



APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2016.** Please include this application form with electronic entry.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Stafford

Program Title: Select-A-Sport Day

Program Category: Parks and Recreation

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: Anthony Romanello

Title: County Administrator

Signature: 

Virginia Association of Counties

2016 Achievement Award



Stafford County, Virginia

Select-A-Sport Day

Program Press Summary

In today's world where children's activities and sports are a booming business, some children often do not have a chance to try a new sport because of cost or time barriers. Stafford County's Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities Department helped alleviate that problem by creating a "Select-a-Sport" day where children can try an array of activities at no cost to their parents, all in one day. It benefited the County by providing a wider exposure to its programs. Stafford was able to create a successful program by using its existing resources and investing very little money.

The answer is Stafford County's Select-A-Sport Day. Select-A-Sport Day is a free community event showcasing all community youth sports activities. Select-A-Sport Day is managed through a partnership between Stafford County's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities, and six local partner youth sports organizations. Each organization provides its own equipment and staff. Select-A-Sport Day is hosted at Stafford's own Curtis memorial park and advertised through existing means – the County website, cable channel, and social media. By these measures, Select-A-Sport Day is hosted at a low-host to Stafford County.

Stafford has hosted Select-A-Sport Day for two years now and has plans for another this year. It has become a successful, highly anticipated event and has become an asset to the County.

1. The Need for the Program

The array of youth sports can be baffling to both children and parents. A child may hesitate to try a new sport because he/she or their family may not be familiar with it. Parents may hesitate to try certain sports because they are leery of the cost and the level of their children's interest. Stafford County saw a need to give children an opportunity to try a variety of sports before they committed to them. In addition, the County was looking for ways to increase the exposure of both its programs and those businesses providing youth sports programs to its citizens.



2. Description of the Program



Whistles were blowing, balls were thrown in the air, and smiles could be found on the faces of our citizens! The children were joyful and their parents, highly satisfied. Stafford County's inaugural Select-A-Sport Day event proved to be a truly remarkable hit within our community. Stafford is an ever-growing county, home to a diverse population containing many young families. Stafford County's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities is committed to creating new and innovative approaches to provide exercise and activity opportunities to the local population. Through the inception of Select-A-Sport Day, Stafford County was able to bring local community sports organizations together in order to allow citizens to participate in the activities they offer, free of charge.

Select-A-Sport Day is an annual event where local citizens are treated to an exhibition of recreational sports activities offered within Stafford County. The purpose of Select-A-Sport Day is to give citizens an opportunity to try all youth sports offered in Stafford County without having to pay for participation. Parents today are committed to promoting a healthy lifestyle for their children, but are often frustrated by investing money in a sport after their child decides they

do not like the activity. Select-A-Sport Day was designed to address this concern by giving children a first-hand opportunity to try sports before they decide to enroll.

Through Select-A-Sport Day, local children are invited to have fun, play, and learn about a variety of sports. Children receive first-hand instruction from the professional staff of each partner organization. Select-A-Sport Day is an innovative and cost-effective way to introduce the local community to sports and to generate community interest in sporting activities offered. Over 1,500 citizens have attended Select-A-Sport Day since its inception.

Select-A-Sport Day is a free youth sports exhibition event open to citizens. Formal organization for Select-A-Sport Day began in February of 2014. Stafford County's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities entered into discussions with The Gauntlet Golf Club about conducting a joint event at Stafford's own Curtis Memorial Park. The Gauntlet is located adjacent to Curtis Park, providing an ideal event location for both parties. Stafford County's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities decided to broaden event appeal by securing partnerships with local sports leagues. In addition to The Gauntlet, Stafford County secured partnerships with Nova Elite Field Hockey, First Serve Tennis Academy, Stafford Baseball League (SBL), Stafford Soccer, and the Stafford Lacrosse Association (SLA). Each of these organizations agreed to participate in the proposed event by providing its own instructional staff, sporting equipment, and demonstration materials at no cost to Stafford County. The partnership resulted in the establishment of Stafford County's first-ever Select-A-Sport Day, held on August 10, 2014 at Curtis Memorial Park.

Each organization hosted its respective sport at a station. Sports offered by partner agencies included field hockey, tennis, baseball/softball, soccer, and lacrosse. Stafford's parks department

hosted stations for football, basketball, volleyball, swimming, skateboarding, hiking, and biking, using sporting equipment already owned by the County. The Gauntlet Golf Club opened its facility for a golf station and refreshments.

Upon arrival to Select-A-Sport Day, each guest was given a passport featuring a check-box listing of each sport offered. Guests were encouraged to visit each sport station and have a staff member mark their passport to indicate their participation. Select-A-Sport Day gift bags were given to the first 500 guests. These gift bags included a pool pass to Curtis or Woodlands pool, a coupon for a small bucket of golf balls at The Gauntlet, and a form to have their name entered into a door prize drawing. Refreshments were made available to guests for free through the Pepsi Cool Zone, a designated refreshment station sponsored by Pepsi Cola, as well as by The Gauntlet Golf Club.

Stafford County played the central role in the organization of Select-A-Sport Day. The County not only hosted the event, but acted as a liaison between partner organizations. Stafford's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities provided staffing, purchased gift bags for guests, and secured the donation of Pepsi products.

Stafford County's objectives for Select-A-Sport Day were clear and straightforward. Foremost, Stafford's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities' mission is to provide fun-filled, cost-effective forms of recreation to all citizens. Stafford sought a new, low-cost way to market the recreational activities offered by and within the County. In doing so, Stafford believed citizen participation and partnering with local organizations were crucial to generating community interest and promoting local business. One of the priorities of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors is economic development. Stafford is always looking for ways to promote

businesses that operate in the county and to help them be successful. Helping partner organizations furthers economic development within Stafford County by generating community interest in the services each organization offers. At the conclusion of the event, the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities distributed surveys in hopes of receiving community feedback. These surveys were used to gauge community interest in sports and to plan for the next Select-A-Sport Day.



4. The Cost of the Program

Select-A-Sport Day was executed at a relatively low cost to Stafford County. Stafford pays no cost for facilities since the event is held at Curtis Memorial Park. Additional facility space was provided free of charge by The Gauntlet Golf Club, located adjacent to Curtis Park. The only operational cost Stafford County incurred was the cost of staffing. Stafford County's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities provided a total of 15 staff members for Select-A-Sport Day. Staff members were paid at a rate of \$10 per hour, for a total of six hours worked. In total, this amounted to a staffing cost of \$900. Additional staff was provided by the various partner organizations, as well as in the form of 20 unpaid volunteers.

Sporting equipment used for Select-A-Sport Day was provided by both Stafford County, and the respective partner organizations. Each partner organization brought its own equipment.

Stafford's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities provided all additional equipment. Every piece of sporting equipment used for this event was provided through existing resources, at no cost to Stafford County. Food was offered for purchase off-site by The Gauntlet Golf Club. Pepsi Cola donated fifty cases of product to Stafford County in order to create a refreshment zone for event guests. The only capital cost Stafford County incurred for Select-A-Sport Day was the cost of the goody bags provided to guests. Stafford spent a total of \$664 on goody bags. When the cost of the goody bags and staffing were added together, Select-A-Sport Day cost Stafford County a total of \$1,564. By using its own facility, resources, and staff, Stafford County was able to finance Select-A-Sport Day at a low cost.

Furthermore, Stafford did not incur an advertising cost for Select-A-Sport Day. Select-A-Sport Day was advertised internally through Stafford County's homepage, parks website, social media

pages, and the existing quarterly Parks and Recreation magazine. Externally, each of Stafford's six partner organizations advertised the event through their websites and social media pages. By these means, Stafford saved entirely on the cost of advertising. Select-A-Sport Day's internal and external advertising measures did not go unnoticed by local media. Staff from Stafford County's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities was interviewed on the popular area radio station, B101.5. With radio advertising secured, Stafford County was able to inform not only its own residents about Select-A-Sport Day, but also residents of the greater Fredericksburg area.



5. The Results/Success of the Program

“What a wonderful event to introduce our kids to sports! We had a blast and enjoyed everything”! This quote is but one example of the positive feedback Stafford received for Select-A-Sport Day. Select-A-Sport Day has been a well-regarded hit within our community. Over 1,500 people have attended Select-A-Sport Day since its inception in 2014. All surveys returned to Stafford County indicated strong positive feedback for the event. Participants praised the helpfulness of the staff, the availability of each sporting activity, the free participation, and their overall enjoyment of the event itself. Some survey respondents even stated that they feel lucky to live in Stafford County and thanked the County for organizing this event. The success of Select-A-Sport Day has made it a popular annual event for Stafford County. Select-A-Sport Day 2016 is planned for August 21, 2016 at Curtis Park from noon to four.

While tangible results provide a good measure of success, it's equally important to analyze the intangible results. Stafford County has formed strong relationships with each partner organization involved in the planning of Select-A-Sport Day. Today, these organizations not only remain involved in planning Select-A-Sport Day, but partner with the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities to provide youth sports opportunities to the community. Stafford County and its partner organizations were successful in hosting Select-A-Sport Day through a collaborative effort, which resulted in a low cost to Stafford County. But most of all, Select-A-Sport Day allowed the community to experience sports offered by both Stafford County's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities, as well as by local partner organizations at no charge to its residents. By doing so, young Stafford citizens were given full access to try all sports offered within Stafford County.

Short Overview

In this day and age when children are offered an ever increasing array of sports opportunities, it can be bewildering for the child decide if he/she is actually interested in a sport before he/she tries it. Stafford County was able to help citizens better make that decision through the innovative Select-A-Sport Day, at a very little cost of \$1,500 to the County. Through Select-A-Sport Day, Stafford not only provides free exercise to its citizens, but showcases the sports opportunities the County and the community have to offer. The event allows children to play, have fun, and determine which sport or sports they enjoy most. It gives parents peace of mind in knowing that Stafford is willing to organize a free event which doesn't require citizens to enroll their children in a sports league or class. Select-A-Sport Day allows children to learn about different sports and to begin the development of their athletic passion. Children receive first-hand training from community instructors and players alike. It is cost-effective, efficient, and uses already-existing resources to achieve its goals. Select-A-Sport Day is truly an asset for Stafford County and a wonderful example of a locality bringing together all local resources for the benefit of the community. Over 1,500 citizens have attended Select-A-Sport Day during its two-year history. It is Stafford's sincere hope that Select-A-Sport Day can serve as the model event for neighboring localities seeking to generate community investment in the recreational activities they offer.



