



Benefits Driven Recreation

By Barrie King, Engineering & Public Works, City of Richmond

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The following story is presented by the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Benefits Committee, and the Corporate Wellness Committee in the City of Richmond B.C.

The story, featuring non-recreation staff sharing their stories that focus on the benefits of recreation, was developed to highlight the Benefits program.

A benefit of this story is that staff from outside of the recreation field learn about the benefits of recreation from their co-workers. For some, the articles have provided the push needed to make some lifestyle changes.

Staying Healthy With Recreation

Recreation for me has taken many different forms over the years. I was once preparing a rental house for sale and had work to do before putting it on the market. At about the same time I'd been trying various diets to help me lose weight. I'd decided to clean all the walls and repaint them, clean all the carpets, replace all broken fixtures, tidy up the garden and prepare the house for a quick sale. I kept a camp bed at the house and lived in the empty house for two weeks as I worked away at my long list of chores. By the time I reached the end of my list of things to do, I had a clean, tidy, freshly painted house and I'd lost 15 pounds.

At the time, I really hadn't considered these chores as forms of recreation. However, when I started thinking about some of the benefits associated with recreation I realized that this project had helped me achieve a few of the benefits one gains from recreation; I had lost weight, it reduced my stress level, it was definitely a form of physical exercise and most importantly, I actually enjoyed it. It taught me that if one wishes to lose weight, then exercise is equally important as one's diet. The exercise has to be sustained and become part of our lives.

Recently, after undergoing heart by-pass surgery, I learned just how important stress management is and how recreation can help with this. If you are overloaded with stress, whether it is emotional, work-induced, economic or physical, it is very difficult to manage our weight or take time out for activities we enjoy.

Nowadays, I've had to give up some of the more strenuous recreational activities I used to do (karate and running), in favour of more gentle forms of exercise. After successfully completing the cardiac rehabilitation program at Richmond Hospital and improving my results on my stress test, I enjoy mild hikes around the lower mainland and the beautiful scenery hiking can provide.

Problems with repetition and boredom rarely occur during a good hike. I often take books on trees, birds or flowers and identify as many as I can. A book on insects can also be useful to identify the nasty little wretches after they bite you. Photography is another



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hobby I enjoy, so I often take my camera with me to capture nature's beauty and diversity on film.

My unsolicited advice to anybody reading this, who might wish to avoid my fate, would be to develop an exercise program as varied as possible, watch your diet and try to minimize your stress levels. Recreation is a great, positive outlet to stay healthy.



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