

Parks and Recreation Department

Phil Blasko, Superintendent

The Mishawaka Parks and Recreation Department successfully cut ribbons on three new amenities in 2018; Merrifield Park, Castle Manor and the Fitness Court. The newly renovated Merrifield Park features an extension of the Riverwalk, new restroom building, and is highlighted by the upgrade of the historic Castle Manor. Through generous donations from individuals, families, service groups and businesses, we were able to successfully complete our first ever Patronicity



Central Park Fitness Court

Campaign to build the new, state-of-the-art Fitness Court on the Riverwalk. Rosemary's Garden features two swing benches that provide a great opportunity to reflect or rest while enjoying the sights of downtown Mishawaka.

We believe that we play a very important role in enhancing the quality of life for the City of Mishawaka. Our commitment to engage with the community through new events, programs, and activities has been our primary focus. With over seventeen new special events, along with the expansion of our summer camps, our positive

momentum is here to stay. We are proud to report that we have provided opportunities for all ages and abilities at the Mishawaka Parks Department.

Battell Community Center

The Community Center has been as busy as ever this past year: packed with people, special events, youth and adult activities and evening/weekend rentals. We are pleased that the community is becoming more aware of the BCC and all that it has to offer. Lil' Explorers Adventure Day Camp was the "perfect first camp experience" and proved to be a nurturing introductory program for preschoolers. Our camp counselors did a wonderful job embracing the creativity and imagination of each child to create an inventive and inclusive environment.

Special Events have not only expanded in selection, but in attendance as well. The 3-day Halloween Spooktacular was a massive hit with the community, featuring a Haunted House, Kids Fun House, Trunk or Treat and the BCC Graveyard! With around 6,000 people in attendance, lines wrapped around the building and out through the parking lot each night. We proudly collected and donated 2,643 pounds



Trunk or Treat

of food to the Mishawaka Food Panty. We are pleased to announce that this event will extend to two weekends in 2019, making this our first ever six-day event. The Fam-Fam Sale, 2nd Chance Prom, Macarons with Mom and the Winter Concert Series were also popular events

The BCC Youth Sports leagues have more than doubled in participants this year! The Youth Basketball Program had over 200 three through eight year old participants. We utilized both the Battell and John Young Gymnasiums for Wednesday practices and Saturday Games.



Youth Sports

Merrifield Complex

The summer aquatics season started with the 6th Annual Blazin' Buffalo Swim Invitation. Throughout the season, the pool saw a steady crowd of both residents and nonresidents enjoying all that this great amenity has to offer. We hosted multiple successful events throughout the season. Our Neon Glow Swim brought large numbers of families and kids to swim after dark with glow sticks and colorful lights around the pool. The summer season ended with a Dive-In Movie event. Our very popular Central Park Splash Pad was able to stay open until Mid-October.



Merrifield Swimming and Skating

On December 8th, Merrifield Ice Rink opened to one of the largest crowds in history at our Winterfest event. Free ice-skating was offered to everyone at the event. Due to increased marketing efforts and mild weather, our December attendance was higher than the entire 2017/2018 season. In addition to our public skate hours, Irish Youth Hockey League utilized our facility four nights a week for their practices and games.

Recreation

With the expansion of age groups and additional recreation programs, the recreation department experienced double-digit growth for the second year in a row. One of our leading programs nearly doubled in participants from the previous year, with over 220 kids playing T-Ball. Youth Track and Field made its debut and was huge hit. We ended the year with offering eight successful outdoor youth sports leagues and three adult sports leagues.

Thanks to an abundance of snowfall throughout the winter months in 2018, George Wilson Park saw record-breaking revenue numbers for the snow tubing season. Leading into spring and summer, local disc golf clubs and individuals with a passion for the park volunteered their time to help clean and improve the George Wilson disc golf course.

Special Events

2018 was packed with Park Events! We are so grateful for the community turn-out that we had. Our Helicopter Easter Egg Drop saw nearly 4000 attendees, up from about 400 in 2017. The



Heritage Fest

Memorial Day Kids Dash was a huge success – 250 runners participated. Independence Day Celebration this year saw some of the hottest temperatures of 2018. Despite the heat, we had good attendance at Kamm, Battell, and Central Parks. The Mishawaka Heritage Festival also had a heat wave come through, but we had a number of people out to celebrate the culture and historical background of Mishawaka. Our 80's Color Run saw close to 100 people in attendance and the Flannel Formal made its debut with nearly 300 people in attendance. Live

music, fires, and a beer garden were highlights of the “Formal”. The year ended on a high note with Winterfest. We were able to bring a reindeer to the event for the first time in our Winterfest history.

The Summer Concert Series was as popular as ever, featuring free family friendly music at Central Park, Battell Park Bandshell, Merrifield Park and the Eberhart Golf Course Clubhouse Deck. We are excited to offer our Thursday evening concerts this year at Central Park.



Color Run

Landscape Division

In 2018, the Landscaping & Urban Forestry department accomplished many significant goals, but three achievements stand out above the rest. Our Landscape Manager organized and raised funds with the students of the Mishawaka High School Landscape & Gardening Club to fund the construction of a 1,200 square foot Educational Greenhouse through Patronicity. The Community Greenhouse, our second Patronicity project of the year, will act as a new meeting location for our program with the High School and allow the Parks Department to offer some new and unique educational programs to the community right across the street from the Battell Community Center. This new space will allow us to expand the scope of programs we offer and plant material that we are able to use in our parks.

We would like to recognize the students for their involvement and efforts in the fundraiser and would like to express a special thanks to Club President Christian Hawkins who helped raise over \$17,000 in donations. We look forward to the construction of this project starting this April and are proud of the students involved in our program.

The Department expanded the Adopt-a-Park program to continue to engage the community in park stewardship and conservation. We had over twenty organizations, along with several individuals take part in a variety of tasks around the City and we expect this program to continue to grow and expand this year.

One of our new partnerships is with the Penn District Middle Schools, who spent a day helping with cleanup and detail work at Central Park, Shiojiri Niwa, and Merrifield Pool Complex. We are



Park Landscaping

still enjoying our partnership with the Young Adults program through School City of Mishawaka. This program has yielded rewarding work experiences for the students involved. We would like to recognize James Madden and Susan Nettrour for their outstanding work and effort to help the Landscape Department last year.

After the flooding of the Riverwalk, the Landscape Department teamed up with Epic Church to do a community cleanup event. We had over 200 volunteers attend the event at Beutter Park and Eberhart Golf Course. Despite freezing temperatures, we had a successful event that brought the community together to aid in the repair of our parks. It was a wonderful and humbling event for our staff and we plan to continue to work with Epic Church for years to come.

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Eberhart-Petro Golf Course

During the last week of February, a flood of monumental proportion swept upon the city, leaving half of the golf course under water for more than two weeks. As the water receded, large amounts of silt, rock and other debris covered the course. With the help from volunteers and city departments, the course was able to open on April 21st, which is two months later than the previous year.



Eberhart-Petro Golf Course

A decorative aluminum fence was added to the course at the entrance and putting green area. This provides us with added curb appeal and additional safety on the property. The golf season generated 16,000 rounds.

Park Board

The City's Park and Recreation Board has continued its dedication and devotion to the city patrons, as well as our agency. The Board's passion and drive to meet the needs and desires of the community remains evident through the continued growth of recreational programs offered each year. Through their guidance, recreation and special events we will continue to evolve for people of all ages, both now and well into the future.

2018 Board of Parks and Recreation	
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Michael Faulkner	Vice President
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