

**2024-2025 MCC Governing Board  
Regular Meeting + Public Hearing on FY2027 Programs  
March 26, 2025 – 6:30 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**Board Members Present:** *in-person:* Kristina Groennings; Katie Gorka; Gloria Marrero Chambers; Aaron Stark; Sonya Thott; Michael Monroe  
*remote:* Ron Keesing (*1<sup>st</sup> time remote; personal: Stockholm, Sweden*)  
Peter Pin (*1<sup>st</sup> time remote; medical: McLean, VA*)

**Board Members Absent:** Anna Bartosiewicz; Doug Jeffery; Kathleen Cooney Porter

**MCC Staff Present:** Betsy May-Salazar, Executive Director; Holly Novak, Executive Assistant; Matthew Hockensmith, Comptroller; Mike Fisher, General Programs Director; Sarah Schallern Treff, Performing Arts Director; Sabrina Anwah, PIO; Jennifer Garrett, Technical Director; Jonathan Melendez, Deputy Director

**Guests:** Deb Bissen (MPA); Jim Lawless (Friends of MCC/MCA); Kathleen Gillette Mallard; F. Cole Mallard; Anastasiia Dudnik-Dubiniak; Russell King; Alexia Mallano

**CONVENE MEETING**

On March 26, 2025 at 6:35 p.m. Chair Kristina Groennings convened a Regular Meeting of the Governing Board of McLean Community Center. This was also the Public Hearing on FY2027 Programs (focus two fiscal years from now). She announced the meeting was being audio-recorded for purpose of Minutes. Chair Groennings explained the opportunity for public comments about *future* programming during the Public Hearing, and for public comments of *general* nature to occur later in the meeting during “Public Comment” segment. No changes to the agenda were requested; it was adopted by acclamation.

**CONVENE PUBLIC HEARING ON FY2027 PROGRAMS**

Programs & Outreach Committee Chair was unable to attend due to illness. Executive Director Betsy May-Salazar was designated to conduct the Public Hearing on FY2027 Programs. This annual forum looks forward to the future, allowing tax district residents to provide significant input on the trajectory of meaningful programming at MCC two years from now - in FY2027.

Overview of Community Feedback Survey

The Public Hearing began with an overview of the Community Feedback Survey recently completed (320 respondents).

*\*remarks by Executive Director Betsy May-Salazar; General Programs Dir. Mike Fisher; and Performing Arts Dir. Sarah Schallern Treff*

*\*PowerPoint presentation is attached at end of this document.*

DISCUSSION:

**\*increase survey responses/participation in the future**

300 total respondents is reflective of what we anticipated, but there is opportunity to build on it and design new ways to reach community members. We did thorough outreach: program guide; direct postcard mailing to tax district households; multiple messages through social media; all ACTIV database registrants; offering the survey at some events. Board members helped to share the word. Perhaps if people answered the survey last year they may have avoided doing so again (not understanding that it’s an annual process). An annual survey iteration is recommended to provide solid grounding and context to individual comments typical of the annual public hearing on programs.

**\*suggest narrowing the time span survey offered** Programs & Outreach Committee on May 7 will brainstorm about future iterations of the survey.

The survey presentation was followed by an opportunity for tax district residents to express comments specific to FY2027 programming. It was announced that, as individual residents share their thoughts and ideas, Governing Board members and MCC staff would not be responding in-the-moment. All comments will be taken very seriously; and staff may follow-up with a written response, if appropriate.

Written comments – No written comments were received in advance. During this meeting, no written comments were submitted for the record by the April 2 deadline.

Verbal comments – Those attending were invited to express their comments specific to FY2027 programs (first stating aloud their residential address to verify if they are a tax district resident). Each person was allotted 3 minutes.

**1. Small District 1A-Dranesville resident (youth)**

topic: The high volume & great variety of MCC programs is wonderful but it creates difficulty in marketing and trying to reach different audiences. Being too well-rounded and offering so many things to so many different people is good thing! BUT... there is need to communicate more effectively to specific groups.

*Executive Director May-Salazar thanked the individual for her comments.*

**ADJOURNMENT OF PUBLIC HEARING ON FY2027 PROGRAMS**      *\*remarks by Executive Director May-Salazar*

We thank the public for attending this special focus on MCC future programming. MCC has always been a reflection of the community and we deeply value your input. We now officially adjourn the Public Hearing on FY2027 Programs.

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*Board Chair Groennings proceeded to conduct the business matters of the Regular Meeting agenda.*

**APPROVE MINUTES**

Minutes of February 26, 2025 Regular Meeting were reviewed. No changes were requested; accepted as written.

**MOTION:** To approve Minutes of February 26, 2025 Regular Meeting.

**Approved by a vote of eight:** Katie Gorka; Gloria Marrero Chambers; Aaron Stark; Kristina Groennings; Michael Monroe; Sonya Thott; Peter Pin; Ron Keesing – all voting “AYE.”

Anna Bartosiewicz, Kathleen Cooney Porter and Doug Jeffery were absent

**CHAIR’S REPORT**

*\*remarks by Board Chair Kristina Groennings*

Continued emphasis on “BEING VISIBLE:” Fiesta del Sol was a tremendous success! It was a joyous event for everyone. Attendance was great this year. Upcoming events: McLean Central Park grand re-opening on Saturday, March 29. SpringFest – April 5, McLean Earth Day – April 12; Spring Community Parking Lot Sale – April 19, which is when the candidates for the Governing Board will have an opportunity to meet and mingle with the public.

2025 Election update: ENC Chair Katie Gorka announced 9 youth and 6 adults are running! Six students are from McLean H.S.; three are from Langley H.S. Candidate Orientation on March 25 was excellent. Two candidates couldn’t make it, but they received the materials. All candidates had their publicity headshot photos taken.

The list of candidates will be posted on MCC website (under the “Governing Board” tab); a news release will come out on March 27. All promotional tasks for the Governing Board election are being coordinated by MCC PIO team.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**      *\*remarks by Executive Director Betsy May-Salazar*

1. Fiesta del Sol was an amazing success (nearly 1000 attendees)! We expanded out to the plaza with tables and seating for the first time (last year it was rained-out so we couldn’t do it). People could go in and get food and exit out the back doors to sit. McLean Room was also open for seating. It was a delightful event. Everyone seemed very happy – a lot of rave reviews as people were leaving. We’ve also received e-mails from people this week saying ‘Thank you’ for doing this event. It’s a lot of fun!

2. Further reflection about MCC Governing Board 2025 Election process: We had a great evening on 3/25 to meet all the candidates. Campaigning has now begun. NEW this year: we made lanyard nametags for candidates to wear when campaigning out in the community (increasing their visibility and name recognition). The candidates will be at Spring Community Parking Lot Sale – we encourage you all to come out and meet them. We have re-vamped the layout structure to be more inviting for conversations: tables & mingling at the coffee truck. Candidates will also be able to walk around during the event.
3. Tomorrow, Sat. March 29 is the dedication of McLean Central Park at 10 a.m. Feel free to attend.
4. SpringFest (Saturday, April 5) – dedication of our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary commemorative tree: Native Black Gum tree (in outer lawn area near plaza entrance). Fairfax Co. Urban Forestry assisted in selecting the tree and they will install it. McLean Tree Commission will be at the event, which is geared toward young children, so they will be leading a coloring project with the kids after we make a few remarks about the commemorative tree planting. We encourage board members to come out and participate in the dedication.
5. April 5 & 6 – performances of The Alden’s 2025 Youth Production: “Stuart Little”. The kids have been hard at work and are very excited for the performances. I have heard it is really adorable.

**PROGRAMS & OUTREACH COMMITTEE**     *\*summary by Executive Director Betsy May-Salazar*

March 12 meeting focused on preparing for tonight’s public hearing – with a preliminary run-through of the survey presentation. We also addressed staff efforts in working through feedback in the survey about marketing and being more visible as a community center. MCC staff have already begun progress on those aspects.

We discussed an exciting new opportunity which is a request from McLean Project for the Arts: for MCC to be one of the founding sponsors of their new facility that will open in about a year in downtown McLean. The committee talked through various options and responded back to MPA with some thoughts; discussions continue.

ACTION: We anticipate bringing a proposal in April for the Governing Board to consider – being a founding sponsor of the new facility as an extension of what MPA does here.

**YOUTH AMBASSADORS – UPDATE**

*\*remarks by General Programs Director Mike Fisher, and Youth board members Sonya Thott and Aaron Stark*

A meeting on 3/26 featured Susan Sims (Youth Leadership Network), explaining their programs. They offer small-scale sessions with teens at high schools: presentations or discussions on leadership and how to become better leaders as youth. We will confirm with the rest of the Youth Ambassadors to see if any programs YLN offers stood out that we would eventually like to do as a group.

A date is now set for tutoring program – Monday, April 7. Tutoring will be offered on-site at Cooper Middle School for the Cooper students. We will have transportation for Langley H.S. students to go to Cooper. Aaron Stark will offer rides from McLean H.S. to Cooper. There are enough tutors there (we only need 4-5 people; perhaps only Langley students, but we will take any McLean students who would like to go). Mike Fisher attempted outreach to Longfellow but they haven’t responded. So, the Youth Ambassadors are currently focusing on Cooper as their sole outlet for the tutoring program.

Saturday, April 26 – another ‘clean-up’ program at Lewinsville Park (in advance of McLean Day!) – 10 a.m. There may be an invasive species removal project happening there simultaneously. If we have enough people we may be able to assist. FCPA does invasive species removal (teams go out to parks). They will allow *general* park clean-up without a FCPA person there but require a FCPA staff for invasive species removals. Board members are welcome to join the Youth Ambassadors in Lewinsville Park clean-up on April 26. We’d love to see you there if you’re available. Peter Pin, Mike Monroe, and Kristina Groennings helped last time.

**MCLEAN PROJECT FOR THE ARTS - UPDATE**     *\*remarks by Deb Bissen, MPA*

Today was last day of youth art shows – there is much interest in seeing youth art! We experimented with having the gallery open without staff present. It’s ideal for families who couldn’t attend during regular hours when MPA is open. The youth art shows were a great success; and we had a great time with the two opening receptions, as well.

NEXT UP: Spring Solo exhibitions (*flier was distributed*). Opens on April 10; Opening Reception on April 17. Every two years, do a call for artists in the mid-Atlantic area (solo artists who maybe haven’t had a chance to have a solo exhibition);

always get 150+ entries. We select two years' worth of solo artists. We are very excited about them and we welcome you to see it in the gallery.

ACTION: MPA will gladly arrange a special tour and talk with the curator before a future Gov. Board meeting.

Spring classes and camp registrations are going on: 3 new classes – photography; plein air painting; assemblage 'collection' – creating art out of collected things

ArtReach program – we have had two sessions. McKinley Commons program is running now; they have an art teacher that works on their staff. ArtReach staff is coordinating with that person about what MPA can add to what they are doing already. It's been a great partnership. We are interested in finding similar facilities that aren't too far from here.

ArtReach is also continuing to work with SPARC Solutions, ServiceSource, McLean H.S. Special Ed. programs.

Unfortunately, FCPS has not been scheduling field trips; there are many other priorities going on with Title 1 schools right now. While MPA hasn't had much luck with FCPS, we think the other community partnerships (including Second Story) are reaching the same group of people. It's good to be able to partner with them to serve under-resourced communities.

New downtown McLean facility: We are looking forward to having MCC involved in our expansion.

SPECIAL REQUEST: If there is any way that MPA could collaborate and add specific questions into the next iteration of the MCC Community Feedback Survey, that would be wonderful. Purpose: to learn what people value in art and what MPA is already doing; and what else to add to our art program going forward.

*Executive Director May-Salazar responded: Yes – we will collaborate on that.*

## **OLD /NEW BUSINESS**

Chair Groennings opened the floor for any matters of old or new business. Nothing was mentioned as a further topic for discussion this evening.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

**In-person comments:** Chair Groennings invited the public to introduce themselves and give verbal remarks if they wished. Governing Board members will not be responding in-the-moment. The staff may follow-up with a written response if appropriate. The individual must first state aloud their residential address to verify if they are a Small District 1A-Dranesville resident. Each person was allotted three minutes to speak.

### **1. Small District 1A-Dranesville resident (adult)**

topic: Individual appreciates the wide range of programming MCC offers; however, objects to

LGTBQIA+ Pride month emphasis including film as being inappropriate for children and families.

*Executive Director May-Salazar thanked the individual for her comments.*

The Chair inquired if any other individuals wished to make a verbal comment? **No one did so.**

**Written comments:** Individuals submitting written comments to be shown in these Minutes were pre-verified as residing in Small District 1A-Dranesville.

**No written comments were submitted in advance of this meeting, nor during the meeting.**

To conclude this Public Comment segment, Chair Groennings stated aloud:

We thank members of the public for contributing their feedback this evening. The MCC Governing Board takes your suggestions very seriously. You are always welcome to attend our meetings. All MCC Governing Board meetings are open to the public. You can view the board schedule on MCC's website.

We have very strict county regulations and stringent oversight of our work in all areas, and we work hard to meet these needs in being responsible to our taxpayers. We are committed to transparency and to making the process open to the public. We welcome you back to future events at the McLean Community Center to see the value of your tax dollars at work.

**ADJOURNMENT** Chair Groennings stated that all business matters were now concluded. She thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 7:40 p.m. Respectfully submitted, Holly Novak - Executive Assistant

# **McLean Community Center FY2025 Community Feedback Survey Results**

March 2025



McLean  
Community  
Center  
*The Center of It All*

# Who We Are

The McLean Community Center is a special tax district within Fairfax County Government.



- Built and funded by residents of Greater McLean for their use through a real estate tax surcharge.
- MCC tax district is comprised of approximately 18,300 households and 300 businesses.
- MCC has an elected governing board with nine adult members and two teen members.

# The McLean CDP Demographics

## Language:

- 27% of residents speak a language other than English at home
- Predominately Asian/Pacific Islander (13.2%) and Indo-European (9.6%)
- 33% of McLean district elementary school student households speak a language other than English in the home – predominately Mandarin, Spanish, Korean

## Age:

- 26% of residents are 17 and under
- 53% are 45+ (of which 19% are 65+)

## Race & Ethnic Groups:

- 68% White, non-Hispanic
- 20% Asian/Pacific Islander
- 5% Hispanic/Latino
- 5% Two or more races
- 2% Black, non-Hispanic



# Purpose & Vision

## Purpose

The McLean Community Center provides a sense of community for MCC tax district residents.

## Vision

The McLean Community Center generates inspiration, creativity and connection in McLean and its communities.



McLean  
Community  
Center  
*The Center of It All*

# Mission

The McLean Community Center:

- Provides access to inspirational arts, cultural experiences, learning opportunities, civic engagement and recreational activities;
- Supports community organizations, and;
- Offers facilities

for all MCC tax district residents

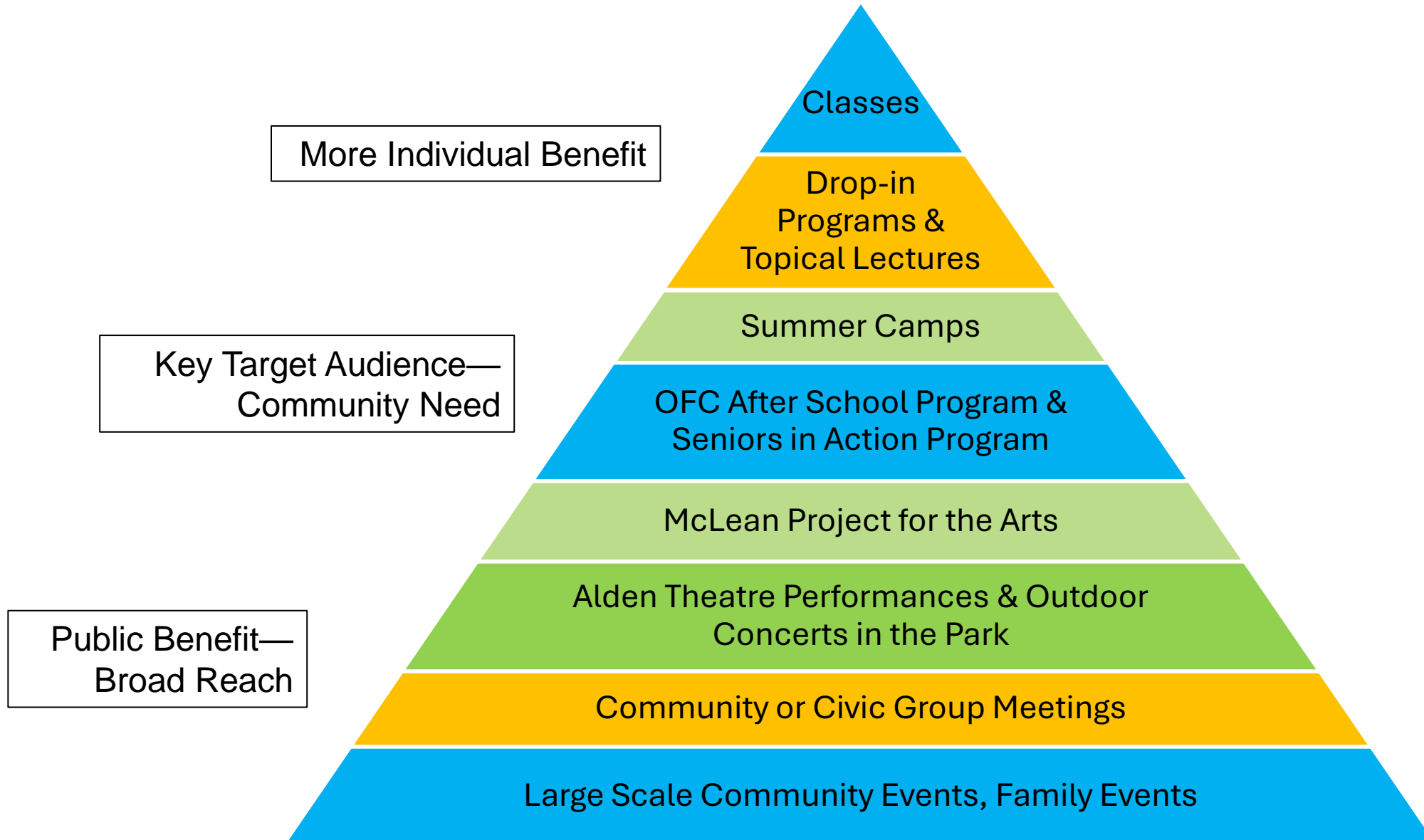


# Strategic Goals

- Be Visible
- Welcome All of McLean and its Global Community
- Invite Discovery
- Showcase Excellence
- Model Sustainability and Good Stewardship



# MCC Programming Pyramid



# Overview: MCC's role in the community

“What do you think McLean Community Center's current role in the community is? What do you think it should be?”

- “MCC is and should be a place to connect with members of the community, learn something new, experience joy.”
- “Exactly what it is, love that I have the MCC in my neighborhood!”
- “Continue to provide expansive opportunities for all ages to convene, learn and grow.”
- “MCC is a public location where members of community can socialize, participate, and learn. I like it because I am making new friends and having fun.”
- “Glue that holds our community together.”
- “A center that helps make McLean feel like a smaller community within the vast Fairfax County. It's great to have these options and activities available for just the McLean community to help the area feel "smaller" and more connected.”
- “Unity of the people and know each other and support the community.”
- “I love that there's a place walking distance from my home where my family can take classes and do the sorts of things that would otherwise leave us driving all over town—this means more time as a family, and I'm thankful for that.”

# How it was different from last year's survey

- Asked about programs in depth.
- Included “Did you know?” questions.
- Included “Did not attend any events” as an answer option for some questions.



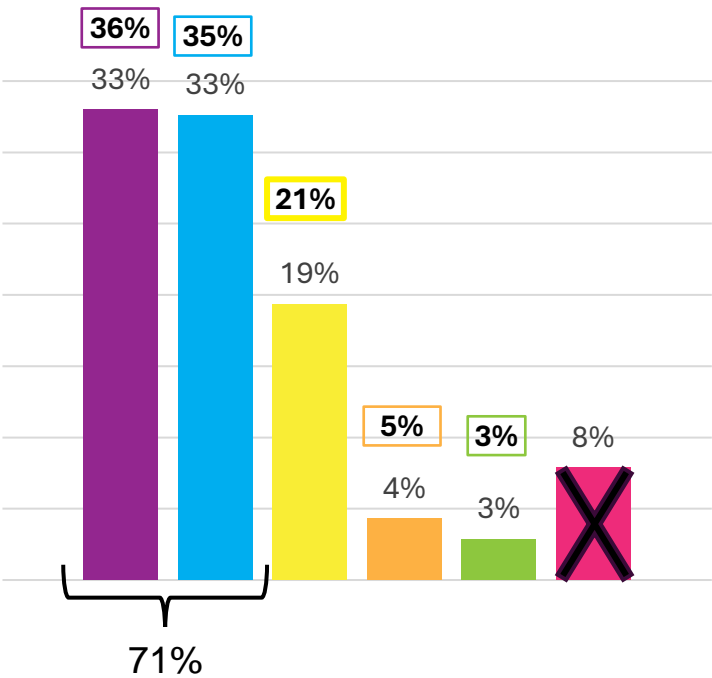


# Survey Respondents

- 320 Survey Respondents
- Estimated 80% - 90% were in the McLean Tax District based on zip code.
- Age Demographics of Respondents  
(*may fall in more than one category*):
  - 217 respondents had adults (55+) in household
  - 134 respondents had children under 18 in household
  - 120 respondents had adults (23-54) in households
  - 34 respondents had young adults (19-22) in household)
  - 14 respondents had adults (23-54) without children in household

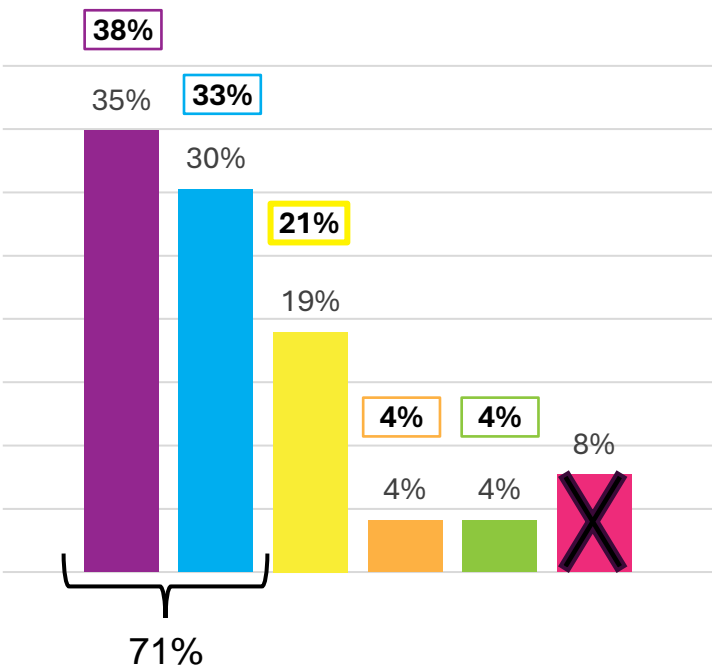
# Please rate your overall satisfaction with the programs and services offered by the McLean Community Center, Old Firehouse Center and Alden Theatre.

ALL RESPONSES



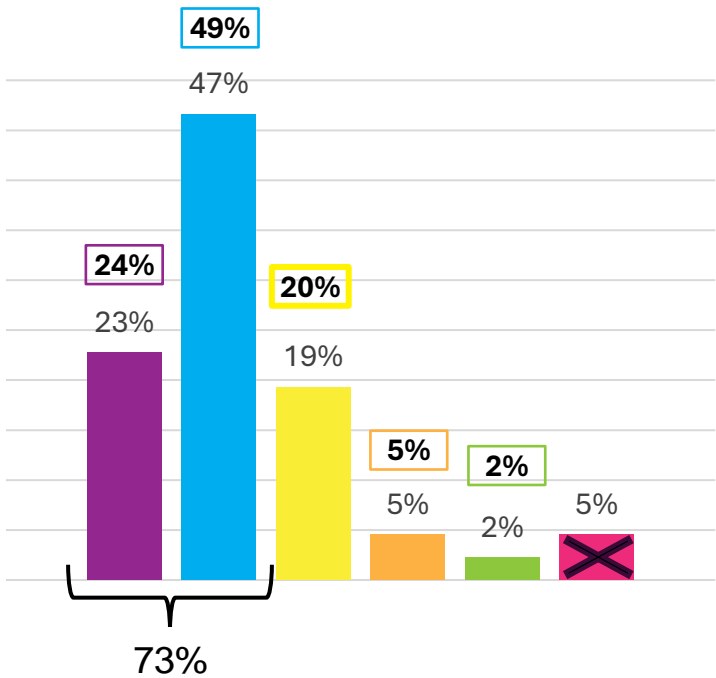
Very satisfied  
Satisfied  
Neutral

OLDER ADULTS

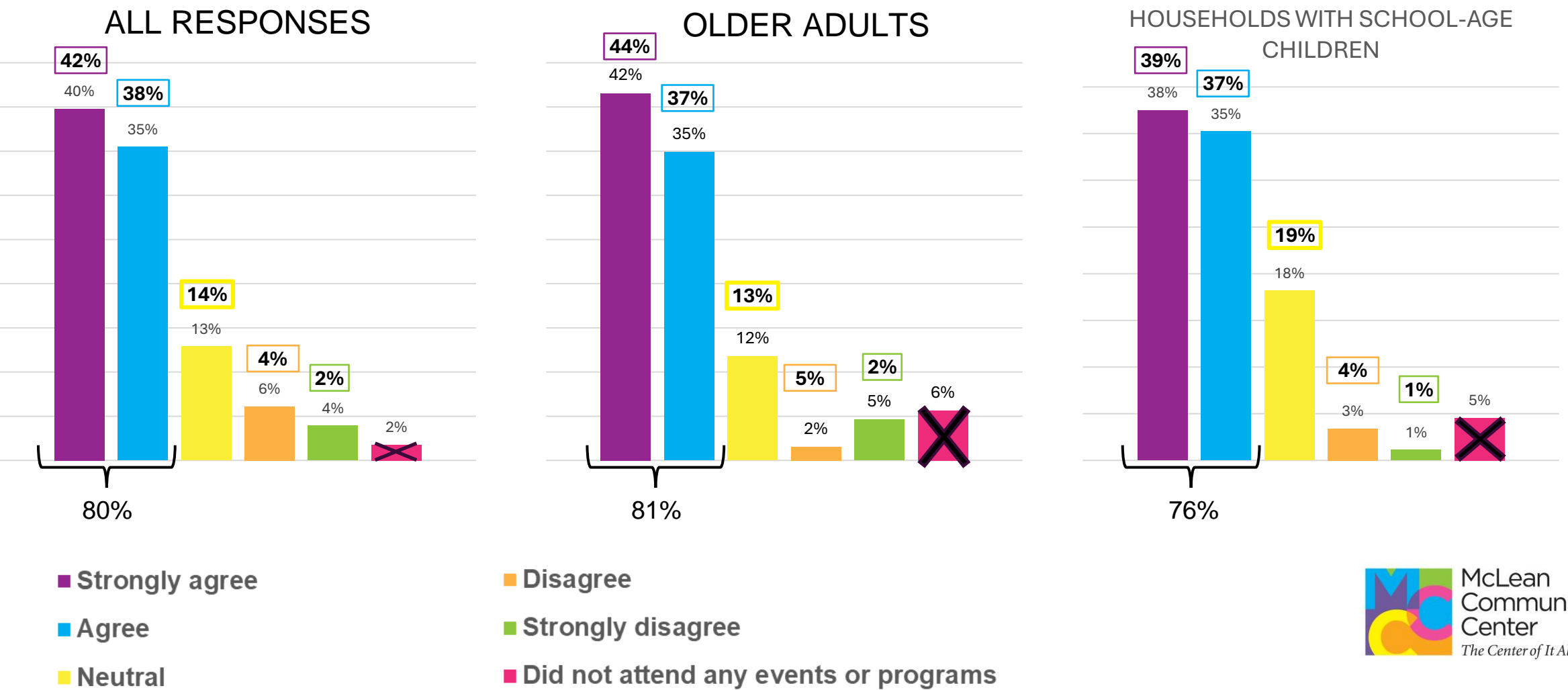


Dissatisfied  
Very dissatisfied  
Did not attend any events or programs

HOUSEHOLDS WITH SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN



# Having the McLean Community Center, Alden Theatre and Old Firehouse Center in your community provides you with a better quality of life through programs, learning opportunities, services and community events.



# Reasons Given for Low Ratings

- 10 respondents of the 320 received ranked their satisfaction at dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- Key comments related to:
  - Belief that the programs primarily relate to children.
  - Tax dollars.
  - Desire for more theatrical and musical shows in Alden Theatre.
  - It should be a place that is free of any political agenda or ideology.
  - Cost.



# Reasons Given for Not Attending

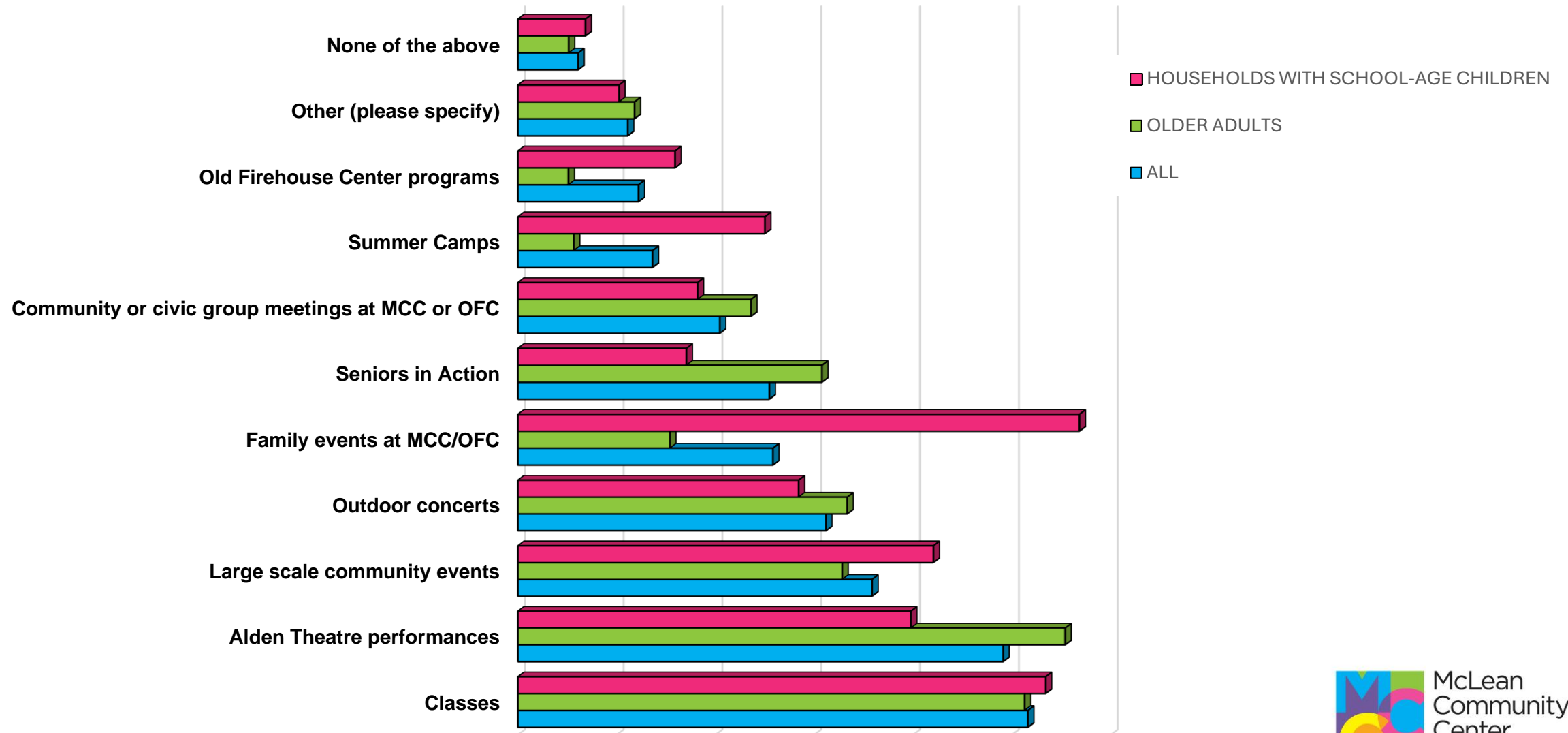
- 22 respondents of the 320 indicated they do not attend programming.
- Key factors:
  - 35% of these respondents indicated None of the Above when asked what MCC program they value most, followed by large scale community events, classes, outdoor concerts and Alden Theatre performances.
  - These individuals answered “Did Not Know” to a higher % of individual questions when compared to overall survey results.

# Which of the following does your household value most?

ALL RESPONSES



# Which of the following does your household value most?

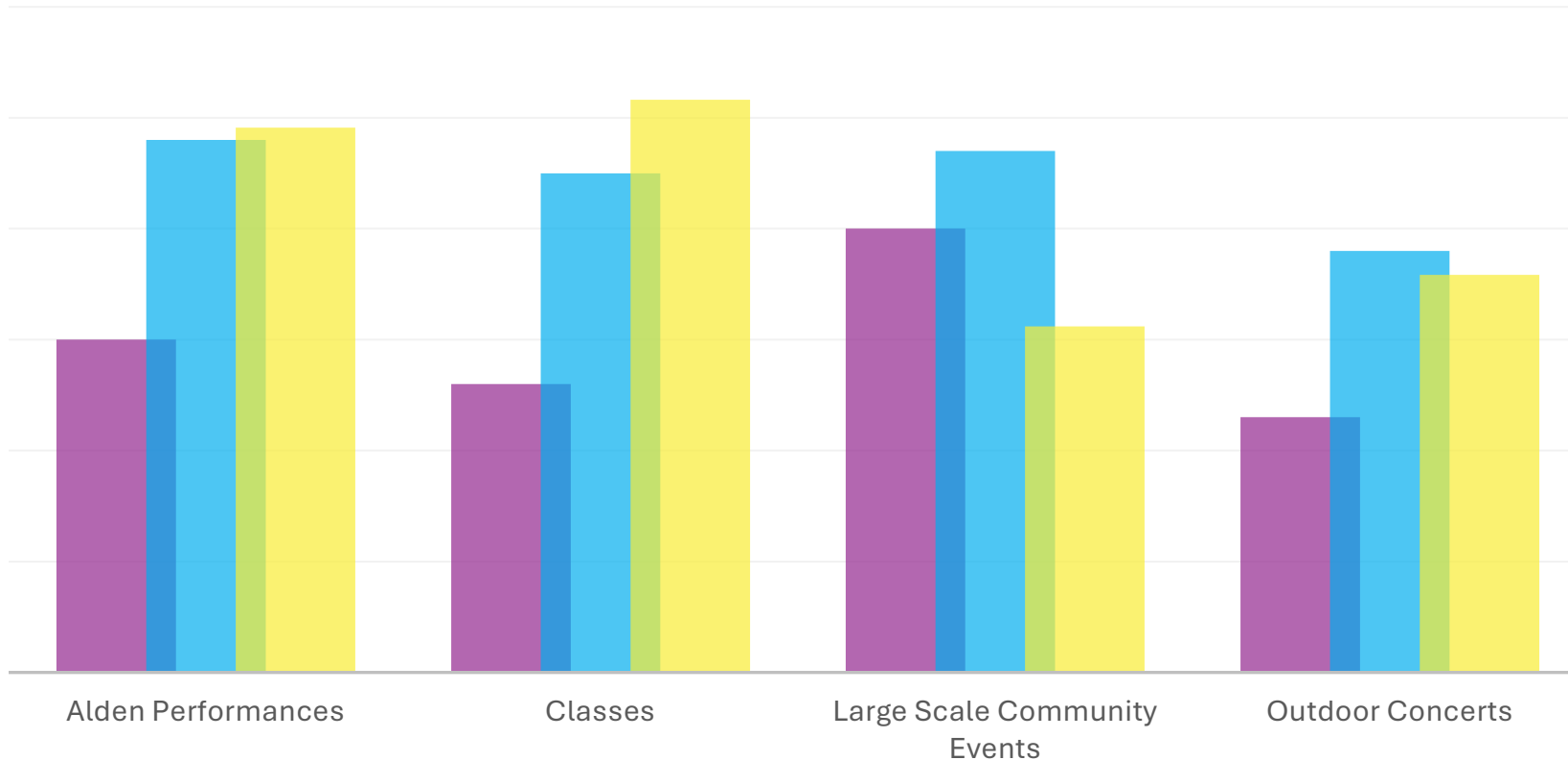


# Other program suggested/referenced:

- Many are programs we already offer, just more specific:
  - Antique/craft show, movies/foreign language movies, snack and paint, “outdoor kid events like the trucks in Oct.,” OFC 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade dances,
  - “The recent Children's Business Fairs in the block parties were such a novel concept. They seem a wonderful practice for the kids and bonding time for the entire families in our area. Welcome more of these.”
- New/renewed ideas:
  - Day trips and other travel options, events for working adults, more opportunities for involvement, photography exhibits, tours, language.
- Ideas for improvement:
  - “Can we get better bands that have more appeal playing in the cooler evening?”
  - “Can you have fitness that is good, also in the evening?”
  - “Recycling events to be offered more than once a year, at least bi-annual.”
  - “Is it possible to schedule events on other times/days other than Saturday 10am?”
  - “Please 🙏 we have soccer and never make it to events. Thank you.”
  - “Could use better advertising.”



# Top Four Programs, 2024 vs. 2025



- What Respondents Participated in During the Last Year (2024)
- What Respondents Plan to Participate in in the Future (2024)
- Which of the following does your household value most? (2025)

# Results: Language learning

We asked about goals, format and age

- Top three goals:
  1. To learn a new language. (43%)
  2. None of the above/I am not interested in language learning (32%)
  3. To brush up for vacation (25%)
- Top three target ages:
  1. Adults (48%)
  2. Older adults (46%)
  3. Grade school age children (24%)
- Top three formats:
  1. Weekly classes of one hour or less (59%)
  2. None of the above (25%)
  3. A series of workshops (for example, a three-hour session once a month) (23%)



# Results: Outdoor concerts

We asked about obstacles to attending and day/time/season preferences.

- Top three obstacles to attending concerts:
  1. Weather (45%)
  2. Did not know about it (35%)
  3. Not interested in the performer (31%)
- Timing for concerts:
  - Ideal: early evening on Saturdays in spring.

Will need to see the response to Thursday evening concerts and let that inform the survey findings when planning future seasons.



# Results: Gardening classes & walking club

Top ranking gardening workshops\*:

1. Vegetable and herb gardens
2. Native species
3. Gardening for beginners

If MCC were to create a walking club, where should the club meet?

- 63%: In the area adjacent to MCC

*\*“Not interested” was not an option for this question.*



# The need to “be visible”

## Three "Did you Know?" questions (both to gauge awareness and to inform):

1. **47%** didn't know that the Old Firehouse offers teen trip camps during the summer and school breaks.
2. **54%** didn't know that MCC shows free foreign language movies twice a month during the school year.
3. **56%** didn't know that when McLean Central Park reopens, it will feature a new performance space where MCC will present its outdoor concerts.

## Still misconceptions about what MCC does/offers:

- “Should offer more workout classes for people under age 55!”
- “More activities for the over 50.”
- “It's geared more to toddlers and children. There's very little for adults.”
- “MCC seems only focused on children and the arts.”
- “How about adult pickle ball classes/play in the evenings? How about doggy play groups?”
- MCC's role is to “maintain/improve Central Park.”
- Should provide “opportunities to meet other seniors during the day.”



# Key takeaways

- Our **top four program** areas remain consistent.
- **Be Visible** still needs to be a top priority.
- **Different Age Demographics** value different programs.
- **Specific Event Participation Survey** responses consistently rank higher than the community feedback survey which reaches a broader community audience who may not be as familiar with MCC.
  - 93% Rating for Satisfaction from Specific Event Surveys (compared to 71% in community feedback survey)
  - 88% Rating for Better Quality of Life from Specific Event Surveys (compared to 80% on community feedback survey)



*Fin*