

Summary of project objectives and participating agency

End of year, 2023, update on eSports program. We have 10 sites currently offering eSports. Each site has registration numbers between 2- 30 youth. We have future plans to partner with Elite Gaming to provide formal tournaments between centers. Also, eSports Engine has offered to help us build our brackets within centers and provide additional games. We currently have Rocket League and Madden. Would like to add Mario Brothers and Super Smash along with Fifa.

Please see below, under Evaluation of Outcomes for more up-to-date information.

The launch of eSports for Youth programming by the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department has had several positive outcomes. Here is a summary below.

Increased participation: The program has attracted youth who are interested in sports but may not feel comfortable or have the skills to participate in traditional sports. eSports has provided an alternative opportunity for them to engage in a team-based activity and increase overall participation in recreational programs. We have also started discussions on how to include our Therapeutic section and being more inclusive with our adaptive sports. We have had meetings with OSU, Wexner Medical Center to see how we can build the partnership to provide adaptive gaming assessments to participants.

Skill development: Through coaching and training, participants are developing skills in gaming, teamwork, leadership, and socialization.

Bridging the digital divide: We have provided equipment to 8 community centers to help provide access to technology and video games which may be limited in their home. The program has provided them with essential skill development and exposure to technology that can benefit them in their future careers and life.

Breaking stereotypes: The program has helped dispel any stereotype barriers associated with gaming and eSports by promoting inclusivity and welcoming participants of all genders. It has promoted the idea that video games offer value in terms of personal development, career prospects, and teamwork.

Overall, the potential outcomes of the eSports for Youth program include increased participation, skill development, bridging the digital divide, community engagement, breaking stereotypes, and recognizing participant's accomplishments.

Summary of Project Activities and Final Timeline

- June 2020- Applied for grant
- 2021- TV's came in but consoles were delayed due to lack of chips
- December 2022- consoles finally arrived for sites
- May 2023- all equipment was installed at 8 community centers
- May 2023- TR met with OSU Wexner Medical Center to begin discussions about partnership and available equipment at sites
- Summer and Fall 2023- sites are piloting the program

Evaluation of Outcomes and Impact

Based on evaluations each center has provided after the programming session ends, the eSports program has successfully brought together youth through weekly challenges and tournaments.

- Centers have provided the opportunity to play their favorite games in a structured environment.
- Youth engage in healthy competitions and model good sportsmanship and positive attitude.
- Youth are encouraged to build positive peer bonds with other participants through collaboration and teamwork.
- Build a positive rapport between staff and youth in order to build a foundation of continued mentorship.
- Participants improved their eye- hand coordination through gaming.
- Participants grew in critical thinking skills.

Programs also evaluated attendance in order to measure growth with peer bonds.

Post surveys for each class provided effectiveness of the foundational mentorship between staff and youth.

Staff were instructed to check in with reports on new relationships built and how they continued fostering existing ones.

Our original 8 sites has grown to 10 and we anticipate more by our fall 2024 session. Numbers are still low at most sites but anticipate as we start tournaments between centers for those numbers to increase. Our largest program is through Center Without Walls which has 30 participants daily for gaming.

Description of Subsequent Plans

Expansion: If the initial launch proves successful, the program could be expanded to reach all our community centers, especially sites doing after school programming.

Diversification of games: While the program is initially focused on a select few games, there could be plans to introduce a wider variety of games based on interests and preferences of the participants. The inclusion of adaptive sports will also allow for us to reach for participants and be inclusive.

Professional development: To maintain quality coaching and training, continuous professional development opportunities could be provided to the program's staff. This could include workshops and networking events that ensure that they are equipped with the latest knowledge and best practices in the eSports industry.

Community events and showcases: We hope to build on end of season event including TR and have everyone come to one destination to have a tournament.

Summary of Expenses Incurred

- 8- 55" TV's
- 8- X Box consoles