. The desire to foster the healing process in our organizations comes to us as we listen and empathize with those with whom we serve and work.

The ability to be self-aware.

In our ever-changing world, the need for leaders to be aware of their customers, their staff, and their organizations is well-documented. Yet, servant leaders are asked to take an additional step, to develop self-awareness. This entails making time for self-reflection, to understand the big picture. This type of general awareness, and especially self-awareness, aids in understanding issues involving ethics and values. It enables one to view most situations from a more integrated position.

The ability to build consensus.

Servant leadership offers a scenario whereby leaders encourage workers to build consensus around the true purpose of the organization as well as the means of achieving this purpose. Within this type of environment, staff are encouraged to use persuasion rather than coercion in influencing others to their point of view.

The ability to conceptualize "what might be."

From an early age, we are taught to deal with complexity by breaking things down into their separate parts. The flip side of this approach is to see the big picture, or to see things whole, we need to put the pieces back together. The ability to see things whole and offer a preferred vision for programs or the organization as a whole is critical to the success of any program or organization.

The ability to foresee issues and plot the course of the organization.

Foresight is closely related to the ability to conceptualize the future, yet still distinct. Conceptual skills allow us to see the big picture, the *where* we want to go. Foresight allows us to map out how we are going to get there by anticipating the various consequences of our actions and then picking the action that will best serve the organization.

The ability to be a good steward.

In today's society, stewardship is often seen in association with environmental or financial responsibility, yet it can be so much more if we are willing to be accountable for something larger than ourselves. Peter Block, in his book *Stewardship: Choosing Service Over Self-Interest*, defines stewardship as "the willingness to be accountable for the well-being of the larger organization by operating service, rather than control, of those around us. Stated simply, it is accountability without control or compliance."

The ability to be committed to the growth of others.

By committing to the growth and development of staff and customers, servant leaders can adopt a benefits-based approach to delivering services and recognizing the inherent power of our programs and services to make a difference. Consider how the definition of a benefit parallels the ultimate test of a servant leader. A benefit is defined as a realization of desired and satisfying on-site experience, changes that are viewed to be advantageous as a result of an experience, or the prevention of a worse condition. Now reconsider Greenleaf's ultimate test of a servant leader. "Do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants (the realization of desired and satisfying on-site experiences)? What is the effect on the least privileged in society: Will they benefit (improvement in condition) or, at least, will they not be further deprived (prevention of a worse condition)?"

The ability to build community.

Servant leaders are committed to contributing to the bigger picture, constantly looking for ways in which their programs and organizations can contribute to the "common good." This can be accomplished in many ways. For example, building community through programs, encouraging virtuous behavior in staff, and encouraging customers to take responsibility for themselves and their actions lead to the common good.

Integrity

One definition of integrity is completeness, the ability to live out one's values and vision as well as dealing with others in a straightforward manner. By being reflexive and thinking before acting, servant leaders can deal with people and programs with integrity. When a leader is perceived as acting with integrity, it enables her or him to be a healing force within the organization and to persuade others to her or his point of view. Leaders who are perceived to act with integrity are well on the way to earning the trust and support of staff and customers, which is needed to harness the synergistic power that is inherent in servant leadership.

Passion

Passion goes beyond simply being dramatic, powerful, and emotional; it is more accurately characterized as an unfailing dedication to an ideal. Thus, intensity and duration often demonstrate passion. Seeing things through over the long haul, whether it be a program or the way a department functions, and not being deflected requires passion. When servant leaders can demonstrate their passion for many of the core values of their organization, they reaffirm their organization's commitment to the growth of people and building social capital within their communities. As a result, we must continue to develop the "inner fire within ourselves." This allows us to continue to deliver programs and services at a high level over the long-term, as well as encouraging a passion for services within our staff to meet the needs of customers.



In following through on these themes of reflection, integrity, and passion, servant leaders can begin to weave many of the characteristics presented in Table 1.2 (p. 21) with the characteristics and skills of leisure services professionals presented in the preceding section. Through this integration process, we can create the blend of compassion and effectiveness that is the mark of a servant leader. However, it is also important to stress that there are no easy answers presented in this model and that the concept of the servant leader is a paradox. The real strength of the concept is in remembering the process of balancing the concept of servant and leader is not *either/or*; it is *and*. In the end, being a servant leader is not something we do, but rather something we are. It is about creating the right environment to get the best out of people and unleash their true potential.

Summary

All parks, recreation, and leisure services organizations are concerned with programming. After all, programs are the vehicle professionals use to deliver leisure benefits to both individuals and society. In this chapter we have laid the foundation for understanding the recreation programming process by presenting definitions, a very brief history, and a number of important concepts. First and foremost, recreation programmers must understand the five prevailing factors that characterize the leisure experience—freedom, perceived competence, intrinsic motivation, locus of control, and positive affect. Freedom implies choice, spontaneity, and being free from constraints that inhibit participation. Perceived competence refers to the skills that an individual believes she or he possesses that will contribute to successful participation. Intrinsic motivation refers to an individual's desire to participate in leisure experiences based on personal needs and desires, rather than external motivation. Locus of control refers to the need of an individual to control elements of the leisure experience once she or he is engaged in the process, and positive affect refers to a sense of enjoyment. Understanding these factors as they relate to satisfying leisure experiences is imperative if parks, recreation, and leisure services programmers are going to design and implement programs and services to meet the needs and demands of a variety of people.

A second important consideration in delivering leisure experiences is the concept of outcomes-focused programming. An outcomes-focused approach to leisure encourages a broad understanding of the long-term and short-term beneficial outcomes provided by the leisure experience. Both individual and societal benefits exist. The development of social capital is one common outcome or benefit of parks, recreation, and leisure services programs. In many ways, benefits serve as the driving force behind programming approaches.

In addition to discussing the foundations of recreation programming, we also introduced the role of the programmer in planning, implementing, and evaluating programs. Important elements include understanding what it means to be a part of a profession as well as defining what makes a profession—a code of ethics, opportunities for accreditation and certification, taking advantage of ongoing educational opportunities, and behaving with integrity. Within the professional context, we presented servant leadership as a philosophical approach to programming leisure experiences. Servant leadership emphasizes increased service to others by

encouraging shared decision making and a sense of community. Such an approach emphasizes the three factors that have shaped all forms of leisure services at their best: the desire to help people, an entrepreneurial spirit, and the ability to respond to societal changes.

Servant leaders exhibit a number of important characteristics. Each subsequent chapter of this book will highlight various characteristics from Table 1.2 that fit with the contents of that chapter. One characteristic—commitment to the growth of people—flows through every chapter in the book, and is profiled here. Edginton and Chen (2008) in their book, *Leisure as Transformation*, note that leisure provides an optimal environment for individuals to seek new experiences, experiment, and to learn and grow anew. Leisure provides an environment that enables individuals to change or to be transformed. They go on to note

Increasingly, leisure service providers will be viewed as advocates, social entrepreneurs, community organizers, facilitators, as well as direct service providers. This new focus for assisting and facilitating the process of transformation; helping individuals, communities, and nations think differently about issues related to social justice, the environment, and in general their social development including how humans use their creative abilities to enhance their quality of life and well-being from multiple perspectives including social, cultural, and economic interests related to leisure. Because the properties of leisure not only assist people in the transformation or change process, but also help individuals maintain a link to their more stable roots, leisure service providers will be key agents in assisting individuals to cope with the ever increasing social, cultural and economic disruptions that will occur during this time of great transformation. (p. 127)

In fulfilling this role, leisure services programmers must not only help people grow and develop, but must also help them deal with the changing world. This is a tremendous responsibility, as well as an opportunity to fulfill the promise of leisure for both individuals and communities. It is our hope that this book will help you catch the vision of the possibilities of recreation programs to make a difference, while also giving you the tools and knowledge to create programs that help participants grow and develop.

Key points presented in this chapter that will serve as the foundation of this book include:

- All parks, recreation, leisure services, and related organizations are concerned with programming—it is the lifeblood of what we do.
- Recreation programs have the potential to make a positive difference in the lives of individuals and their communities if they are well-planned and implemented; programs must be purposeful interventions.
- Programs are not ends in themselves; they are the means by which leisure services professions produce beneficial outcomes—the benefits people seek in their leisure experiences (e.g. freedom, perceived competence, intrinsic motivation, locus of control, positive affect).
- Although leisure services programmers should always remember that fun and enjoyment are central to what we do, we must also remember the power of programs to address larger societal issues such as health and fostering active living, enhancing community and building relationships, environmental issues, and helping people connect to the world. We believe that this demands that we take a servant leadership approach to offering programs.
- Servant leadership will serve as the philosophical foundation for designing, implementing, and evaluating recreation programs. Servant leadership emphasizes increased service to others by encouraging shared decision making and a sense of community. Such an approach emphasizes the three factors that have shaped all forms of leisure services at their best: the desire to help people, an entrepreneurial spirit, and the ability to respond to societal changes.

Programming from Here to There

This section will end each chapter and will offer thought-provoking concepts, stories, and programs that embody many of the principles discussed. In this chapter, we present an innovative program that exemplifies taking a benefits (or outcomes) approach to programming by centering on contributing to the growth of participants. This program originates from the city of Albany, Oregon where the Parks and

Recreation department partnered with local business leaders to offer the “Rosie the Riveter” program. Katie Nooshazar, Recreation Program Manager for the city of Albany, outlines how the department uses a form of benefits to determine a community need. “We begin by identifying a community challenge or issue, for this particular program the department focused on the decline in most girls’ level of self-esteem and sense of self-worth as they reach middle school. The community partners wanted to create a program to build self-esteem, improve problem-solving skills, and assist girls in developing an image that is strong, confident, capable, and ready to meet life’s challenges. In addressing these issues, we focused on what experience we wanted girls to have, from anticipation and participation to reflection.” Once the staff had a clear picture of these desired outcomes, they were able to design the program.

In this case the program was a day camp for middle school-aged girls that offered the opportunity to learn nontraditional skills. The girls learned trade skills such as welding, carpentry, plumbing, window installation, and wiring from women in each trade. The female electrician taught them how to change a light fixture. The female welder helped them create metal yard art. The girls installed windows, built patios, changed plumbing fixtures, and did basic electrical work. At lunch, women in the community who held nontraditional jobs (e.g., firefighter, police officer, public works director, newspaper publisher) ate with the girls and provided mentoring. The female trades instructors worked hand in hand with male assistants so the girls saw strong men and women working together (Sjothun, 2008). As this program is replicated in the future, it will be important to evaluate the outcomes of the program to quantify its benefits. This program and thousands of others demonstrate the potential of recreation programs to intentionally make a difference in the lives of both individuals and communities.

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