

Regional LIFE Program Review 2019

Engagement – Panorama Recreation with Reception & Program Staff

Three over-arching questions are guiding the Regional LIFE Review:

1. What is working well with the current LIFE Program?
2. What is not working well with the current LIFE Program?
3. What could the “better” LIFE Program look like?

WHAT WORKS WELL

- It is a step towards improving mental health. Being a part of the community despite financial challenges.
- Membership options provided are reasonable, and memberships are easy to obtain. Applications are processed quickly with little wait time for the applicant(s).
- Processing applications and explaining the program is straight forward and simple.
- Nice to have the program for referral as needed - ie. that regardless of age, background, etc. we have this program available for those facing a financial barrier.
- It gives opportunities for kids, individuals and families that may not otherwise be able to participate in activities that their peers are in, and provides a safe and healthy environment, free of judgement, and allows “everyone” to be able to enjoy our facility.
- Word appears to be spreading! More sign-ups each year which is great.
- Value is good & great opportunity to make recreation accessible! Provides much more than just a monetary value - valuable impact on mental health and social relationship building for participant (benefits over & above the \$ figure).
- Recent and good change was that Take Heart program now accepts \$50 LIFE Pass discount.
- Good to be able to use 1 of program discounts on discounted purchase of a timed pass when visits run out.
- Program discounts - 50% or up to \$50 good.
- Good that monthly scheduled payments available for annual pass options.
- Nice that those opting to use all 52-visits just at Panorama can get them loaded onto their card for ease of scanning at turnstiles.

Regional LIFE Program Review 2019

Engagement – Panorama Recreation with Reception & Program Staff

WHAT'S NOT WORKING WELL

- Post-secondary students should be eligible.
- Still having to get cards with stickers checked at the reception desk is a barrier. Means LIFE members have to wait in line and show their card, identifying them as being different. Nice that those opting to use all 52-visits at Panorama can scan them at the scanners 'like everyone else'.
- People apply and are approved but, often by the end of the year, still have used very few of their visits. Too many other barriers preventing them from making time, having the money, finding the transportation, etc. to recreate.
- Refugees should receive 2 year approval on first application.
- Applicants with long-term disabilities or special needs should receive multi-year approvals without need to reapply & recomplete paperwork annually.
- Missing the boat on youth. A youth adjudicator form like that that Saanich has should be considered inter-municipally - something that a school counsellor would complete for a youth who's family situation would make them eligible but, whose parent(s) may not take the initiative to apply for.
- Subsidies should be available online. Call or come in to use discount not a smooth system. Reception & phone lines always busy (especially at key seasonal registration times).
- Need a better system for tracking use of program discounts. A credit system would be better (give them an annual amount to use in whatever increments up to \$50 max at a time).
- Having a credit system versus number of discounts would also be good in encouraging more participation. Currently many hanging onto use of discounts for big ticket items (like swim lessons) which means they may not be taking part in some of the smaller, lower-priced workshops.
- Financial thresholds - Not scaled enough to regional cost of living.
- Financial thresholds - Should be more steps in the middle versus just the single low-income threshold (scaled to different incomes).
- \$50 credit, although valuable, now on the low side with inflation. As example, 10 swim lessons now \$63. Would be nice if this part had an annual percent increase to keep up with inflation.
- Most contractors supportive of permitting 1 or 2 LIFE discounts once minimums met. Challenge of having requirement of 'after minimums met' though is that in some cases space then fills or course gets cancelled due to low registration.
- With university students ineligible for program, there are a number of students who may not have access to rec when home from school. Would be nice to see a provision to include this group at least April through August when they may not have access to their school facilities. A summer rec pass?

Regional LIFE Program Review 2019

Engagement – Panorama Recreation with Reception & Program Staff

WHAT COULD THE “BETTER” LIFE PROGRAM LOOK LIKE?

- Could more demographic-specific options be explored? Like something slightly different for families than a single individual or couple without dependents?
- An applicant should be able to apply at any participating recreation centre regardless of their address. As a Victoria-wide program, it is unfortunate when a patron comes with all their paperwork complete to have to go elsewhere finding out they approached the wrong centre...another barrier to those already struggling to find time/money/transportation/etc.
- Great program but, would be great to see it promoted in a way that it is not just “low income”. It is a step towards better health. Inclusive for everyone.
- PerfectMIND registration software should be able to track program discounts used.
- Perhaps offering 100 visits versus 52 as physical activity and leisure such an important piece - especially for those who NEED the program.
- 52-Visits - More needed to align with national activity recommendations.
- Never been approached by someone who exceeds the financial thresholds interested in applying but, perhaps they do not bother asking once they see the numbers?
- 52-Visits - Streamline ease of application & use of the visits. Scan at turnstiles or through desk? How handle that inter-municipally?
- Should a sliding scale be explored?
- Missing the boat on youth. A youth adjudicator form like that that Saanich has should be considered inter-municipally - something that a school counsellor would complete for a youth who's family situation would make them eligible but, whose parent(s) may not take the initiative to apply for.
- With university students ineligible for program, there are a number of students who may not have access to rec when home from school. Would be nice to see a provision to include this group at least April through August when they may not have access to their school facilities. A summer rec pass?
- Panorama-specific - Should permitting LIFE discount on First Night Event tickets be considered?