

# TACOMA WEEKLY

## Graduate Tacoma makes searching for summer youth programs easy, stress-free

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*Photo courtesy Metro Parks Tacoma*

The last day of school in Tacoma is June 15, and the likely challenge for parents as the date nears is figuring out how to keep their children actively engaged and entertained for the summer.

Oftentimes, parents get overwhelmed by the dizzying number of options, or they simply don't know where to look. Fortunately, Graduate Tacoma's out-of-school and summer learning network hosts a useful and intuitive website ([summerlearningtacoma-pierce.org](http://summerlearningtacoma-pierce.org)) that aggregates summer youth programs offered throughout greater Tacoma and Pierce County.

"We are interested to hear from program providers who want to list their summer learning programs on the website," said Kristy Gledhill, communications

director at Graduate Tacoma. "People who have questions about the site, or want to list their programs, can call us at (253) 272-1600."

The website was made possible by financial support from the Foundation for Tacoma Students and is comprised of community partners that include Tacoma, Bethel, Clover Park, and Franklin Pierce school districts; Pierce County Library; Pacific Lutheran University; Metro Parks Tacoma; YMCA of Pierce and Kitsap Counties; Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium; Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber of Commerce; Children's Museum of Tacoma; Peace Community Center; Tacoma Art Museum; and many more.

To search for summer programs, simply visit the home page and click on “search programs.” Parents have the option to search for programs by entering in a date or a date range; searching by zip code; or by keyword, school grade, cost, or type of program. Select the program you’re interested in to learn more and select “Add to Cart” to save for later, or click “Get Started” to register your child immediately.

There is also a link on the home page that lists free and low-cost programs. If parents are curious about programs that offer scholarships and financial aid, they simply select the “Show Scholarship/Free Programs” filter on the search drop-down menu under “cost.” Online resources and also free community resources and activities are mentioned.

In total, the website boasts a list of 492 current summer programs for all ages and abilities. Program partners continue to add more to the site. The purpose behind Summer Learning Tacoma, which launched in 2014, is to foster continued academic learning and development opportunities for youth during the summer months in order to avoid what educators commonly refer to as the summer slide—a period of time during the summer when students lose the knowledge they gained and return to school unprepared in the fall.

According to Graduate Tacoma, children who read or engage in day camps or learning activities during the summer receive an academic boost, while their peers who do not risk losing the ground they’ve achieved.

Just a sampling of what is listed on the site includes the TAM Studio, open seven days a week (no museum admission required), located in the lobby of the Tacoma Art Museum, where students of all ages can utilize the art supplies available and craft their own creation; Pirate Fitness Camp, catering to PreK-3rd grade at Metro Parks’ STAR Center, June 18-22, \$100 (scholarships available); and Pioneer Storytime at the Tacoma Public Library, 7001 Sixth Avenue, catering to PreK-2nd grade, free admission, on June 21.

In addition, Metro Parks welcomes parents to pick up the summer 2018 Go Guide, available at all community centers or online at [metroparkstacoma.org/go-guides/](http://metroparkstacoma.org/go-guides/). The Go Guide features summer day camps, special events and festivals, adaptive outdoor recreation, arts and culture, sports and fitness, and much more.