



Parks & Recreation

Annual Report

2015



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ADMINISTRATION

The Administrative Division of the Town of Normal Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the provision of recreational services and facilities to our residents. Facilities that are administered by the Department include the Anderson and Fairview Aquatic Centers, Champion Fields Softball Complex, Children’s Discovery Museum, Ironwood Golf Course, Maxwell and Shepard Dog Parks, Normal Theater, Community Activity Center, the Connie Link Amphitheatre and the always popular Constitution Trail.



The Department employs 37 full-time employees, and over 500 part-time employees throughout the year.

2015 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Numerous capital construction projects occurred in 2015 within the community that provided improved recreational facilities to residents. These include the construction of an umpire shelter at Champion Fields, new shelter and bathrooms at Maxwell Park, parking lot expansion at Champion Fields, initial construction of Ironwood Tennis Courts re-build, and an outdoor fitness pad at Carden Park.
- Seven new staff members joined the Parks and Recreation team this year, including: Adam Fox as Normal Theater Manager, Angela Malone as Aquatics and Special Events Supervisor, Chris Cotten as Director of Parks and Recreation, Rachel Carpenter as Education Manager at the Children’s Discovery Museum, Tony Axelson as Youth Sports and Teens Supervisor, James Wayne as Assistant Director of Business and Recreation Operations, and Gene Kotlinski as Assistant Director of Park Maintenance Operations.
- Approval of the Town of Normal Parks and Recreation comprehensive master plan update which includes future development of a soccer complex and recreation center.

MARKETING

The Marketing Division is responsible for providing timely information to the Bloomington-Normal community through delivery of integrated marketing and public relations activities that promote high quality programs and services. A variety of communication vehicles are used to disseminate information in an accurate and timely manner. These vehicles include:

- Broadcast Media: Radio & TV
- Print Media: Newspapers and Magazines
- Social Media: Facebook and Twitter
- Websites: Intranet and Internet
- Official Department Publications:
 - Program Guides (2/year); CDM Newsletter (4/year); CDM Camps Guide; CDM Educator Guide; CDM Annual Report
- Print Materials: Brochures, flyers, posters
- Video: Department Commercial and Zombie Fest Promotion
- Community Outreach

The Marketing Division’s goals are to help position the department favorably against its competitors, continue to grow program and event attendance, and ensure the community has multiple avenues to obtain information about the Department.

2015 ACCOMPLISHMENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- Developed new newsletter concept for the quarterly CDM publication with a local designer.
- Coordinated the production of an updated design for the fall/winter/spring and summer program guides.
- Sent regular e-blasts to CDM and Parks & Recreation listserv subscribers.
- Developed collateral materials and provided support for special events.
- Delivered timely information to the media resulting in approximately 20 Pantagraph articles and 10 TV news segments.
- Worked with the CornBelts Professional Baseball Team and Thunder Jr. Hockey program to develop signage, PA announcements, and integrated program promotions.
- Creation of promotional videos for Parks and Recreation, ASA National slow-pitch softball bid, Ladies Luncheon and Style Show, and Adults Night: Zombie Fest.
- Launched inaugural #GivingTuesday campaign for the CDM Foundation.
- New website is being created on the Civic Plus platform for the Children’s Discovery Museum.

PARK MAINTENANCE

The Park Maintenance Division is managed by the Assistant Director of Parks & Recreation/Maintenance Operations, with three Park Supervisors directing daily practices and procedures in horticultural, facility, and general park maintenance operations. The Park Maintenance field staff is comprised of sixteen full-time employees, six 9-month part-time employees, six 8-month part-time employees, and 27 seasonal employees. Essential responsibilities include providing comprehensive maintenance to the Town's eighteen parks covering approximately 402 acres along with over 14.25 linear miles of the Constitution Trail. Staff provides maintenance to all park facilities including restrooms, picnic shelters, playgrounds, irrigation and lighting systems, drinking fountains, and trash receptacles. Specialized care is provided to the Uptown landscape beds, the David S. Anderson Aquatic Facility, the Fairview Family Aquatic Center, the Connie Link Amphitheatre, the Fairview Skate Park, and the Champion Fields and Maxwell South softball complex, including the many other athletic fields, tennis and basketball courts and the in-line hockey rink located at One Normal Plaza. Maintenance is also provided by staff to over 250 acres of roadways, creek banks and well sites, and to numerous other Town facilities and properties, including two community gardens and two off-leash dog parks.



The Park Maintenance staff provides support to the Children's Discovery Museum, Normal Theater, Community Activity Center, Ironwood Golf Course, Normal Public Library, Uptown Station, and City Hall Annex. Maintenance staff also provides support for recreation, athletic and aquatic programs, Uptown festivals and special events, and for other projects and events within the community. Staff is responsible for snow and ice removal at various Town parking lots and park properties, including the plowing/sweeping of snow from the Constitution Trail. During the off-season, staff provides preventative maintenance and repairs to pool mechanical equipment and pumps. The cold winter months also permit staff to perform a complete inventory of preventative maintenance and repair needs to the entire fleet of mowers, trucks, tractors, utility vehicles, trailers and other park maintenance equipment.

The Park Maintenance staff continues to emphasize urban beautification, landscape improvements, and professional tree and plant care within the Town. Horticulture crews designed, planted and maintained more than one hundred landscape beds all over the community including throughout the Uptown area. During 2015, Forestry crews pruned over 1,100 trees in Town while removing 490 others, almost two hundred of these were trees damaged by the Emerald Ash Borer. During the spring and fall months, staff planted 470 trees in Town parks and along right-of-way areas.



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2015 ACCOMPLISHMENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- The ball field at Fairview Park was dedicated as “Blemler Field” in honor of former Parks & Recreation Director, Ron Blemler.
- A bench and plaque were installed and dedicated outside of the Fairview Aquatic Facility fence in honor of Tom Cherry upon his retirement after many years of service as the Park Supervisor.
- Forestry crews installed banners and festival lighting throughout Uptown. Crews also installed holiday decorations and lighting in Fell Park.
- Upgrades were completed to the interior of the Linden Street Barn. The break room was expanded and a computer area was created. The restroom facilities were remodeled, doubling the capacity. Construction began on an office space for the horticulture and forestry staff.
- A small brick patio area was constructed near the Ron Allers Shelter at the Connie Link Amphitheatre and new dedication benches were installed along the Constitution Trail.
- The construction of a new picnic shelter and restroom building was completed at Maxwell Park.
- The parking lot at Champion Fields was expanded adding needed new spaces for patrons. New scoreboards were installed on Fields #2 and #4. Park Maintenance staff began on the construction of a shelter building that will provide a lounge, restroom, and changing area for umpires.
- Forestry crews finished eliminating EAB infested ash trees from Town right-of-way and park areas, and began the removal process at the Ironwood Golf Course.
- The Town received a \$2500 grant from the Ameren Right Tree, Right Place Program to plant additional trees throughout the community.
- A swamp white oak was planted outside of the City Hall Annex, dedicated as part of the Arbor Day festivities.
- Park Maintenance staff fabricated a decorative wall around the stage extension at the Normal Theater.
- The installation of swing sets completed the new Game Time playground equipment project at Martin Luther King Park, including the installation of new border timbers and playground wood fiber. Staff added additional wood fiber and swing mats to other park playgrounds.
- Park Maintenance staff applied a fresh coat of paint to the basketball courts at Fell Park, Savannah Park and Carden Park.
- Park Maintenance staff erected new Town of Normal Park Rule signs at all park areas.
- Park Maintenance staff assisted with many special events during the year, including the St. Patrick’s Day Parade, Sustainability Expo, Rock the Block in the Uptown Plaza, ISU Special Olympics, 4th of July celebration at Fairview Park, Sugar Creek Arts Festival, Sweet Corn Blues Festival, Fell Fest, Medici Craft Beer and Jazz Festival, and the Haunted Trail.
- New pool liners were installed in both the dive and lap pools at the Anderson Aquatic Facility and the leak in the zero-depth pool was repaired. The sand volleyball pit was removed at the Fairview Family Aquatic Facility.
- The One Normal Plaza in-line hockey rink bench area was rebuilt with new raised seating. The sideline boards and gates were repaired and painted.
- Fitness America exercise equipment was installed in Carden Park through a joint effort with the Unit-Five School District.
- Park Maintenance staff removed the nets, fencing and some base rock in preparation for the installation of a new asphalt playing surface at the Ironwood Park tennis courts.
- Barton Electric and Musco Lighting installed a field lighting system to the two ball fields at Shepard Park. New scoreboards were also installed on both fields. New concrete sidewalks were placed to the baseball batting cages and storage buildings. Park Maintenance staff mounted a yellow fence cap on the perimeter fence and installed new warning tracks to the two ball fields.
- The foot bridge deck to the tennis courts at Anderson Park was replaced with new treated planks.
- A new landscape planter was completed around the park sign in Fell Park.
- The old playground at One Normal Plaza, east of the Community Activity Center, was removed in preparation of the spring installation of a new unit.

IRONWOOD GOLF COURSE

The Golf Course Division is responsible for the administration of all operations related to Ironwood Golf Course, a Roger Packard Design which utilizes large areas of fescue grasses and maturing trees to shape the course. Specifically, these operations include; a concessions area, a driving range, a golf cart fleet of seventy 2014 E-Z-Go Golf Cars, clubhouse rentals, golf tournaments, golf outings, host course for high school and university golf teams, nine golf leagues, and all of the maintenance of the golf course.

The Division employs three full time positions including a Manager/Golf Pro, a Golf Course Superintendent, and a Maintenance Technician. Approximately 25 part time seasonal staff works at either the pro shop or performs maintenance on the course.



2015 ACCOMPLISHMENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- Revenues gained at Ironwood Golf Course in CY2015 reached \$739,000. A majority of these revenues were funded by green fees and cart rental fees. As area golf courses adjusted prices, Ironwood continued to offer great prices on rates, season pass options and frequent player cards.
- Junior Golf participation at Ironwood Golf Course reached a new pinnacle with a total of 297 juniors for 2015. These juniors participated in one or more of the programs offered, from junior high golf, junior golf clinics, to intro to junior golf.
- The 2015 golf season was hampered by spring rains. Spring rounds were effected by April rains, although the summer was mild and above average temperatures for the late fall extended the season for rounds at Ironwood Golf Course to reach approximately 23,000.
- Ironwood Golf Course has been selected as one of the 'Best Places to Play' by voters, according to local media outlets. These high standards have led to Ironwood Golf Course being awarded with a USGA qualifier location for USGA Pub-Links Championship and C.D.G.A. qualifiers for Illinois State Amateur and Mid – Amateur.
- Ironwood was host to several local fundraisers, including the MARC Center, Central Catholic, Pam Can and Golf for a Cure. In all, Ironwood played host to a total of 49 golf outings and tournaments this past year.
- In 2015, Ironwood continued with the junior high golf league for Bloomington/Normal. A total of 8 junior highs participated in the 5 week spring season. Ironwood also hosted all 8 golf teams from Unit 5, and both the men's and women's golf teams from Illinois Wesleyan University.

IRONWOOD GOLF COURSE MAINTENANCE



The 2015 golf season was another great season for Ironwood Golf Course Maintenance. Golf course staff includes Golf Course Superintendent, Tyler Bain and David Cosenza, Equipment Technician. In addition to the two full time employees, we depend on 1 regular temporary employee and 8 seasonal staff for nine months of the season. The golf course staff is responsible for daily mowing and grooming of 120 acres. Greens are maintained between .110 and .135 of an inch and also rolled 3-4 times per



week, tees and fairways are maintained at 1/2", and primary roughs are mowed at 2 1/2". Ironwood Golf Course is surrounded by an additional 80 acres of native fescue grass. The native grass areas have added a challenge for the golfers while providing a distinct character to the golf course. From an agronomical perspective, these areas require less pesticides and less mowing to the steep mounding around the greens and tees. Ironwood Golf Course has continued to improve its overall condition over the past years and that trend will continue well into the future. With these

improvements and the other daily maintenance practices that staff implemented this season, Ironwood and the Town of Normal will continue to provide great playing conditions every day.

The 2015 golf season started off very wet, during the latter part of May and through June we had near record rainfall. Thanks to the newly added cart paths on the back nine of the course, play continued even with the heavy rainfall. While rain is much needed for turf grass, that much in the early part of the season caused the turf to have short root systems. With the root systems being so short, the turf needed extra water during the summer and that is reflected in these water usage charts. The golf course made it through the season in great shape even with the difficult weather conditions. The heavy rains caused delays in mowing and other common practices, but the golf course staff was able to keep up the great playing conditions despite the weather.

| 2015 Golf Season | Water usage in gallons |
|------------------|------------------------|
| March | 0 |
| April | 680,233 |
| May | 1,929,831 |
| June | 299,473 |
| July | 2,427,689 |
| August | 5,983,992 |
| September | 4,567,138 |
| October | 2,954,665 |

| Annual Water Usage | Gallons of Irrigation Water |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2013 | 23,776,498 |
| 2014 | 18,110,857 |
| 2015 | 19,225,162 |

Due to the Emerald Ash Borer, many of the Ash trees on the golf course have been or will be removed. To help counteract that, golf course staff planted over 100 new trees throughout the golf course in 2015. Many different species of trees were used, including many maples, oaks, and new varieties of elm. Over the course of the next 3 years, the golf course plans to plant between 300 and 400 new trees. Many of these trees will be along the property lines of the golf course, where most of the ash trees are currently.

Core aerification is an essential process that we conduct yearly. It is typically completed in a two day time period so we can allow at least nine holes to be open at all times. In 2015, we completed core aerification in the Spring before much of the rain came. The process was completed without any issues and the greens recovered within 4-6 days providing some of the best conditions all year. Golf course staff will continue with the practice of “venting” the greens. This is a process that will allow us to get some of the benefits from aerification, with far less recovery time. Venting is not a replacement for aerification, but rather a helpful tool to use in conjunction with aerification to provide healthy, firm, and fast playing conditions.



Ironwood staff has also been working on improving the course playability by constructing a new tee on the 5th hole as well as lengthening some of the fairways to create a more enjoyable round for the younger and even older players. Staff incorporated new distance markers this year to help the playability of the golf course.

With the current economic situation, many golfers are looking for more affordable golf, yet they do not want to sacrifice the quality of course they are accustomed to playing. This is a good thing for Ironwood Golf Course in the fact that we are affordable and the conditions are that of other much higher priced golf courses in this area. As we continue to keep conditions at the high level that golfers have become familiar with and we consistently add new and improved practices to the golf course we will get the attention of the golfing community. The goals that we have set at Ironwood continue to push the maintenance staff to provided better golf conditions every year. With the new carts, irrigation system upgrade, and the overall health and playability of the golf course, Ironwood is becoming one of the desired courses to play in the B/N area.

2015 ACCOMPLISHMENTS/STATISTICS

- Ironwood staff selected Applied Ecological Services to address the erosion issues on the ponds at Ironwood golf course. Work started in the Spring of 2014 and was completed mid-summer. AES continued to work with golf course staff in 2015 to make sure the prairie plants are well established and performing in the fashion that is desired. The plants are doing very well and should provide some needed height and color around the ponds.
- Ironwood Golf Course has two tunnels on the golf course that allow for access under Towanda Ave. The boards in the tunnels had rotted and caused some issues for travel between holes. In 2015 those boards were replaced and they provide a safe and reliable path for carts under Towanda Avenue.
- Ironwood maintenance staff also planted over 100 trees on the golf course in 2015. Most trees were planted in replacement of Ash trees that have been removed or that will be removed due to the Emerald Ash Borer infestation.
- Ironwood successfully hosted many golf outings this year including Bloomington-Normal Match Play tournament. Even with heavy rains threatening play, the tournament was completed with no issues. Ironwood was able to showcase its golf course to the Bloomington-Normal community and the golf course was in great shape and was a great test for all competitors.
- Ironwood staff also started to change the layout of a few hole on the golf course. Staff completed a new championship tee on the 5th hole to make for a more challenging tee shot. As well as tees the maintenance staff started to extend fairways on holes 2, 6, 7, 9, and 18, to help accommodate some of our younger and older golfers.

AQUATICS

The Aquatics Division provides visitors opportunities to experience outstanding aquatic facilities at Fairview Family Aquatic Center and Anderson Aquatic Center. The facilities offer recreational swimming, a swim team, water aerobics, swim lessons, private rentals, and birthday parties during the summer months, as well as a strong swim lesson program for the winter months.



The Fairview Family Aquatic Center is one of the premier aquatic facilities in Central Illinois and features four pool areas and a total of six slides. For the younger children, the facility has a fantastic spray toy area with over a dozen spray features. The Anderson Aquatic Center includes a large pool with a diving board, a pool featuring two thrilling water slides, and a third pool offers shallow water with a variety of exhilarating spray toys and two small slides for the younger patrons.

The Aquatics Division also certifies lifeguard candidates who will be employed with the Normal Parks and Recreation Department as well as many of the surrounding area swimming facilities. The Aquatics Division certified approximately 125 lifeguards during the 2015 season.

2015 ACCOMPLISHMENTS/STATISTICS

- Fairview Family Aquatic Center was host to 67,107 visitors during the 2015 season, while Anderson Aquatic Center was host to 24,212 visitors. Fairview showed a 10% increase in attendance compared to the 2014 season while Anderson saw a decline in pool attendance for the third season in a row.
- Swim lessons were offered at Fairview and Anderson Aquatic Centers, and at Normal Community West and Normal Community High Schools. Over 2,300 individuals participated in our swim programs.
- Aquacise classes and Early Bird Lap Swimming were offered again for the 2015 season. The Aquacise classes were held at the Fairview Family Aquatic Center and had almost 450 participants throughout the season. Early Bird Lap Swim had just over 120 participants throughout the season.
- The Normal Parks Swimmin' Sharks hosted seven home swim meets throughout the summer at Anderson Aquatic Center. All seven meets were a great success, with the Sharks ending the 2015 season UNDEFEATED for the seventh consecutive season! The swim team also won the Conference Championship meet for the sixth season in a row.
- Lifeguard certification courses were held at Normal Community High School in March, April, and June. Lifeguard re-certification courses were also held at Normal Community High School, and were very successful with 66% of the 2014 staff being rehired and employed for the 2015 summer season.
- The 2015 season experienced an issue with a shattered impeller in the slide pump at Fairview Family Aquatic Center. Maintenance staff were able to temporarily replace the inoperable pump with the splash pad's functioning pump until a new impeller could be fabricated and therefore minimized the time the slides needed to be closed.

CHILDREN'S DISCOVERY MUSEUM

In 2015, the Children's Discovery Museum celebrated its eleventh anniversary as part of the Town of Normal. The CDM welcomes visitors from Central Illinois, the Midwest, and beyond. Hands-on experiences and exhibits at this 3-story site are designed for families with infants to pre-teens, with special emphasis on "inspiring the love of learning through the power of play." Ten professional full-time staff, 30 trained, part-time seasonal staff and many volunteers and interns ensure programs and activities are developmentally-appropriate, fun and engaging.



2015 By the Numbers:

- Total visitors – 138,674
- Paid Admissions – 47,161
- Free Admissions – 9,478
- Member visits – 35,663
- Field Trips and Classes – 17,817
- Offsite Classes – 9,064
- Birthdays/Rentals – 5,906
- Memberships – 1,791
- Volunteer Hours – 10,018

2015 ACCOMPLISHMENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- IDNR funding currently on hold for renovation of *ImagineAir* exhibit in 2015.
- Awarded free venue of traveling exhibit *Hello from Japan*, coming June-September 2016.
- Held three fundraising events benefitting the CDM including Ladies Luncheon and Style Show, Doctors in Concert, and Medici Craft Beer and Jazz Festival.
- Received State Farm funding to continue *Innovation Institute/STEM* programming with UNITY.
- Hosted Bloomington-Normal's 9th Annual *Worldwide Day of Play*.
- Utilized Pizza Hut funding for 2015 Family Fun Nights.
- Offered dozens of on-site and outreach educational classes, camps and programs for kids and families in McLean County and beyond.
- Continued the PNC-funded "Growing Up Great Through the Power of Play," learning opportunities in art, math and science for preschoolers.
- Hosted 2nd annual Member Appreciation Day event on November 19th, resulting in a record membership drive and Discover More Store sales.
- Hosted first CDM Nights at both the Normal Cornbelters and Bloomington Thunder.
- Collaborated with the Normal Theater to feature "Museum and a Movie" nights.
- Hosted inaugural Low Sensory Night at the CDM for families with special needs.

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NORMAL THEATER

The Normal Theater is in its twenty first year of offering the community a meeting place that features alternative film offerings for children, adults and seniors. The theater shows family favorites, silver screen classics, modern classics, independent films, documentaries, and world cinema Thursdays through Sundays, weekly, all year long. Additional special film presentations are also programmed throughout the year through Friends of the Normal Theater and Beyond Normal Films support organizations, as well as other partnerships & rentals with area businesses and organizations. The Normal Theater is also in the early stages of expansion to offer live-event programming, with the initial focus on comedy and music performances.



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2015 ACCOMPLISHMENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- This year the theater introduced the Tuesday Night Classics series, dedicated to showing popular favorites and forgotten gems from the golden age of cinema. Free admission to this series took the place of the Secret Cinema program as a membership benefit for Friends of the Normal Theater. The series has opened up a lot more classic film programming for the public.
- Community partnerships have continued to be a focus of the theater. Sugar Mama Bakery now offers their product at concessions, which patrons have loved. WJBC and WBNQ presented films each month in celebration of their anniversaries. AsiaConnect hosted the first Asian Film Festival at the theater in April, with a follow-up event scheduled in 2016. Local filmmaker RC Raycraft premiered the new digital restoration and new edit of his film INCIDENT AT KICKAPOO CREEK at the theater in May. The Prairie Pride Coalition once again co-sponsored the LGBT Film Festival in October. And Beyond Normal Films continued in their advisory role to the theater, offering title suggestions throughout the year and hosting their annual showcase, now re-named the Farlee Film Festival and split into two two-week sessions, one in March (beginning 2016) and one in September.
- The theater was a host venue for the Normal 1-5-0 celebration in September, showing the film THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH as the kickoff to that weekend's festivities as well as hosting a series of historical re-enactments on Sunday.
- Illinois State University's Theatre of Ted co-sponsored the theater's first-ever run of THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW in October, with a full shadow cast performance each night. It was a great success, and will now become an annual Halloween tradition.
- The theater hosted the first annual TedX Normal event, partnering with Illinois State University to bring this conference to the community. The event was simulcast online, with a full video production team involved in its execution. The event will return in the fall of 2016.

BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

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The Before and After School program continues to be a popular program for participants. The program was offered again at eight Unit 5 elementary school sites in Normal. The school sites



include, Colene Hoose, Fairview, Glenn, Grove, Oakdale, Parkside, Prairieland, and Sugar Creek. This year, there were 3,698 students registered in the Before and After School Program. This was a slight increase over last year's participant numbers. The Recreation Supervisor, Assistant Recreation Supervisor, and 70 part-time staff oversee the program.

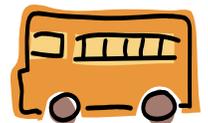
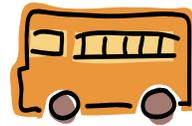
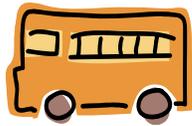
The program provides students with recreational, educational, and social opportunities in a safe environment. Students enjoy playground and gym time, recreation activities, games, crafts, and have the opportunity to work on homework. The Before School Program is run from 6:45 a.m. to 8:30 a.m., and the After School Program is run from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. The program meets in each school site's gym/multi-purpose room.



The Before and After School program continues to partner with other groups in the community. On-site program visits occurred from the Children's Discovery Museum and the Ecology Action Center. These groups provided learning opportunities for the students, and allowed them to experience something exciting, and new.

We had several volunteers work with the program again this year. We worked with Illinois State University's Kinesiology and Recreation Department by hosting student volunteers, and student led group projects. We also hosted volunteers from ISU's Education Department, and Normal Community High School's Business Club.

The Time Out Program and Spring Break Program were also offered throughout the school year. The Time Out Programs were offered on seven days that Unit 5 was not in session. The Spring Break Program was offered during Unit 5's spring break week. The Time Out and Spring Break Programs increased in participant numbers from last year's programs. Field trips included skating, bowling, laser tag, gymnastics, a children's museum, the zoo, and the movies.



YOUTH PROGRAMS/CULTURAL ARTS

The Community Activity Center continues to be a very popular place for youth programs during the fall and winter months but also during the summer months as well. During the summer months, Children’s Theatre utilizes all three of the classrooms on the west side of the building during the morning hours. Hoopin’ It, which is the hula hooping class, Zumba Kids/Jr. and youth dance usually find some time to sneak into the classrooms for their summer programming. The SOAR program has been catering to their clients that live in Normal by using some of the classroom space for their summer programs during the afternoon hours. Youth dance, High School Summer Theatre and Hoopin’ It utilize the classroom and social room space during the evening hours.



We have begun working with CirqueMania, Inc and are developing circus art classes and also circus themed birthday parties. The social room at the CAC is now equipped with apparatuses hung from the ceiling to help accommodate the circus classes and circus themed birthday parties.



The adult social dance program, Let’s Bring Back Dance, has developed quite a following and they continue to meet on Tuesday nights at the CAC with dance lessons. There are also social dances each month either at the CAC or the Lafayette Club.



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Safety Town continues to entertain local preschools, day care centers and individual birthdays. The decision to hire part-time staff to help with summer rentals and birthday parties turned out to be very successful. The spring and fall rentals still remain the supervisor's responsibility. Visits to the Fire Station #3 as well as the visit from Police Officers Dobson and Bock continue to be a big hit with the children.



The Tiny Tumblers program still remains to be a popular program having a winter and fall session as well as a summer session that has 4 full classes that meet on either a weekday or Saturday morning. The weekday classes meet at a Unit 5 elementary school and the Saturday class meets at the CAC activity room. All sessions total number of participants were 70, 3-5 years of age.

The new format of the Children's Theatre program has continued to be a success and both of the sessions offered in the summer saw their maximum number of 30 participants with some remaining on the waitlist. The shows in 2015 were High School Musical and The Wizard of Oz. The first two weeks of the sessions were once again held indoors at the CAC and the last two weeks of the sessions were held at the Amphitheatre. The group performed for one of the Thrilling Thursdays and used it nicely as a dress rehearsal. There were also performances held in the evening that were very well attended.



The summer day camps as well as the other outdoor summer programs have become a bigger challenge for the supervisor due to the recent changes in weather patterns over the last few summers. Most of the day camps have an alternate indoor space secured but those have become increasingly more difficult to obtain due to space issues and Unit 5 needing the space for their own programs.

The 3 day camps traveled to a Peoria Chiefs baseball game this summer and will hope to continue to attend in future summers. Cirquemania, Inc. also visited the camps and allowed them to try out some circus skills. The camps also attended a free opera performance at the ISU Performing Arts building and it was more geared towards youth than it was last year and more enjoyable. The summer gymnastics program is still seeing promising participation numbers and using two Unit 5 gymnasiums remains to be a good working relationship. We are happy to continue working with Mickey Lower (aka, The Zoo Lady) by offering our summer Art Camp. We are never sure where we will be seeing the participants' art in the Town.

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The Youth Dance program continues to thrive with most of the classes seeing the maximum number along with a waitlist of people wanting to participate. There is a fall, winter and summer session of the program as well as a few week long camps during the summer. At the end of each session there is a family open house where the participants and the instructor get to show off all their hard work and talents. Refreshments are a must and enjoyed by all those attending. We were not able to offer a fall session since we were in between dance instructors. Participation numbers in each class: Creative Movement-24, Pre-Ballet-24, Ballet 1-18, Ballet 2-8.



The Musikgarten program has a very passionate and dedicated instructor who continues to find ways to get families enrolled. There are classes all year round; fall, winter and shortened sessions during the spring and summer. Zumba Jr. for kids under 8 years old and Zumba Kids for those 8 years and older will still be offered during the summer months. Hoopin' It was a new program that was offered during the summer months and there were hopes that the program would continue into the fall. Hula hooping is becoming rather popular in the community and our department is lucky to have found an instructor who is interested in teaching classes and seeing the program grow.



The Connie Link Amphitheatre continues to be a very much appreciated facility and stays pretty busy during the season. The High School Summer Theatre continued with a two show summer and the shows were **Godspell** and **The Addams Family**. 14 of the 16 shows took place due to weather issues. Almost 3,000 people came out to the Connie Link Amphitheatre to be entertained by this talented group of local high school students. The new paved parking lot at 611 S. Linden was so helpful and much appreciated by all. The dream is still alive for a

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permanent parking lot to replace the temporary grass lot at Underwood Park and will also have access to the trail and so people won't have to try and walk across busy Linden Street. We are waiting for State grant dollars to come through. The permanent restroom/storage area facility continues to be a welcomed addition.



The Thrilling Thursdays program at the Connie Link Amphitheatre continues to draw a big audience. A lot of preschools, home day cares and young families are able to come to a one hour long, free performance throughout the summer. We have begun partnering with Cirquemia for programming and they performed for one of our Thrilling Thursdays. Julie K is always a must have on the schedule, there was a magician from Philip & Henry and Miller Park brought some of their friends to visit. The Children's Theatre program held a dress rehearsal for one of their shows the last Thursday in July and that was well liked and well attended. We will try to continue to provide this in the future as long as both schedules allow. The Twin City Tale Spinners provided stories, crafts and snacks on Tuesdays during the month of June this summer. In the future, we will try to be consistent with our morning programming at the Amphitheatre.



Great news for the Dress Up Movies program, all of the scheduled movies were shown including the three that had been rescheduled from the previous summer. The summer Concert series is very popular from a performer's perspective as there are more groups that would like to perform than the facility can schedule. This is a good problem to have and new groups continue to rave about the facility and are thankful for the opportunity to perform. Some of the new groups that performed this summer were Sweetwater, Bone-a-fide, Pearl Handle Band and The Old Men Boys. The indoor Dress Up movies saw numbers around 200 for a couple of the movies, November and December.



SPECIAL EVENTS PROGRAMMING

Saturday, March 28, 2015 marked the Town of Normal Easter Egg Hunt. This was the fourth year holding the event at the Cornbelter's Corn Crib. Special Event staff was prepared for a large group of participants by stuffing over 20,000 eggs. Despite the weather being very chilly and windy albeit sunny and clear, almost 3,500 participants arrived to partake in the festivities. The large venue with its expansive parking capacity and layout designed for smooth foot traffic flow with controlled entry & exit has been outstanding and will continue to be utilized in future years.



Fourth of July activities were hosted at both Fairview Family Aquatic Center and Anderson Aquatic Center. Over 1,700 partons visited the two facilites and participated in games and activities throughout the day. A local artist donated her time and talent free of charge to create large chalk murals at AAC saluting men & women of the Armed Forces for their service.

On June 12 & 13, 2015 the Illinois Special Olympics were in town. Athletes, coaches, and their families were welcomed to Fairview Family Aquatic Center to swim all day, free of charge. The change from previous years offering only 1 hour of fee swimming was greatly appreciated by all of the more than 500 athletes, coaches, and mentors who took advantage of the event.



Department staff began preparations for the 2015 Haunted Trail in mid-August. The event ran on October 22, 23, 24, 30 & 31. Unfortunately, this season's event was plagued with poor weather. Cold, rainy, windy conditions resulted in the department needing to cancel the event on two of the five scheduled evenings. The non-scary weekend was open two of the three scheduled dates and saw 3,011 participants. The scary weekend hosted 1,862 participants with the event opening late and closing early on the second night due to inclement weather. As always, canned goods were accepted in lieu

of admission fees for the first weekend, and were donated to the local Salvation Army. A total of 1,820 canned goods were donated as a result. Overall, the 2015 Haunted Trail saw 4,873 visitors over the 2 weekends it was in operation. Phone Calls from Santa were held on Monday, December 7 and Wednesday, December 9. This event was again offered free of charge to residents. Local volunteers from the YWCA and Knights of Columbus were utilized to help make phone calls to children. Almost 70 children received a call from Santa.

Breakfast with Santa was held on December 12th, 13th, and 19th at the Community Activity Center. A new caterer, Times Past Inn, was used for the event this year and we had excellent feedback from those in attendance. In total, 132 participants attended the three breakfasts.



TEEN/YOUTH SPORT PROGRAMS



The Youth Basketball program for boys and girls in 1st – 5th grades had over 150 players participating. Leagues were divided as follows; 1st grade, 2nd-3rd grade and 4th-5th grade.

Pee Wee Sports, a program for 3-5 year olds offered 8 sessions this year. Throughout 2015 we had over 100 participants. The little ones experienced baseball, soccer, hockey, track and field, basketball, and football.

Wee Ball, T-ball, and Pre Ball programs were offered for children ages 4-7, with over 225 youths taking advantage of the programs.



Youth Tennis was taught at four different levels this summer. Tennis participation had a total of 101 participants.

C.O.B.R.A. (Children Outside Being Really Active), for boys and girls in 2nd-5th grades, gave kids the chance to get out from their home and be active for 2 ½ hours twice a week during the summer. This summer we had over 70 participants in this program.

The Parks and Recreation Department offered a six week Jr. High Basketball program to 6th-8th grade boys this fall. The league was started in the winter with 40 boys participating.

The Parks and Recreation Department offered an 8 week Youth Volleyball program this fall for grades 4th-8th. The program was divided into a 4th-5th grade league and a 6th-8th grade league. Volleyball had 72 participants this year.

The Parks and Recreation Department once again offered its popular Bidy Basketball Program to Kindergarten and 1st graders this fall. This eight week instructional clinic had 46 participants this year.



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Lacrosse 101 was a new program introduced in the fall of 2015. The program runs for 6 weeks and is an introduction to the sport of lacrosse. Lacrosse 101 had over 30 participants ages 5-15.



For the seventh year in a row, the Parks and Recreation Department offered a full day summer camp for teenagers. Teen Camp was offered to students entering 7th-9th grades. The camp was divided into three three-week sessions, and this year allowed 30 teens per session. A total of 90 teens participated in teen camp.

On February 16, 27 teens took part in a ski trip to Ski Snowstar in Andalusia, Illinois. This trip was offered to all students in 6th-12th grade.



The Babysitter's Certification Course was offered 6 times during the 2015 year. This course teaches babysitting skills to students 11-15 years old. A total of 30 students participated in the program this year.

On March 27, 21 teens made the trip up to Joliet to visit Challenge Park Xtreme.



ADULT SPORTS/ADULT FITNESS

Softball leagues are offered in the summer and fall. Summer leagues include; men's recreation, co-ed and church leagues. This past year 75 teams participated in 11 leagues. Fall leagues consist of men's recreation and co-rec. Fall leagues began after Labor Day and continued through early October. There were 46 teams playing in the fall season.

Basketball leagues for men are conducted in the winter months (November – March). Games are played Monday nights at Chiddix Jr. High School. Five teams are participating this year.

Winter Drop-in basketball is held November – March three nights a week; Monday at Chiddix Jr. High School, Wednesdays at Sugar Creek and Thursdays at Kingsley Jr. High. Participants pay \$2.00 per night to play pick-up games of basketball. Average attendance per night is 12.

Fitness Classes are offered throughout the year at the Community Activity Center. Classes include; **Step Aerobics, Core Training, Body Shaping, Zumba and Stretch & Tone.** Stretch & Tone has the highest participation numbers with over 30. Core Training and Body Shaping average around 12 participants while Step Class and Zumba are averaging 20 or more.



Champion Fields continued to be very busy during the spring, summer and early fall. Champion Fields played host to 12 weekend tournaments. The larger tournaments included BNGSA Class B - 82 teams, BNGSA Firecracker – 86 teams, BNGSA Memorial Day Tourney – 66 teams, ASA 10A State – 44 teams and IESA State - 16 teams, (5,000 spectators). The highlight of the summer was hosting another ASA National Championship. The 10U age group provided far less teams than the older divisions of play but was still a great event for Normal and the community.

Champion Fields Concessions also experienced a busy and profitable year. The stands were open mid-May through early October and had over \$110,000 in sales. A total of 30 part-time staff worked throughout the summer.

Three baseball trips were offered this past year. On Saturday, May 30 a group of 50 traveled down to St. Louis for an afternoon game between the Cardinals and Dodgers. It was a rainy day that had fans sit through two lengthy rain delays. Cardinal fans drove back to Normal disappointed after a Cardinal loss. Saturday, June 27 was a game up to Chicago's Wrigley Field for the big rivalry game, Cardinals vs Cubs. Three buses carrying 160 fans got to experience this great baseball venue and a Cubs win. The final trip of the summer was once again up to Chicago's Wrigley Field to see the other rival of the Cubs - Chicago White Sox. Two buses taking 100 fans made this trip. The weather was far from ideal as the first four innings were played under a constant drizzle but the group had cover from the deck above and there were no rain delays. The flag with the big blue W was not flying after this game.

