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Denver Parks and Recreation Newsletter

Editorial Calendar - Upcoming Issues

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March 2009

Recreation Center Task Force Update

The Recreation Center Task Force has spent the past nine months learning about the recreation center system, listening to citizen priorities for the recreation centers and creating draft recommendation that were shared at five community meetings during the first two weeks of February. The meetings were well attended, with over 500 passionate individuals providing their likes and dislikes of the draft recommendations for the future of the recreation center system. The Draft Recommendations were primarily created based on the feedback that the Task Force received from the first round of community meetings (16 meetings in total). At these initial meetings, citizens expressed a desire for increased hours of operation, increased programming, improved amenities and increased flexibility. The Draft Recommendations included creating partnerships with other non-profit agencies to assist in the management and program delivery at some of the recreation centers and creating a community, neighborhood, local and regional tier of centers with expanded hours of operation and programming. In addition, the Task Force recommends a tier of fees that are based on paying for the amenity that you use. For example, a membership at a regional center would be honored at all recreation centers and a membership at a neighborhood center would be honored at centers within the neighborhood tier. There is the ability to use centers in a different tier for a nominal fee.



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The Task Force draft recommendations also emphasized that priority be given to youth, seniors and people with disabilities with increased programming for these groups at all of our centers. They also recommended creating standards for customer service, maintenance and equipment.

The Task Force is working very hard in creating a recommendation to Parks and Recreation for the strategic vision for the recreation centers for the next 1-10 years.

The Task Force should have their final recommendations by mid-March, which will be presented to Kevin Patterson, Manager of Parks and Recreation. Once the final recommendations have been approved, the recreation staff will create a transition plan that will create a timeline for implementation and identify the necessary steps to implement the recommendations.

Casting Call

Night of the Stars Youth Talent Show Denver, Englewood, Commerce City Northglenn and Thornton team up for city wide talent search

So you think you got what it takes to wow a crowd? If so come participate in the 6th annual Night of the Stars Talent Competition for kids. Denver, Englewood, Commerce City, Northglenn and Thornton's Parks and Recreation Departments will host a metro wide talent search competition this spring, hoping to find our region's most talented kids. If your voice is stellar or you have the ability to make your sibling disappear, then we want you.

Performers will be judged and prizes awarded for 1st-3rd place in the following categories: voice and variety. There are three age categories: K-4th, 5th-8th, and 9th-12th. First Prize winners will move on to compete in a multi-city competition.

Registration starts now and will continue through March 11th. Everyone who registers before March 6th will be guaranteed an audition time. Auditions will be held on Wednesday March 11th at Eisenhower Recreation Center starting at 6:00pm. A dress rehearsal and local competitions will also take place prior to the final multi-city competition on March 19th.

The most important aspect of the talent show is that it's not only a show for kids, but it's also produced by kids. Local area kids participate in all aspects of production, including the administration of the program. If you have a child that might be interested in the operations on how to produce a large scale project such as this or would like to sit center stage and perform, please contact your region to register.

For more information for Denver's Night of the Stars, please contact Brooke Ives at Eisenhower Recreation Center: 303-692-5650.

Denver Parks and Recreation	303-692-5651
Englewood Parks and Recreation	303-762-2680
Commerce City Parks and Recreation	303-289-3674
Northglenn Parks and Recreation	303-450-8800
Thornton Parks and Recreation	303-255-7800

Facility Services Plan Future Recreation Center Projects

Maintaining our beautiful parks and fun-filled recreation centers is a big job and our Facility Services' division does this and much, much more. Besides maintaining numerous ornamental water fountains throughout Denver, they also keep our recreation facilities in tip-top shape. The 2009 year promises to bring increased improvements to our neighborhood recreation centers.

When the Better Denver Bond program passed in 2007, it allowed the Parks and Recreation department to make and plan improvements on numerous recreation centers. From renovating an old wood shop into a state-of-the-art fitness center to new gym floors at some of our busiest recreation centers, there are many exciting projects planned. A partial listing of projects in various stages will give you a sense of the projects completed, underway and planned for the future.

Completed projects:

- Renovation of craft room at Eisenhower
- Renovated the Scheitler wood shop into a fitness center
- New multi-purpose room floors at Montclair, Montbello and Scheitler
- New carpet at College View
- Installation of upgraded burglar alarms at 10 centers
- Installation of new phone systems at 15 centers

Underway or coming soon:

- New gym floors at Athmar and Harvey Park
- Youth oriented Exercade systems at Stapleton and Athmar
- Installation of a Coolerado cooling system at Aztlan
- Upgrades to the weight room at Glenarm
- New window installation at 20th Street
- New sports flooring at Davis
- New room dividers at Highland, Southwest and

Montbello

In the planning phases:

- Construction of an expanded fitness center at Eisenhower - September
- Architects estimate for renovating fitness areas at 20th Street
- Bids on storefront for pool and new exterior siding at Washington Park
- Estimates for new pool paks at Scheitler, Davis, La Familia and Athmar

We look forward to working to improve amenities in your community.

The First Tee of Denver

Summer programming is coming up for The First Tee of Denver! The programs will take place at City Park, Willis Case, and Wellshire golf courses, as well as at Aqua Golf, the brand new driving range and miniature golf course on Santa Fe and Florida. Classes run from June 14 through July 26, and sign up begins online Monday March 16. Further details can be found on The First Tee of Denver website, www.thefirstteeofdenver.com.

Employment is also available for adults through our instructor program, and for youth through our mentoring and caddie programs. The instructor program gives adults the ability to teach a group of youth specific golf and life skills. The mentor program gives older youth an opportunity to help the instructors implement the course materials and gives them valuable work experience. The caddie program allows youth to make money, earn scholarships, and gain job experience while giving them invaluable networking opportunities. Applications for all programs are now available.

For more information on the mentor and instructor programs, contact Clint Eckstein at 303-295-4082 or via e-mail at clint@thefirstteeofdenver.com. Applications are due April 3rd. For the caddie program, contact Blake Adkison at 303-295-4082 or via e-mail at Blake@thefirstteeofdenver.com. The program begins in April so get your applications in today!

The mission of The First Tee of Denver is to use golf as a tool to educate kids academically, socially, and physically. Young people who become members of The First Tee of Denver enjoy a variety of opportunities to learn lessons on the golf course that translate to success off it, as well as life skills that can help them grow as individuals and prepare them for the future.

Softball in the City

Spring is Here

Well, at least spring weather is here, and that means it's time for softball. Break out the uniform, oil-up the glove, shine the non-metal cleats, and get out to a Denver park near you and play some softball!



Denver's Parks + Recreation has been involved in running adult softball for many years, and the CityWide Sports division oversees adult sports offered by the City and County of Denver.

Since its inception five years ago, CityWide Sports has been very successful with its adult softball program: 'Softball in the City', which boasts some great participant numbers. More than 8,000 men & women on over 600 teams participate annually from March to October.

'Softball in the City' offers Men's and Co-Ed leagues Monday through Friday evenings at: Barnum North Park (W. 8th Ave. near N. Federal Blvd.), Kennedy Park (off of Dartmouth & Kenton), Lawson Park (W. Park Blvd. & California St.), Ruby Hill Park (W. Jewell Ave & S. Platte River Dr.), and Vanderbilt Park (off of Santa Fe Dr. & Mississippi).

Spring season registration: March 2 - March 13, 2009.
The 8-game season begins March 23, 2009.

For more information or to register a team, go to:
www.denvergov.org/citywidesports.

If you have any questions regarding any CityWide Sports program, contact:
Thomas Almeida @ thomas.almeida@denvergov.org or
303-710-8491.

Flag Football in the City

The CityWide Sports division of Denver Parks + Recreation is excited to announce the inaugural season of the adult flag football program: 'Flag Football in the City'.

The Parks + Recreation department has been involved in running youth flag football for many years, and this spring will begin offering this fast-growing sport for adults. The CityWide Sports division oversees adult sports offered by

the City and County of Denver and Denver Parks + Recreation.

Since its inception five years ago, CityWide Sports has been very successful with its adult softball program: 'Softball in the City', which boasts some great participant numbers. More than 8,000 men & women on over 600 teams participate annually.

'Flag Football in the City' will offer leagues at Barnum East Park (N. Federal Blvd & W. 5th Ave) and at Ruby Hill Park (W. Jewell Ave & S. Platte River Dr.) Sunday through Saturday for the following divisions: NO contact: Men's 5 on 5 and Mixed (co-ed) 5 on 5, as well as Men's 8 on 8 semi-contact.

Spring season registration: February 2 - March 6, 2009.
The 7-game season begins March 9, 2009.

For more information or to register a team, go to:
www.denvergov.org/citywidesports.

If you have any questions regarding any CityWide Sports program, contact:
Thomas Almeida @ thomas.almeida@denvergov.org or
303-710-8491.

2009 Summer Camp

Denver Parks and Recreation has the perfect **affordable** solution to entertain your children on those hot summer days. This year we are pleased to announce that we will be hosting outdoor based camps within our parks and indoor sites at various recreation centers throughout the Denver metro area. Our licensed summer camps provide structured learning programs focused around sports and fitness, arts and crafts and aquatics while providing young campers with a fun and educational experience. Most day camps start the second week in June and conclude the first week in August.

Summer Camp registration begins March 9. So hurry and sign up fast because camps fill quickly. Hours of operation, ages and fees and charges vary, please go to www.denvergov.org/recreation or call (720) 913-0689 for more information.

Recreation Happenings

Outdoor Recreation

Locations vary
(303)370-6669

Full Moon Snowshoe & hot cocoa

Experience the joy of snowshoeing on a moon-lit, snow-packed trail. The evening is capped-off with a steaming cup of hot cocoa. Outdoor Recreation's experienced staff will lead this leisurely snowshoe outing in the Colorado high country. Those new to snowshoeing will find it to be a simple and easily learned activity-ideal for staying active during the winter months. Outdoor Recreation will provide snowshoes, headlamps, and related gear, along with the hot cocoa! Call Outdoor Recreation @ 303 370 6668 for more information and to register.

Location: Echo Lake (Denver Mountain Parks)

Cost: \$20

Session date: 3/11/2009

Day/Time: Wednesday 4:00PM-9:30PM

"Basic Bicycle Maintenance" seminar

Outdoor Recreation will be hosting an educational evening program at the Outdoor Recreation office located within the Historic Graham Bible House of City Park. (2080 York St.) This bike maintenance seminar is open to all ages. Please

RSVP 303.370 .6668. The seminar will be 1.5 hours long. "Basic Bike Maintenance" @ City Park

Cost: \$3 (please bring your own bike and tools)

Session date: 03/25/2009

Day/Time: Wednesday 7:00PM

Giving Back - - Hip Hop Style

As Denver Parks and Recreation moves forward incorporating hip-hop themes in youth programming, it is important to highlight strides the department makes that are not always easy to recognize. The RAC4DY (pronounced Rack Forty) program has moved from one-time events to recreation center programs that occur afternoons and evenings a couple days per week. St. Charles and La Familia Recreation Centers are currently operating separate, but complementary hip-hop programs that feature graffiti art and break dance programs taught by several talented Denver Hip-Hop Heads.

A very talented, former B-Boy from the Parks Division is volunteering his time (and effort) at the center several hours per week, teaching the 20 plus youth ages 3-18 the history and techniques of hip-hop dance. While Tom Martinez' specialty is 'poppin' he utilizes youth instructors from the Rated Fresh dance crew to implement more 'breakin' moves for the kids who are interested. Even in times where it is difficult to have a positive outlook about uncertain futures in our City, Tom is happy to contribute to

the future of hip-hop through Denver's youth whenever he can.

Remember to Think in Pictures

By Andrea Gianella, Denver Parks & Recreation
Special Needs Program Intern

Being in the Recreation Therapy field, especially in this decade, most of us can expect to have some sort of interaction with people on the Autism Spectrum. While the publicity and questions of origin seem to be constantly growing, it is easy to lose sight of what it really means to be Autistic. Impaired social interaction, sensory sensitivity, delayed verbal and nonverbal communication skills, and unusual or limited interests are all key words that we have used to describe this developmental disorder. Some examples of common behavioral concerns for people who have Autism are "meltdowns", inability to focus and follow directions, and hyperactivity. These behaviors may be occurring due to lack of understanding, lack of structure or to hyper/hypo sensitivity.

It is important to remember that people who have Autism think in pictures. Temple Grandin, an author and autistic woman, describes this perfectly in her book, "Thinking in Pictures." "Autistics have problems learning things that cannot be thought about in pictures," Grandin said. "The easiest words for an autistic child to learn are nouns, because they relate directly to pictures." - Temple Grandin

With the idea in mind of needing structure and thinking in pictures, are we doing all we can to adapt therapeutic recreation activities for people on the Autism Spectrum? Here's a list of things that may help with the organization of your programs and activities.

Picture Communication Symbols (PCS): PCS are pictures that are used to describe a word. People with Autism respond much better to seeing the picture of the word rather than hearing you say the word.

Schedules: A schedule of events for the activity or program is a great way to create structure so the participant knows exactly what to expect. Icons can be used in sequential order to create a visual schedule.

First/Then Boards: These are good for transitioning from one activity to the next if the visual schedule is too much for the participant.

Environment: Keep in mind that florescent lights and various noises can easily distract someone who is hypersensitive to sensory input. On the other hand,

Autistic people who are hyposensitive may actually need sensory input in order to stay focused. This can be accomplished by giving them a ball to squeeze, going on a short walk, or implementing some type of vestibular motion, such as swinging or bouncing, in the activity.

It is important and helpful to use these tools and keep this information in mind when planning and implementing programs so that the participant can apply and enjoy themselves to the fullest. Grandin agrees: "I think in pictures," she said. "Words are like a second language to me."

*Boardmaker is a computer program that offers a wide variety of Picture Communication Symbols for printing and creating schedules. You can purchase the program at their website at www.mayer-johnson.com Pictures can also be homemade by using clear pictures that represent words or actions.

Four Mile Historic Park Upcoming Events

Signs of Spring Day Camp

Join us for two days during spring vacation to learn all about spring!

Come discover the answer to these questions and many more!!!

How did the pioneers know when to start planting?

What do animals do after a long winter?

What exactly is a windmill for anyway?

March 23rd and 24th; 9am -1pm

and

March 31st and April 1st; 9am -1pm

For more information and pricing visit

www.fourmilepark.org, email

education@fourmilepark.org, or call the Education

Department at 720-865-0814

Summer Day Camps at Four Mile Historic Park Week-long half day sessions 9am-Noon

***Fee \$110**

FMHP Members 10% off

Homesteading Camp

Available weeks: June 8 or July 13

Campers will help build a new community as they experience and learn about the unique situations associated with early homesteading in

Colorado. They will enjoy a horse-drawn wagon ride, visit a blacksmith, make a historic quilt, attend a one-room

school, and cook in a wood-burning stove.

Trailblazer Camp

Available weeks: June 22 or July 27

Campers will learn about Native American life in Colorado: Cheyenne, Arapahoe & Ute, become a Mountain Man for a day, pan for gold like a real 59er, participate in a rendezvous, and ride in a horse-drawn wagon.

Ranches to Railroads Camp

Available weeks: June 29 or Aug 3

Campers will discover the many opportunities available to both men and women on the frontier. They will try their hand at ranching, newspaper publishing, working on the railroad, and many other jobs that helped tame the wild west.

Week-long full day sessions: 9am-3pm

*** Fee: \$175 (bring a sack lunch daily)**

FMHP Members 10% off

How the West was Fun!

Available weeks: June 15 or July 20

Campers will enjoy hands-on experiences as they learn about several different groups of immigrants and their unique experiences in the Westward Expansion. The customs, traditions, and crafts of the African American, Hispanic, Jewish, and Chinese pioneers will come to life for your child. This is a culture-based curriculum. In cooperation with the Mizel Museum.

Hay Bales & Tall Tales

Saturday, March 7, 11:00 am

Pioneer story time with game/activity to follow.
Begins at 11am, lasts for approximately one hour.

A Chicken in Every Pot Dinner

Friday, March 13, 6pm

How different is our current economic situation from those of the past? Are there lessons to be learned? Dine with Alexander Hamilton, Franklin Roosevelt, & others and ask them yourself. Family-style dinner, cash bar & even a bit of levity.

PRICING:

Before March 6th: Adults \$60; Members of FMHP \$45

After March 6th: Adults \$80; Members of FMHP \$65

Advance payment is required. Please call (720) 865-0815 by 4pm, Friday, March 12th. No tickets will be sold at the door.

Proceeds from all events go directly to support the mission of Four Mile Historic Park.

Murder Mystery Dinner 1905: The Peephole's Choice Saturday, April 4, 6pm

Join us for a night of MURDER and intrigue. Evening includes four-course dinner, open bar, and a few dead bodies.

PRICING:

Before March 27th: Adults \$80; Members of FMHP \$65
After March 27th: Adults \$100; Members of FMHP \$85
Advance payment is required. Please call (720) 865-0815 by 4pm, Friday, April 3rd. No tickets will be sold at the door.

Proceeds from all events go directly to support the mission of Four Mile Historic Park.

Critter Corner

Coyotes Revisited by Ashley DeLaup

As Denver Parks and Recreation rolls out its Coyote



Management Plan, a large component of the plan is community education. To minimize risk to pets and more importantly, people, it is important to understand the coyotes and their role in our ecosystem.

Coyotes are native, mid-sized predators that have always lived in the Denver Metro Area.

They have two layers of thick fur and long legs that often make them appear larger than

they really are. Typically, coyotes weigh between 25 -45 lbs and tend to be smaller in this part of the country than they are further east and north. They, like many canid or dog-like species, are omnivores, eating a diet comprised of fruits, grasses and garbage, as well as rodents, squirrels, prairie dogs, geese and other prey.

Although native to the Midwestern states, coyotes have been able to expand their range to every state and country in North America. This is attributed to their keen intelligence and adaptability. Urban areas provide the many necessities to coyotes, with an abundance of food, shelter and year-long water sources.

The abundance of food comes from intentional and unintentional feeding of the coyotes. Trash, open compost, ripe fruit on the ground and messy bird feeders all provide food both to the coyotes and to their prey, such as rabbits, squirrels and rodents. The number of coyotes that can successfully survive in an area is directly related to the resources available to them. If we removed coyotes, without removing the resources they use, new coyotes would immediately move in.

Because coyotes are a part of our environment, it is important to be aware of your surroundings. Coyotes rarely injure or initiate any kind of contact with people. In the past twelve years, Colorado has had 12 incidents

between a person and a coyote(s). While coyotes typically avoid close encounters with people, they have lost much of their natural fear of us. One of the best defenses is to re-establish their natural fear of humans and the best way to do that is by hazing, or intentionally harassment, of the animals. ,

Make a coyote that come too close or enters your yard uncomfortable and unwelcome. Yell, spray with hose, make noise, do what you can to make that animal leave. Examine your yard for things that may be attracting the coyote and remove them. Animals that are this adaptable and intelligent will quickly figure out that your yard isn't a place they want to be.

Denver also wants to know about your coyote experiences so we can best manage the animals that live here. Please visit www.denvergov.org/naturalareas to report a coyote encounter, as well as to find specific tips on protecting your home and pets.

Lifeguard Training

Lifeguard Training is an American Red Cross class intended to teach participants how to become a lifeguard. Candidates must be 15 years of age when the class begins. Class prices range from \$125-\$175. For more detailed information go to



<http://denvergov.org/Portals/659/documents/TrainingScheduleFall.pdf> or call the Denver Aquatics office at (303) 458-4796.

Upcoming Public Meetings

Improvements to Madame C.J. Walker Park Tuesday, March 3, 2009

Denver Parks and Recreation invites all residents interested in discussing future enhancements for Madame C.J. Walker Park. DPR's goal is to provide a forum where individuals will have an opportunity to provide input on preferences and priorities for future improvements to the park.

This meeting will be held on **Tuesday, March 3** from **6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.** at the Warren Public Library, 2825 High Street.

Summer Jobs for Youth Ages 14 - 21

The Denver Office of Economic Development Youth Services is recruiting youth ages 14 - 21 for summer jobs! There are two different programs available this year:

Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) - This program is for Denver residents, and includes income restrictions. Applications are available on the Youth Services website

<http://www.milehigh.com/employment/youthservices/SummerYouthEmployment> or please see the attached application. Applications need to be returned to the Youth Services office, 1391 N. Speer Blvd, Suite 520. Applications will be accepted until March 20th or until all positions are filled.

Governor's Summer Job Hunt (GSJH) - This program is for all Colorado youth and has no income restrictions. There are four job fairs in February and March, including one on March 11 at the Colorado Convention Center. More information can be found at <http://www.milehigh.com/employment/youthservices/GSJH>

For questions or more information, please call Youth Services at 720-865-5700.

Tax Relief for Working Families! Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit

If your family's income was less than about \$42,000 in 2008, you could be eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit when you file your tax return. The EITC is a special tax benefit from the federal government for working people with children who earn lower or moderate incomes. It's designed to help reduce your tax burden and supplement your wages.

If you're eligible, the Earned Income Tax Credit could mean a refund of up to \$4,800. Plus, you also may qualify for a Child Tax Credit of up to \$1,000 for each of your children. There also are tax credits for saving for retirement or for college expenses.

According to The Piton Foundation, which sponsors a statewide public information campaign about tax credits for families, more than 265,000 Colorado families received \$450 million in tax refunds last year because of the Earned Income Tax Credit. But, unfortunately, many other eligible families did not receive these much-needed refunds because they weren't aware of them, didn't know they were eligible, or didn't know how to apply.

But there's a free statewide hotline that you can call to learn how you can get these tax benefits and how to keep more of your refund by saving on tax preparation fees—even getting your tax return done for free! For more information, dial 2-1-1 (it's a free call) or go to www.piton.org/eitc. Claim all the tax credits you earned!

Photo caption: Families making less than \$42,000 can get their taxes prepared and filed at not cost by trained volunteers at free tax sites across Denver. Dial 2-1-1 or go to www.piton.org/eitc to find the site nearest you.



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