



TOWN OF GUILFORD
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, RECREATION AND SENIORS
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GUILFORD PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
ANNUAL REPORT 2018 - 2019

The Parks and Recreation Department enhances the quality of life in Guilford by providing attractive, well-maintained areas and facilities for active and passive leisure pursuits. We offer affordable structured activities that are recreational, social, cultural, physical and creative for all age groups and we provide various social and health services.

Our services benefit INDIVIDUALS with better health, fitness, self-esteem and creative expression; the COMMUNITY, through connected families, community pride, support for youth, and a lifeline for the elderly; the ENVIRONMENT with open space, wildlife habitats and oxygen-producing green areas; the ECONOMY, through enhanced land values, reduced healthcare costs, and reduced crime and vandalism.

The Parks and Recreation Department provided positive experiences for thousands of Guilford residents from preschool-aged children through senior citizens. Nearly 745 classes and special events were offered last year and the total number of participants exceeded 20,000. Over 3,300 families were enrolled in our programs.

Preschool children learned socialization skills in a variety of classes with our quality instructors. They also learned new skills and sportsmanship in sports programs and creative expression through music, crafts and tumbling.

Classes for youth in guitar, dance, drama, engineering and cooking provided creative outlets. Sports and fitness programs, such as tennis lessons, gymnastics, basketball clinics, Tae Kwon Do and sports camps offered young people skill development and improved self-esteem through accomplishments and encouragement from caring instructors.

We met the desire for residents to improve their fitness level by providing over 30 fitness and yoga classes each season. There were over 2,500 registrations throughout the year.

Our two beaches offered a refreshing break from the summer heat. We sold over 1,900 seasonal passes. The boat docks at Lake Quonnipaug and the kayaks and paddleboats were very popular at the lake. There were 25 different swim lessons and programs at Lake Quonnipaug.

Summer camps, including *Camp Menunkatuck* and aftercare for children in grades 1 – 6 and *Get Out Way Out* for grades 7 – 9, enrolled over 1,000 campers throughout the summer. *Camp Menunkatuck* campers had terrific special events, exciting trips, and fun activities, including kayaking, crafts, sports, drama, archery, nature study, games and swimming. Counselors served as big brothers, big sisters, teachers, coaches and mentors for their campers. The *Get Out Way Out* program featured educational and exciting trips each week and many special events. The highlight of the summer was the end-of-camp celebration at Baldwin Middle School, featuring a 150-foot waterslide.

We also scheduled 25 summer sports camps with more than 500 children participating.

The Annual Community Picnic, featuring the 100-piece Community Band and various inflatable activities for kids, attracted nearly 1,000 people.

The 20th Annual Fireworks display attracted nearly 6,000 people. This annual event is one the highlights of the summer.

Our summer concert series featured *Dr. Joe & Friends* playing jazz, *Nightshift* playing hits from the 1960s and 70s, and tribute bands for *Earth, Wind & Fire*, *Steely Dan*, and *Blood, Sweat & Tears*. All concerts attracted large crowds on the Town Green with people of all ages enjoying the music.

Summer concerts and family activities at Jacobs Beach and *Eggstravanza* were fun family events. *Winterfest* attracted over 300 people for indoor and outdoor events during February school vacation. The *Halloween Spooktacular* on the Town Green featured *Trunk-or-Treat* with 35 cars decorated and handing out candy. There was also entertainment, face painting, and a costume contest. This event, co-sponsored with Youth & Family Services and Developmental Assets for Youth, attracted over 750 participants.

Teens came to the community center after school to play pool and basketball. Recreation staff and Youth and Family Services coordinated half-day school events such as flag football on the Green, basketball tournaments and other supervised activities.

We enriched the lives of over 2,500 senior citizens who participated in recreational, social and educational activities. Their interest in improved health and fitness was evident with participation in senior aerobics, Body Wise, line dance, hula, ballroom dance, chair yoga and tai chi. Their creative potential was tapped with oil painting, sewing, knitting and crafts groups,

and their minds were challenged with classes in French, Spanish, Italian, spirituality, a men's discussion club, *AARP Safe Driving* courses and chess.

The bocce league had 82 participants in the spring and fall. Pickleball, with over 120 participants per season, continued to explode in popularity. Pickleball is played on the Guilford Lakes School tennis court, Bittner Skate Park and at the Adams School tennis courts. In addition, we had an agreement with the Guilford Racquet Club for pickleball in the winter. Groups also played in the community center.

The community center was a place for seniors to gather during the day, enroll in a multitude of activities and play cards, read and socialize in various special events. More than 90 older adults participated in the *Annual Harvest Fair* that featured quality crafts, Christmas ornaments, baked goods and knitted clothing. Many of these goods were handmade throughout the year by the seniors, themselves.

For many older adults, the lunches served four days a week at the community center are their only hot meals for the day. Our kitchen staff also prepared delicious and nutritious meals for *Meals on Wheels*. There were 24,262 meals delivered by *Meals on Wheels* volunteers and 10,284 meals served at the center.

Transportation on four mini-buses brought seniors to the community center, to doctor and dental appointments, on shopping trips and errands. Our senior buses carried 13,149 passengers on 8,212 trips. In addition, we offered an overnight trip to upstate New York and numerous special day trips to shows, concerts and museums.

Along with the Madison Senior Center and sponsorship from the Guilford Foundation and Madison Foundation, we hosted the Schiller Shoreline Institute of Lifelong Learning (SSILL) group. They provided meaningful and intellectual classes for retired and semi-retired seniors of Guilford and Madison and attracted 494 seniors with 43 classes offered in the fall and 42 in the spring.

Our older adults were entertained throughout the year with various special events, including movie nights, a *Seniors Prom*, and lunchtime concerts.

The Nathanael B. Greene Community Center continued to be a magnet of activity. The center was active throughout the day with preschool children through senior citizens and it was used for Parks and Recreation programs and by community groups evenings and weekends. The center was open an average of 95 hours per week. There were small group activities, town meetings, banquets, concerts, Parks and Recreation programs and meetings of various organizations. There were over 4,800 room reservations in the center, including programs.

A new roof was installed on the community center to replace the 26-year-old shingles.

Providing and preserving parks and open space enhances the desirability of a community as well as contributes to the safety and health of its residents. Green areas offer stress reduction opportunities to our citizens.

The Parks Maintenance Division maintained eight parks, three beaches, the Town Green, town building areas and school grounds, including athletic fields. Responsibilities included turf management, mowing 120 acres, preparing 40 athletic fields for middle school, high school, youth and adult sports. The parks maintenance crew continued the comprehensive turf management program that included mowing, aerating, topdressing, seeding and fertilizing athletic fields to maintain them in top playing condition. Our aggressive management of all fields resulted in better playing conditions for over 3,000 young athletes. With our ongoing program to improve *Little League* fields, the parks maintenance crew rebuilt the Bittner A field.

The synthetic turf field at Guilford High School stadium, opened in the fall 2007, continued to be used for hundreds of high school and youth sports events, even during winter months. The field was scheduled jointly by the Athletic Director and the Parks and Recreation Department to avoid scheduling conflicts for the many groups wanting to use the field.

During the winter months, our crew removed snow from over two miles of town sidewalks and parking lots. Mill Pond was open for ice skating three days.

Jacobs Beach continued to be an attraction due to ongoing improvements and the weekly grooming of the beach. The picnic shelters were reserved for more than 190 events and our entire stock of 237 boat racks was rented for the season by avid kayak and canoe owners.

We continued a project to control invasive weeds in Lake Quonnipaug. Benthic barriers were installed in the swim area. Invasive weed treatment for the lake now falls under the Town's environmental planner. He will continue the work to help eradicate the weeds to improve lake quality.

The dog park at Nut Plains Park continued to be an attraction with as many as 30 dogs visiting at a time.

The approvals of an 18-hole disc golf course at Bittner Park were given in the fall of 2018. Construction with the parks crew and volunteers occurred throughout the winter and spring of 2019. It was anticipated the course would be completed by fall 2019. Many volunteers from Boy Scout Troops 471 and 474 helped drag brush and clear areas as the wooded fairways took shape. Craig Smolin, professional disc golfer, continued to volunteer to fine tune the course layout.

There have been many Boy Scout Eagle projects that have benefited the Parks and Recreation Department and the community over the years. In 2018-2019, Michael Kegal (Troop 474) expanded parking at Nut Plains Park and Joshua Brause (Troop 474) placed mini-libraries at Jacobs Beach and the dog park. Alex Russello (Troop 471) replaced a damaged bridge at the Bittner Park Trout Trail. Kent Macowiak (Troop 471) constructed steps to the announcer's platform at the Page soccer field in Bittner Park. Norman Benedict (Troop 474) rebuilt a split-rail fence at the Lake Quonnipaug upper picnic area. James Crossley (Troop 471) constructed a kiosk for the disc golf course at Bittner Park.

2018 – 2019 Statistics

Classes and special events	745
Total participation	20,000
Seasonal beach passes sold	1,900
Boat racks	237
Summer camps enrollment	1,000
Swim lesson classes	25
Sports camps enrollment	500
Jacobs Beach & Lake Quonnipaug pavilion reservations	192
Fitness classes enrollment	2,500
Lunches prepared	34,546
Senior transportation	13,149 passengers on 8,212 trips
Senior citizens enrollment	2,500
Community center reservations	4,800
Acres mowed	120
Fields maintained	40

Thanks are extended to the thousands of residents who have supported our programs. I also thank the Parks and Recreation Commission, staff and volunteers for helping advance the quality of life for the folks of Guilford. We are thankful for the support of the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance that gave us the budget to meet the recreation needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Rick B. Maynard
Director, Guilford Parks and Recreation