OUR MISSION:

Administration

The Administration Division is responsible for the overall operation and management of the Parks and Recreation Department. This includes the front-line customer service over the phones, online and in person at the Richard A. Clark Municipal Service Center, volunteer opportunities and the marketing and promotion of department facilities and programs. We are also responsible for the safety of the department’s permanent and seasonal team members while ensuring a fun and safe environment for the parks and open space system users. The Administration Division also oversees managing the department’s operating budgets and creating partnerships with other organizations and being a direct liaison to the Friends of Des Moines Parks and the Parks and Recreation Board.

Parks

The Parks Division is responsible for maintaining all the facilities and grounds within the Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department. This includes all park buildings, playgrounds, sport courts, pools and aquatic centers, wading pools, splash pads, spraygrounds, mowed turf, prairie areas, woodlands, litter, trash and snow removal. Also included are trails, both paved and nature, municipal cemeteries, landscaped areas, flowerbeds, trees and the city greenhouse.
“Helping Des Moines Live Well, Play Hard and Protect the Earth.”

Planning and Development

The Planning and Development Division designs, plans and implements parks, recreation, natural resources, trails and open space projects that facilitate safe, inviting and memorable use of these facilities. The primary function of the division is to manage the Park Improvement section of the City’s Capital Improvement Program by supervising and executing planning and construction projects. We strive to deliver projects that attract people to all of our facilities, from landmark destinations to nationally recognized trails to neighborhood parks that serve as the heart of our communities, all with a focus on the natural resources of the system. To accomplish this, our staff and consultants possess broad expertise and understanding of fields such as landscape architecture, planning, architecture and engineering.

Recreation

The Recreation Division strives to create a wide range of programs accessible by all residents. The Recreation Division offers activities that enhance people’s experiences in Des Moines and is always seeking to highlight the facilities and natural environment of the City in ways they have never seen before. We aspire to serve not only our regular participants but are actively looking to create excitement for first-time users as well. It is our goal to match people’s diverse interests, using our top-rated facilities conveniently located throughout the city, for all who participate. The Recreation Division is focused on excellence in leisure as part of a larger commitment to health, wellness, and the overall betterment of people’s lives.
PARKS AND RECREATION ADMINISTRATION OFFICE
1551 E. Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway
Des Moines, IA 50317

(515) 237-1386
dmparks.org
parks@dmgov.org

Facebook.com/desmoinesparks
Instagram.com/desmoinesparks
Twitter.com/desmoinesparks
Youtube.com/desmoinesparksandrecreation

Text any of the following keywords to 84483 to sign up for updates on:
DSMEvents, DSMPools, DSMSports, DSMTrails, DSMPopUp, DSMVolunteers
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</tbody>
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## 2019 Photo Contest Submissions

- **Cover:** Missy Miller
- **Financials:** Justin West
- **Facilities:** Mark O’Meara
- **Numbers:** Dennis Spitzer
- **Milestones:** Kathy Baker
- **Looking Ahead to 2020:** Gary Moore
Letter from the Director

Benjamin R. Page

Before we look back at our year, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the men and women that I have the honor to lead. We start our annual “Report to the Community” with a letter from the director, but there really should be numerous letters – one from every member of our staff. Each of these hardworking and dedicated individuals are responsible for the contents of this report, for the positive impact our department makes on the city daily. Without them, there wouldn’t be the volume of contributions to the quality of life that you will see in the pages to follow.

CELEBRATION

In our first year of participating, I am proud to say Des Moines Parks and Recreation scored 39th on The Trust for Public Land ParkScore rankings. This is an evaluation of how our team ranks among the 100 largest populated cities in the US in parkland acreage, investment, amenities and access. While 39 out of 100 may not look/sound that impressive, consider that Des Moines beat out cities such as Atlanta, Austin, Dallas and Miami. We know we have some work to do, but our team is very proud of this accomplishment.

CHANGE

Our team worked to update the section of the city code that governs our department. The most notable changes relate to park hours and use of cemeteries. Parks will now be open daily from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. This came after an evaluation of 20 other cities and their rules as well as discussions with our colleagues at the Des Moines Police and Civil and Human Rights Departments. Their feedback indicated that the previous closure time of 30 minutes past sunset created an uneven approach that was difficult to enforce.

In many cases, cemeteries were the first public parks in the early days of our country’s development, as it was the only accessible public green space. Currently, our team manages 4,000 acres of park land including seven cemeteries and 75 parks. This year another major change was made in our ordinance to accommodate residents demand to utilize these facilities in a respectful manner. The roads within the city cemeteries now may be used by persons during the times that the cemeteries are open to the public, including recreational activities such as walking, jogging, biking, wildlife observation, and dog walking from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.

COLLABORATION

None of the work we do happens alone. It is only through the spirit of cooperation and teamwork that progress happens. Knowing that Mayor Frank Cownie, City Council, City Manager Scott Sanders and the appointed Parks and Recreation Board believe in our mission empowers our team to perform at the highest level. Partners like Jim Cownie, Polk County, Prairie Meadows, EMC Insurance, Wells Fargo, Parks Area Foundation, Rebuilding Together and Mid-American Energy allow innovative new projects to come to fruition within the park system. Volunteerism continues to grow as people look for ways to give more of themselves and give back to their community.

As we wrap up 2019, my challenge to each of you is to join us in 2020 – either as a participant in one of our programs, a patron of one of our facilities, a volunteer at one of our events or as an advocate for our department. I promise you, in whatever capacity you choose, you will not be disappointed.

Sincerely,

Director of Parks and Recreation
2019
Parks and Recreation Board

GEORGE DAVIS
Chair

HEATHER ANDERSON
KIMBERLEY BOGGUS
BARB BREMNER
JAMES BOLLARD
VICTORIA FACTO
CYNDE FANTER
SARAH LOHMEIER
BILL NASSIF

LOYD W. OGLE
JOEL POTTER
SAMMY F. PUGH
JENNIFER SAYERS
WILLIAM THOMPSON
R. STEPHEN VILMAIN
ANDREA WOODARD
### 2019

#### Subcommittees and Their Members

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<tr>
<th>Committee Name</th>
<th>Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cemetery Advisory Committee</td>
<td>Kristine Bartley, Archie Cook, Pete Eicher, Dixie Evans, Cynthia A. O’Brien, Joel Potter, Mike Rowley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizen Golf Committee</td>
<td>Gary Bianchi, Clint Brown, Rex Coble, Susan Hanke, Richard Hodges, Intaik Lee, Colleen Monahan, Parker Murphy, Bill Nassif, Ragen Pullen, Marty Talarico, Stephen Vilmaint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose Garden Committee</td>
<td>Leslie Hunter, Miles Mills, Ed Pagliai, Delores Pagliai, Shane Percival, Matt Rosen, Janis Ruan, Scott Wallace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trails and Greenways Committee</td>
<td>Jim Bollard, John Bouslog, Jane Clark, Jeff Cook, David Fliehler, Alan Foster, Walter Githens, Katie Jones, Steve Karsjen, Matt Keller, Sarah Lohmeier, Loren Lown, Chris McCarthy, Kyle Robinson, Aaron Sewell, Ginger Soelberg, Scott Sumpter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Conservation Committee</td>
<td>Chuck Becker, Leslie Berckes, Jane Clark, Vicki Facto, Beth Jaeger, Teresa Jenson, Loren Lown, Susan Noland, Tom Rosburg, Deb Schiel-Larson, Doug Sheesly, Tyler Stubbs, Andrea Woodard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 2019, the Friends of Des Moines Parks continued to expand upon their mission of helping to preserve, protect, improve and promote the use of Des Moines’ parks, greenways and recreational programs for the benefit of all neighborhoods and citizens.

This included partnering with Des Moines Parks and Recreation on the sponsorship of key programs like swimming lessons, Earth Day Trash Bash, Tour DM Parks, the Mayor’s Annual Ride and Run for Trails and donating $50,000 to the improvement of Chesterfield Park.

The Friends also celebrated the 125th Anniversary of the city’s first four public parks by granting four neighborhood associations $500 to host celebrations in Greenwood, Union, Waveland and Grandview Parks.

In June, the fifth annual Friends golf tournament and bike ride raised nearly $40,000 for the benefit of the Friends mission and will be entirely given to Des Moines Parks and Recreation through program sponsorships and seed money for park improvement projects. Each year the Friends provide $10,000 in “seed” funding to help replace a playground in a Des Moines park and provide funding to ensure that any person that wants to learn how to swim can sign up for one of the city’s swimming lessons each summer.

In the fall, the Friends hosted their inaugural family bike ride as a celebration of the city’s beautiful parks and trails. The minimally priced event was intended as a celebration of the work that is done by Des Moines Parks and Recreation.

Finally, in 2019 the Friends started a memorial bench program that allows anyone interested to purchase a memorial bench for a loved one. This program has proven to be popular with seven benches purchased in the first year. The bench comes with an engraved plaque, color and location of the donor’s choosing. All proceeds from the bench program further the Friends Des Moines Parks mission.

To learn more about the Friends and their programs, visit their website at friendsofdmparks.org
WHAT YOU GET FOR
$113 A YEAR

3 Golf Courses
4 Disc Golf Courses
7 Cemeteries
76 Programs & Events
11 Spraygrounds
8 Wading Pools
5 Aquatic Centers and Pools
4 Splash Pools

8 Baseball Fields
8 Softball Fields
58 Playgrounds
10 Enclosed
47 Open Air

12 Soccer Fields

[12]
A home in Des Moines with $125,800 assessed value pays $113 in Property Taxes towards Parks and Recreation. For $113 a year, residents have access to these Parks and Recreation:

- **3** Dog Parks
- **650** Plant & Tree Species
- **21** Full Basketball Courts
- **9** Half Basketball Courts
- **75** Parks
- **5** Streetscapes
- **64** Miles Paved
- **18** Miles Soft Tennis Courts
- **53** Half Basketball Courts
- **20** Indoor/Outdoor Pickleball Courts
- **2** Community Recreation Centers

$113 A YEAR
Financials
WHERE DOES YOUR PROPERTY TAX DOLLAR GO?

- Polk County Extension < $0.01
- Polk County Assessor $0.01
- DMACC $0.01
- DART $0.02
- Broadlawns County Hospital $0.06
- City of Des Moines $0.35
- Polk County $0.15
- Des Moines Public Schools $0.39
- State < $0.01
Facilities
Aquatics

Our five pools and aquatic centers are open from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Season swim passes are available for individuals and families. During the month of April, purchase a swim pass and save $5 to $20. Private party rentals are an option at the five locations making them a unique option for your next birthday party or special event. Family Swim Nights are held monthly and Doggie Dives are held the last day of the pool season as a great opportunity for dogs and their owners.

There are eight traditional wading pools open Monday – Friday, June through Aug. These water facilities are specifically aimed at children ages 10 and under. The wading pools are dispersed throughout the city and offer supervised water play. It is a great opportunity for children to meet other children, have fun and build water confidence. Parental supervision is strongly encouraged.

There are four splash pools open daily from May – Aug. A splash pool is a zero-depth entry, standing water and multiple spray features; offering water play specifically aimed at children ages 10 and under. Splash pools are staffed; however, parental supervision is strongly encouraged.

There are 11 spraygrounds operating daily from May 1 through Sept. 30. A sprayground is a splash pad with spray features without standing water. Spraygrounds offer unsupervised water play. Staff is not provided, so parental supervision is required.

Cemeteries

The seven municipal cemeteries are large, historic and embrace the cultural diversity of our community. Comprising nearly 10 percent of the City’s parkland, the cemeteries’ 343 acres contain more than 175,214 interments in below and above ground spaces and niches. Through volunteer support, private contributions, increased focus on revenue and efficiencies, the municipal cemeteries are evolving to exceed consumer’s demands.

First plotted in 1848, Woodland was a cemetery before Des Moines became the state capitol. Laurel Hill Cemetery opened its gates in 1907 in the rolling hills of Des Moines’ east side, just southwest of the Iowa State Fairgrounds. Glendale has served Des Moines since 1904. Originally, part of the massive Waveland Park, the year 1900 saw this parkland divided into the beautiful Waveland Golf Course, with the remaining gently rolling hills and dales becoming Glendale Cemetery. Elm Grove, Oak Grove, Sims and St. Ambrose were acquired when their previous owners were financially unable to maintain the cemeteries.

The business model has shifted focus on consumer demand for non-traditional burial services, such as the Wildflower Scattering Garden and Columbarium at Glendale Cemetery. Increased beautification efforts such as tree plantings, statues and garden beds have been supported largely by private contributions.

These amenities when combined with the care of the grounds and existing assets, truly have an impact on where residents choose as a final resting space.

Testimonial

Sara Springer

“...It wasn’t until I saw the program guide that I was aware of all of the activities that were available right down the street from us. Being a new parent, it’s great to see the variety of things to do with my child. It so great to be in a city that takes pride in making us a better place.”
Community Recreation Centers

Des Moines Parks and Recreation manages two Community Recreation Centers, located on opposite sides of the city to serve residents. These centers provide a place to learn, play, socialize, collaborate and belong. Both community recreation centers provide congregate meal sites for seniors aged 60 and over, and host a number of camps and neighborhood meetings throughout the year. As rental facilities, numerous weddings, receptions, birthday parties, funerals, showers and meetings are held as well. These facilities also host youth and adult sports leagues year-round.

Pioneer Columbus Community Recreation Center

Minutes from downtown and adjacent to Stone Park, Pioneer Columbus features two gymnasiums, weight room, cardio room, game tables, computer lab, multi-purpose room, conference rooms, outdoor basketball court, playground, wading pool and a paved walking loop.

Robert L. Scott Fourmile Community Recreation Center

Just off the Gay Lea Wilson trail, Fourmile is home to the city’s only skate park. Additional amenities include a gymnasium, weight room, cardio equipment, game tables, computer lab, multi-purpose room, conference room and playground.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

Des Moines Parks and Recreation manages three community gardens, with 243 plots. We understand the value and need for citizens to grow and harvest their own produce and encourage gardeners of all backgrounds and skill levels to come garden with us. Being a part of a community garden means embracing your community! Each plot is dynamic and every gardener grows differently. We encourage you to meet your neighbors, trade produce and learn from each other.

For those interested in becoming a gardener, email communitygarden@dmgov.org or call 515-237-1386 to discuss space availability and program guidelines. To view openings online, visit dmparks.org
DISC GOLF COURSES

Disc golf provides a different way for the whole family to get out, get some exercise and enjoy nature all at the same time. There are four courses in the park system, each with its own unique characteristics to offer a different experience. Facilities are located at Ewing, Grandview, Pete Crivaro and Prospect Parks.

DOG PARKS

Nearly 2,200 permits were sold for use at Des Moines off-leash dog park facilities in 2019. Annual permits are required and are available for purchase for just $20 at the City Clerk’s office in City Hall. The permit is good at Riverwalk and Ewing Dog Parks.

Volunteer Dog Park Ambassadors greet visitors, check for permits, educate patrons on park rules and inspect the dog park to report maintenance issues. They keep the dog park clean, safe and fun for owners and pets. Dog Park Ambassadors who volunteer 40 hours in a year earn a FREE permit for the following year. To apply, please email parksvolunteer@dmgov.org or call 515-237-1386.

Matt Beatty
Chief Operating Officer
Iowa Sports Foundation

“The success of the Des Moines Corporate Games would not be possible without the support of Des Moines Parks and Recreation. We are fortunate to work with a staff that is so proud of their facilities and excited to welcome in our participants from around the metro. We look forward to the continuing growth of the Games thanks to this amazing partnership.”
GOLF COURSES

Des Moines offers three golf courses open to the public. A.H. Blank, Waveland, and Bright Grandview each offer a unique golf experience. All three courses have affordable rates and are regarded as high quality and very playable for the novice to the advanced golfer.

Course Features, Amenities, and Additional Opportunities

• Fat Joe’s Pizza
• GPS systems in carts (Waveland and A.H. Blank)
• Free sledding at Bright Grandview and Waveland during the winter months (four inches of uniform snow required)
• Banquet facilities (corporate outings, weddings, birthdays parties, holiday events)

Special Offers and Programs

• Season Passes are available online January 1 or at whichever course is open during the winter season.
• Junior Golf is offered at A.H. Blank Golf Course during the summer.

A.H. Blank Golf Course

A.H. Blank first opened in 1971 as a nine-hole golf course and expanded to 18 holes in 1985. Only one of the original nine holes remains, but it has been improved with a beautiful pond and sand traps. A.H. Blank has some of the most unique features of any golf course in Central Iowa. The fairways are USGA approved ranging between 25 and 35 yards in width. The greens are always in excellent condition. A.H. Blank has also been adding trees to the course over time to make it a more interesting golf experience. A.H. Blank features a full practice range, miniature golf course, and pro shop with a complete line of golf equipment.

Bright Grandview Golf Course

Bright Grandview Golf Course, built in 1902, is one of the oldest municipal courses in the county. With its age, it is unique and does not have the look of most modern courses. The layout is mostly flat, making it favorable for newer golfers. Many juniors and seniors play Bright Grandview for just this reason. Trees are the biggest hazard, but even with that it is not a difficult course. Although it is not a very long course, Bright Grandview’s small to medium size greens pose a challenge to some individuals. The fairways are wide so you can take a full swing and not worry about losing your ball. The average round of 18 holes takes about three and a half hours to complete, which is significantly less than other public courses in the area.

Waveland Golf Course

Waveland Golf Course is the oldest municipal golf course west of the Mississippi. This 18-hole course was built in 1901 and has a traditional layout. The clubhouse is a vintage 1940’s red brick building that has a calming and pleasant atmosphere. The feature that sets Waveland apart from the other two Des Moines public courses is the incredible amount of slope. The entire course is built on wooded hillsides. The trees are also very mature, a given for a course of this age.
FACILITIES

GREENHOUSE

Parks and Recreation owns and operates a 15,000 square foot greenhouse located at 2501 SE Maury Street. Much of the labor needed for plant production is supplied by volunteers who donate thousands of hours to produce the annuals used to beautify the city. To volunteer, email parksvolunteer@dmgov.org.

PARKS

The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the management of 75 parks across Des Moines. Besides the special features found in some of the signature parks (Ewing, Union, Greenwood, Gray’s Lake and John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park) patrons can enjoy a variety of amenities such as:

- Basketball Courts
- Enclosed and Open-Air Shelters
- Fishing Ponds
- Natural Playscape
- Nature Trails
- Playgrounds
- Picnic Areas with Tables and Grills
- Pickleball Courts
- Sledding Hills
- Skate Park
- Soccer Fields
- Softball Fields
- Tennis Courts
- Volleyball Courts
- Public Art

Carole Jones
Former President
Pioneer Park Neighborhood Association

"Since the beginning of Pioneer Park Neighborhood Association in 2007, our relationship with the Parks and Rec Department has been wonderful. Even through the years of downsizing and budget cuts, their dedication and commitment to the quality of the city’s parks has been an amazing thing to witness. Ben Page and his hardworking staff are a true asset to the City of Des Moines.”
SHELTERS

Dispersed throughout the city, our department provides 10 enclosed shelters and 47 open-air shelters. Shelters are available for reservation and others are “first come, first serve.” These facilities offer users the perfect location for birthdays, family reunions, baby showers, neighborhood meetings, meal sites and much more.

Diane Rauh

“As the former City Clerk for Des Moines I know firsthand that the Parks and Recreation Board, Director Ben Page and his team really do know how to squeeze the value out of every dollar. Please enjoy all the Parks amenities - there’s something for everyone.”

“I’ve lived in Des Moines for 40 years. When our kids were small, we used the swimming pools and playgrounds often. Once the kids grew up, my husband and I started using the trails and dog parks and also used the shelters for family events. Now that we have grandkids, I’m sure we’ll be using the pools, splashpads and playground equipment again!”
SPORTS COMPLEXES

GREATER DES MOINES SOFTBALL COMPLEX

This premier adult softball facility is located in the northwest corner of the city. Each year we host the district and state Amateur Softball Association tournaments. This complex has been the home of national tournaments such as the North American Fastpitch Association, World Championships and the Senior Slow Pitch World Series. This complex hosts almost 300 teams participating in Des Moines Parks and Recreation’s adult softball leagues (nearly 1,800 league games).

The features of the four fields include:
- Lights
- Irrigated turfs
- Scoreboards
- Bleacher seating

JAMES W. COWNIE BASEBALL PARK

This park is one of the top baseball facilities in the region. We host many local and national United States Specialty Sports Association tournaments at this park. This park hosts South Des Moines Little League (over 500 youth playing nearly 300 games).

The features of this park include:
- 8 irrigated turf fields
- Youth fields (2 have lights)
- All fields have scoreboards and covered bleacher seating
- Concession stand
- New maintenance building
- New parking lots for up to 250 vehicles
- Playground and six batting cages
JAMES W. COWNIE SOCCER PARK

James W. Cownie Soccer Park is the home field for local colleges and high schools including: Grand View University, Drake University, Lincoln High School, East High School, Carlisle High School, and Des Moines Christian High School.

This facility hosts:

- Iowa boys and girls high school state soccer tournaments
- Menace Midwest Invitational
- “Just for Girls” Spring Tournament
- This facility has also hosted the US Youth Soccer National Tournament including Region II Championships, and the Presidents Cup Tournament.
- Field nine is considered championship level with seating for 2,000 fans, a press box and video platform
- 12 irrigated turf fields
- 4 of the 12 fields have lights and scoreboards

TRAILS

The trail system continues to be one of the most popular amenities in the park system. Recent counts indicate users take over 5 million trail trips each year. With 64 miles of paved and 18 miles of soft trails, there is something and some way for everyone to get out and be active - from mountain bikers to runners and walkers of all ages. Trails are not just for exercise; numerous riders utilize trails for their daily commute, year-round. The network in Des Moines serves as a nucleus for the state, with connectivity to over 600 miles in Central Iowa.

Micah Beck
AmeriCorps Team Lead
Maple Team 5

"Serving with Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department has been a joy. I've learned so much about plant identification and prairie restoration, all thanks to the staff at the department. The city is full of beautiful parks, being able to work side by side with dedicated city employees within these parks and hearing from park users how great the work we were doing was fantastic. I'll always cherish my time in Des Moines and I can't wait to return soon!"
Numbers
### 2019 by the Numbers

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<th>Category</th>
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<td>Shelters and Facility Rentals</td>
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<td>Permits Issued for Parks, Trails, Athletic Fields and Open Spaces</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boat Rentals at Gray's Lake Park</td>
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<td>Native Plants</td>
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<td>Annuals</td>
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<td>Facebook Posts</td>
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<td>Number of Calls Taken Each Year</td>
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<td>Website Page Views</td>
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<td>Twitter Followers</td>
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<td>Shelters and Facility Rentals</td>
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<td>Burial Spaces Sold</td>
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<td>Interments at our Seven Cemeteries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Garden Plots</td>
<td>243</td>
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45
New Gardeners

188
Total Gardeners

21
Refugee Gardeners

32,079
Volunteer hours

5,173
Volunteers

815,261
Value of time donated

6,113
Attended a Special Event

5,811
Participated in Recreation Programs

1,711
Enjoyed Yoga in the Park

80,734
Golf Rounds Played at our Three Public Courses

87,507
Community Recreation Center Attendance

1,386
GRASP Cards Issued

2,170
Dog Park Permits Sold

2,725
Environmental Education Programs Participants

76,377
Free Splash or Wading Pools uses

96,313
Visits to one of our Five Pools/Aquatic Centers

2,969
Learned to Swim

1,440
Purchased a Swim Pass

If your household meets the established income guidelines, your income is verified, and you are a resident of the city of Des Moines, you qualify to receive discounts on swim lessons, tennis lessons, basketball and much more!

Call IMPACT Community Action Partnership at 515-248-6216 to schedule an appointment or walk in 1618 6th Avenue Des Moines, IA 50317.
ONE OF THE greatest gifts IS YOUR TIME

2019 5,173 PEOPLE

People Volunteered ‘08 TO ‘19 TOTALS >35,311
Volunteer Hours ‘08 TO ‘19 TOTALS >255,004
Volunteer Value ‘08 TO ‘19 TOTALS $5.93 MIL
### 2019 Hours

- **2009**: 14,456
- **2010**: 15,010
- **2011**: 14,877
- **2012**: 16,655
- **2013**: 25,083
- **2014**: 36,879
- **2015**: 38,431
- **2016**: 34,430
- **2017**: 327,334
- **2018**: 590,977

### 2019 Revenue

- **2009**: $301,404
- **2010**: $211,998
- **2011**: $327,088
- **2012**: $329,394
- **2013**: $375,569
- **2014**: $327,334
- **2015**: $590,977
- **2016**: $868,869
- **2017**: $927,729
- **2018**: $850,095

**Total Hours for 2019**: 32,079

**Total Revenue for 2019**: $815,261
Milestones
2019 HIGHLIGHTED COMPLETED PROJECTS

A. Ashby Park Rebuilding Together
Through the generosity of Meredith Corporation and Rebuilding Together, renovated both playgrounds with innovative, new equipment and installed native woodland plantings along the park’s new nature trails.

B. Columbus Park Shelter Remodel
The original 1930s WPA-era brick shelter was enclosed and expanded into a four season, enclosed rental shelter preserving the cultural importance of this destination for the neighborhood.

C. Fourmile Community Recreation Center Window Replacement
As part of the City’s overall energy efficiency improvement efforts, all windows were replaced at this important city facility.

D. Fourmile Creek Greenway - Multiple Locations
In collaboration with Polk County Conservation, properties in this flood prone area have been acquired and will be managed by both entities to reduce impact of weather events and provide habitat and recreation benefits.

E. George Whitmer Park Renovation
Thanks to grant funding provided by Wells Fargo, this park underwent a complete renovation. From grading to circulation and from playgrounds to vegetation, it is now a place everyone of all ages can enjoy year-round.

F. Gray’s Lake Earthen Berm Stabilization
The berm separating Raccoon River from Gray’s Lake Park was hardened to protect the park from impacts of future floods with techniques and materials consistent with the high quality of the City’s signature park.

G. Gray’s Lake / Kruidenier Trail Resurfacing
The trail around Gray’s Lake sees more than 1,000,000 trail users annually and is a hub for trail users City-wide. The entire trail was renovated and resurfaced ensuring enjoyment for years to come.

H. Gray’s Station Bridge
The future development north of Gray’s Lake Park is now connected to the park via a new pedestrian bridge. The customized approach to lighting provides a layer of interest unique to the city.

I. Hartford Avenue Tree Planting Phase 2
Work towards a fully tree-lined corridor guiding visitors to the James W. Cownie Sports Parks continued this year with another significant section completed.

J. James W. Cownie Sports Park Signage
To enhance wayfinding to our signature soccer and baseball parks, landmark arches were installed over SE 14th Street and Hartford Avenue with grants from Prairie Meadows, Polk County and funding from other generous donors.

K. MacRae Park EMC Overlook and Julia Brenton Shelter
This landmark project, providing an unparalleled view of downtown from the south, was made possible by the contributions from EMC, Prairie Meadows and many others.

L. MacRae Park Road Phase 2
An innovative approach to renovating an existing park road was installed. The section separates pedestrian and bicycle traffic from vehicles, while still providing parking at key points.

M. MacRae Pond Dredging
The existing pond was enhanced by removing silt and debris deposited over years of serving as a stormwater facility. The new design offers features to ease maintenance, enhance fishing opportunities and overall enjoyment of the pond and historic park.

N. McHenry Park Sprayground Surface Replacement
With low, but climbable features at this sprayground, replacing deteriorating surfacing was a key project this year to ensure safe use at a much-loved destination.

O. Pioneer Columbus Community Recreation Center Exterior Paint
This game-changing project brought a completely new look to both the existing building and Stone Park. The once drab exterior is now vibrant and contemporary, adding to the excitement of activity at the facility.

P. Principal Park Improvements
The outfield deck was converted to a long-lasting composite decking material from standard wood and the quality of the new roof will serve the facilities along the left field line far into the future.

Q. Sargent Park Fourmile Creek Restoration
Selected as the site for a Wastewater Reclamation Authority (WRA) Sponsored Project, Sargent Park benefited from a massive improvement to the banks of Fourmile Creek to enhance the park and water quality alike.

R. Sheridan Park Sprayground and Restroom
A new sprayground was added to the park to replace the aging wading pool. The sprayground design and features highlight the identity of the Sheridan Gardens neighborhood. The new single stall restroom serves all park goers.

S. Tower Park Sprayground and Restroom
The signature new sprayground features a replica of the name-sake water tower, providing a unique experience to visitors of all ages. A new double-stall restroom was added adjacent to the sprayground.

T. Trestle to Trestle Trail Stabilization
To protect this important recreation and transportation corridor, sheet pile was installed to shore up the stability of the slope that the trail traverses. Native plant restoration was also a key component of the work.

U. University Avenue Side Path
The first section of trail/bike facility was installed along University Avenue on the north side of Waveland Golf Course. This almost half-mile long section connects to the existing Waveland Trail.

V. Waveland Tennis Resurfacing
Repairs to the existing base and full resurfacing of all 12 courts improved the appearance, playability and added years of life to these well-used courts.

W. Witmer Park Pond Dredging
One of the smaller ponds in the system, it is still surprising how much silt and debris were removed to return Witmer Pond to a destination amenity for fishing and overall enjoyment year-round.

X. Park Entry Signs Phase 6 - Multiple Locations
New or enhanced signs were added to these parks helping with the identity and appearance of the overall system: Woodlawn Park, Belle Turner Park, Prospect Park, Edna Griffin Park, George Whitmer Park, Stewart Square, Redhead Park, Columbus Park, Stone Park and Ewing Park.
MILESTONES

• In July of 2019, the Parks and Recreation Board and the City Council approved the first major overhaul to Chapter 74 of the City’s Municipal Code in the last 20 years. Chapter 74 of the Code governs the use of the city’s parks, trails and recreation facilities and sets the fees for use of parks and recreation facilities. Major elements of this update included:

  • Expanded Park Hours – Hours of operation at most parks are now 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. daily. This is a change from when parks closed 30 minutes past sunset each day which increases the hours parks are open for use and makes enforcement of park hours easier.

  • Tobacco Free Parks – All smoking and tobacco use has been banned from all parks and recreation facilities. Previously, smoking was banned within 25 feet of most buildings and recreation facilities.

  • Fees – Fees for programs and facilities were adjusted to be in line with current use and in some cases were lowered to make facilities more accessible in non-peak hours.

• The City approved amendments of Municipal Code Chapter 34 regarding municipal cemeteries. The updated sections included management, sales, interment rights, memorials, maintenance fund, and public conduct in cemeteries. These changes allow the Des Moines Municipal Cemeteries to keep pace with private cemeteries and to be an attractive choice for end of life services. The updates made to the public conduct section follows the Parks and Recreation Department’s Comprehensive Plan – LiveDSM by allowing the use of cemetery grounds for activities such as walking, jogging and bird watching.

• The 13th year of the Des Moines Urban Deer Hunt harvested 113 deer, with a cumulative total of 1,788. The goal of this program is to reduce the population, not to eliminate urban deer. This will reduce the negative attributes that an overpopulation of deer causes, such as accidents. This also ensures that citizens can enjoy the infrequent sighting of a deer while being able to enjoy flowers and gardens which a high population of deer would not allow. The urban bow hunt connects property owners who wish to reduce the deer numbers with hunters who are willing to harvest the deer in a safe effective manner. Hunters are required to adhere to a long list of rules, attend a safety course and an annual proficiency test. If you would like more information on the program, please call 515-237-1386.

Testimonial

Justin J. D’Souza

“Whether you’re a novice or a seasoned veteran, the Des Moines Fall Ultimate Frisbee League is a great opportunity to play a great game with players of all levels. Entering the league as a novice, I’ve been able to build my skills and keep up with players that have playing the sport for decades. The on-field culture is incredible, and everyone in the league (and in the sport in general) is more than happy to help build skill and to work as a team. Because of this level of competition, skill-building, and quality of the fields, I’m going to sign up for this league as long as I’m within driving distance to Des Moines.”
The parks team repaired and seeded stump removal areas, salt damage areas, amenity removals and grading projects at 30 plus parks totaling 393,944 square feet. In addition, 7,680 square feet of erosion control measures were applied to reduce soil loss from park turf areas after seeding.

While it was cold outside, it was busy inside the warm greenhouse. Feb. thru May, 91 volunteers helped with Transplanting in the Tropics, donating 800 hours. During spring, they transplanted 4,651 flats, 5,633 pots and over 210,000 annuals. Special thanks to Sharon Johnson, winner of the Golden Shovel award for the most hours donated.

It was another successful summer of swim lessons. For the fourth straight year, participation has increased.

- Provided swim lessons to 2,969 participants (increase of 423 from 2018)
- Provided scholarship to 1,236 participants (increase of 338 from 2018)
- Moved to one-week swim lesson sessions, allowing us to serve larger numbers

Through a continued collaboration between Des Moines Parks and Recreation and Des Moines Public School’s English Language Learners (ELL), 376 children in grades K-12 received swim lessons in June and July. This was an increase of 167 more participants from 2018. These children come from non-English-speaking families and have been in our country less than 2 years. They do not know the dangers of swimming in lakes and rivers that they find close to their homes here in our country.

Expanded and comprehensive efforts resulted in the most successful aquatic recruitment and highest staffing levels in last five years. Between the five pools and aquatic centers, there were 119 certified lifeguards and 25 swim instructors employed for the season.

Testimonial

Lokus Ngo

“I dream of a better society and a safer community. I believe, as a part of the community and a citizen of the world, every one of us has the same responsibility to take care of it. To build a better society and a safer community we must influence others and hold each other accountable for our actions. I believe when we can influence the people to take care of trash in our community, we can influence them to take care of all other issues. I have been cleaning up trash in our parks, our streets, and across the world. I lead hundreds of others to join me in our trash-free movement. As a part of the Watchmen, I’m proud to say that each Watchmen’s member is holding the same responsibilities as I am. I want to thank all Watchmen’s members for joining me in our mission and cleaned up trash with me. Thanks, Des Moines Parks and Recreation for all their hard work in maintaining all these beautiful parks.”
• American Red Cross reached out to Des Moines Parks and Recreation to be part of the Centennial Campaign. The Centennial Campaign is a multi-year action that will inspire people to sign up for swimming and water safety lessons at local facilities. It’s a national action to cut drowning rates in half. We received support in terms of program materials (swim caps and goggles for ELL, posters, etc.), $7,500 in funding and waived training fees for staff certifications.

• Utilizing volunteers from the AmeriCorps Program, 6,000 native pollinator plugs were planted in a set aside piece of land at Ewing Park that in the past was used for the commercial bailing of hay. In the past four years, the Natural Resources Crew began transforming it into an urban prairie. The area totals 28 acres in size and through repeated burns, it has slowly transitioned toward a tall grass prairie, using the plugs diversified the area not only for habitat purposes but also converted it into a pollinator destination for birds, bee’s and butterflies. With the plants being grown in house this conversion, although timely, has been met with very little expense.

• In the Fall of 2019, the Natural Resources Crew began a new process to help remove the invasive Black Locust Pods that occupy some of our prairie areas at MacRae and Ewing Parks and also Glendale Cemetery. Previous cut stump treatments have proven to be unsuccessful, and with burns encouraging re-growth we took a systematic approach by removing tree and roots all in one step with a skid-loader post puller attachment. Some soil disturbance was expected but this invasive species strong rhizomatic root structure makes all other mechanical removal methods unsuccessful. In total we covered 12.5 acres of existing park land prairie removing 6 tons of invasive black locust trees.

• New programs:
  • Baseball/Tee Ball/Kickball
  • 3v3 summer adult basketball leagues
  • Capital City Classic youth basketball tournament
  • Shinrin-yoku, forest bathing
  • 3-day sports clinics designed to teach fundamental skills of Basketball, Football, Baseball, Soccer and Tennis at Evelyn K. Davis
  • Total Aqua Body at Ashworth
  • Free youth volleyball clinic for grades one through three
• Increased participation:
  • Highest recorded number of youth basketball participants – 998
  • Tied the record for number of Ultimate Frisbee participants – 83
  • Increased the number of fall adult volleyball teams from 5 to 7
  • Increased fall rentals at Carney and Savage complexes
  • Increased youth volleyball participation from 133 to 142, a 7% increase
  • Increase in the number of registrants in Evelyn K. Davis summer program from 40 to 164.

• Expanded collaboration with Des Moines Public Schools:
  • Added Hoover High School to flag football feeder program
  • North soccer coach to offer a soccer preseason coaches’ clinic
  • East High School assistant varsity basketball coach to offer a spring break basketball clinic
  • Program endorsement from youth volleyball support from East High School varsity coach

• The 48th Annual Lilac convention was held in Des Moines May 2 – 4. Attendees visited the John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park, Better Homes and Gardens Test Gardens, Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden and the Ewing Park Lilac Arboretum. Many from the group had never been to Des Moines and loved the City. The group donated 15 lilacs to grow in the collection at Ewing Park. Our team received the “Award of Merit” which is given to an individual or institution, public/private, for outstanding contributions in promoting, growing, researching or working with lilacs or the society. It is intended to be given regionally as an “International Recognition for work over and above the average”- for outstanding promotion, for public education, for scientific research or for horticultural excellence.

Testimonial

Julie Hinman

“Using the trail network is one of my favorite things to do when I visit! Over the years, I have watched the trail system grow, and cycling on the trails is one of my favorite things to do! I use the trails with my friends and family, and we have been able to spend hours getting to know the area. Riding through an area is so much better than driving; on a bike there is time to look around and notice things. I am getting to know the place where I was raised in a very real and fun way. These trails have been a great way to be social and active! They are very well taken care of. These trails are such an asset to the community as they are constantly used. Last summer, I had bike issues while riding and there was a station with tools that I could use. The trails are well mapped, and it is easy to find your way. I appreciate the trail system and all the work that went into it!”
Beginning in the spring of 2018, Parks and Recreation initiated an ecological restoration of the Ashby Park Woodland. The woodland had not been managed for many years resulting in dense growth and the invasion of undesirable tree and shrub species. The overgrowth caused native wildflowers and grasses to be choked out leading to increased erosion and visibility concerns among park neighbors. The department’s natural resources team collaborated with park planning staff to develop target restoration goals which would support the naturally occurring Oak-Hickory plant community, a highly desirable habitat for urban wildlife. The large, mature oak and hickory trees found throughout the woodland will greatly benefit from reduced competition, and increased sunlight penetration through the canopy will support the native grasses and wildflowers which hold soil in place. Although land management is a multi-year process, we have started to see positive results as spring ephemeral wildflower which had not been seen for several years are starting to return to this beautiful little woodland.

The Evelyn K. Davis Park Futsal pilot program ran Tuesday nights from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m., June 18 through Aug. 20. The sport of Futsal which is a form of soccer also known as “street soccer” was played on the basketball courts of Evelyn K. Davis Park under the newly installed Musco lights. This program gained momentum throughout the summer and culminated in a one-night tournament where prizes and trophies were presented.

STEM Monday events were held both at Evelyn K. Davis Park and the Forest Avenue Library. Children made slime, observed chemical reactions, were visited by live animals, insects and more!

Pop up playgrounds were held at Evelyn K. Davis and challenged kids to build and design play structures, paint on a grand scale, and much more. It has been described as a real-life Minecraft.

Participants in the Evelyn K. Davis Park had the opportunity to enjoy a day at Principal Park thanks to Knapp Properties and the “Fun at Bat” Program. The kids got tickets to an Iowa Cubs game, a private tour of the facility, pre-game picnic, and the chance to join players on the field for the national anthem with the team.

Testimonial

Des Moines Spinal Cord Injury Support Group

“Thanks to Des Moines Parks and Recreation for assisting in funding and placing a wheelchair charging station at Gray’s Lake Park. Individuals are now able to enjoy being out and about on the trail system and at Gray’s Lake without worrying about running out of battery.”
Volunteer Award Winners

- Mary P. Smith - Lifetime Achievement Award
- Archie Cook - Volunteer of the Year
- Knapp Properties - Corporate Group of the Year
- Bridges of Iowa - Volunteer Group of the Year
- Mike Simonson - Friend of the Year
- Des Moines Police Department - Friend of the Year
- Ahman Douglass - Coach of the Year
- Colt Stephens - Volunteer Supervisor of the Year
- Kevin Atterberg - Special Volunteer Award

Thanks to corporate commitment to a better environment and a healthier community, in 2019, Earth Day Trash Bash, Iowa’s largest Earth Day volunteer event, continues to grow as we had 93 volunteer teams at 75 project locations throughout the greater Des Moines metro. Volunteers removed almost 45,000 pounds of trash, recyclables, tires, metal and brush, along with almost 12 pounds of cigarette butts, recycled more than 9,572 plastic bags, cleaned more than 10 miles of trails, cleared 7.5 acres of invasive species, moved more than 100 cubic yards of mulch and more. This event is a collaborative project between the cities & citizens of Des Moines, West Des Moines, Clive, Norwalk, Pleasant Hill, Johnston, Urbandale, Polk County Conservation, Polk Soil and Water Conservation District, West Side Chamber of Commerce, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Ingersoll Business Committee, Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden and Water Works.

169 volunteers donated 512 hours (valued at more than $13,000) at the 8th annual Cache-In Trash Out Creek Clean-up on Walnut Creek. This is a joint effort between Westwood Neighborhood Association, Iowa Geocacher’s Organization, Walnut Creek Watershed Coalition and Des Moines Parks and Recreation. Volunteers cleaned the creek and trail and filled a 20-yard dumpster.

Testimonial

Leslie Berckes
Director of Programs, Trees Forever

“I’ve always been impressed by the ‘can-do, let’s try it’ attitude that everyone at Des Moines Parks and Recreation exhibits. From collaborating on removing invasive species to feed the zoo animals through Upcycle Stewards to partnering with Trees Forever to plant 26.2 trees along the 26.2 mile IMT Des Moines marathon, the Parks Department is a partner that I love to work with. They are ‘tree-mendous!’”
MILESTONES

Vinh Nguyen, ELL Assessment & Accountability Specialist for Des Moines Public Schools

*ELL swim lesson program:*

“This program has been a great addition for the students whose first language is not English. It has helped students understand more about water safety and the risk of not knowing how to swim when they get into the water. Students feel more confident to be in the water since many of them have had no experience of doing so before. I personally want to thank Des Moines Parks and Recreation for working with us to provide such activity in the community.”

- Over 10 tons of invasive species were removed from Gray’s Lake Park over the summer by 40 volunteers during UPCYCLE. This program is a partnership with Blank Park Zoo, Trees Forever and Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. There were 96 hours of service donated for this project valued at $2,441.28. UPCYCLE received a Trees Forever award in June 2019.

- 2018 Volunteer of the Year Award winner Archie Cook continued his popular Woodland Cemetery historic tours monthly April – Oct., with each date attracting around 50 attendees.

- Between April and October, Lokus Ngo and 133 youth/family members from the Watchman Community Center adopted Prospect Park. This dedicated group donated 586 hours valued at almost $15,000 of service picking up litter and making sure the park was clean. This is the first year the kids and families from this organization have volunteered with us and many live in the neighborhood.

- River Run Garbage Grab (R2G2) is an annual creek and river clean-up held at 10 different sites. Specials thanks to our partners Wells Fargo, Izaak Walton League, Cities of Pleasant Hill, Des Moines, Polk County Conservation, Army Corps of Engineers and Polk Soil and Water Conservation. 24 volunteers donated more than 85 hours of service valued at $2,177. The team collected 15 tons of garbage.

- The National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project is a nationwide effort to annually count bicycles and pedestrians. Volunteers assist counting and surveying trail users to collect valuable information. Information collected allows us to evaluate and fund current bicycle and pedestrian facilities and prioritize new connections. In 2019, 72 volunteers donated 300 hours valued at more than $7,600 and filled 104 shifts. 100% of respondents say they will volunteer again or recommend this project! Results for year include:
  - Annual average of 171,276 users for all locations
  - Annual average of 159,396 users for trails
  - Annual average of 196,097 users for street sidewalks
• New volunteer and local photographer, Eric Burson, started a “hands-on” nature photography class. A passionate, published, and award-winning photo-artist originally from small town Iowa, has called Des Moines home for almost a decade. Eric married his love with the outdoors with his love for photography encompassing wildlife, nature, landscapes, and culture. He offered a fall series of FREE photography classes encouraging the community to get outdoors, share their passion for photography and parks. The series included nature photography at Greenwood Park, Sunsets at Gray’s Lake and Fall Colors at Greenwood again. Eric donated 14.75 hours to host 16 guests at three meet-ups which often filled up quickly, sometimes within hours, of being advertised. The small classes allowed Eric to give instruction and then spend individual time with photographers throughout the park.

• Year three of the Woodland Monument Restoration saw 2,220 monuments raised and leveled in addition to 4,010 monuments cleaned and photo documentation of nine cemetery block/sections. Special thanks to the 140 volunteers who donated 543 hours, valued as $13,808. Since the beginning of the project in 2017,
  • 3,222 monuments have been raised and leveled
  • 5,540 monuments cleaned
  • Photo documentation of 35% of the cemetery.

This project has a bright future, thanks to a $150,000 grant from Polk County.

• Thanks to a generous $150,000 donation from Wells Fargo through their Neighborhood LIFT program, Whitmer Park, the small ½ acre park in the East Village underwent a major transformation this fall. Whitmer Park was selected by Wells Fargo based upon the community needs, history of the park space, as well as its opportunity to become something very special for the community. The park space and features were outdated and mistaken by many that it was the surrounding apartment complex’s park.

The Wells Fargo monetary donation covered the cost of all of the new playground equipment, engineered wood fiber mulch, picnic tables, bike racks, charcoal grill, 45 trees, thousands of native prairie grass plugs and bioswale plants, and the concrete etching of a quote of George C. Whitmer. In addition to the generous monetary donation, Wells Fargo added to the project by donating the time of over 40 employees (192 hours) to work alongside City Council members, and staff from Parks and Recreation.

Micah Kiel
**Vice President of Community Relations, Wells Fargo**

“The Des Moines Parks and Recreation team is superb with collaboration, design, and execution. Wells Fargo had the pleasure of teaming with their team to transform Whitmer Park in 2019. When we invest in community projects, we want to ensure the results are representative of the community, innovative, and inspiring. The Parks and Recreation team is of the same mindset, and they definitely deliver. In the spirit of partnership, we encourage other corporations to explore parks transformation as a strong neighborhood revitalization tool.”
MILESTONES

• Des Moines Parks and Recreation Environmental Education introduced a couple of new programs in 2019. The GPS Great Pumpkin Hunt took place at Greenwood Park where participants were able to tie technology and the outdoors together while they used hand held Global Positioning System units to explore the park in search of hidden pumpkins. Each pumpkin held a small prize along with information about the wildlife that you can find in Greenwood Park. The teenage participants were the ones leading the way most of the time, but there were participants that ranged in age from 5 to 50 years old. The second program focused on wildlife that can be found in our Des Moines Parks, specifically bats. An animal that not everyone loves but after learning more about the different kind of bats that live here and how they survive, participants did some woodworking and built a Bat Box to take home. The Bat Boxes help provide roosting habitat, like a bird house, only for bats. Both programs were well received, so look for them to happen again in 2020.

• The Ashby Park Rebuilding Together project represents a collaboration between Rebuilding Together Greater Des Moines, the Meredith Corporation, and the Parks and Recreation Department. This year the project team took on an enormous and unprecedented challenge to construct two playgrounds, plant wildflower gardens, plant and mulch trees and install several new site amenities. Volunteers from the Meredith Corporation and AmeriCorps worked alongside Parks and Recreation staff to implement the improvements making the day a great success. By working together, the team was able to install over $150,000 worth of playground equipment, 10 new site amenities such as benches and bike racks and plant nearly 1,000 wildflower plugs in a single day. This project was made possible by a generous donation from the Meredith Corporation / Rebuilding Together Greater Des Moines and a matching playground equipment grant from Cunningham Recreation. 58 volunteers donated 351 hours (Valued at $8,925.92).

Testimonial

Jessica Butler

“Our sons have participated in Des Moines Park and Recreation swim lesson program for several years. We have really been pleased with the quality experience they’ve received through each session. This summer was particularly successful with an instructor, Cade, who was engaging, supportive, positive, and encouraging – all qualities that create a successful learning environment! Cade, with the support of his supervisors, Hannah and Laura, showed a genuine interest in my son and expanding his skills by offering to provide instruction beyond the traditional swim levels. We really enjoyed and appreciated the opportunity provided to him! Thank you DMPR Aquatics Team!”
• Parks and Recreation worked with the consulting firm Conventions, Sports and Leisure (CSL) on a study to assess the feasibility of potential expansion of the James W. Cownie Soccer Park. The study was in response to a request by City Council to investigate the addition of fields and the continued focus of Cownie Soccer as an economic engine for the city. The study focused on an analysis of economic destinations and local sports supply demand, a breakdown of the current facility, review of the local hotel market ability to support, a recommendation concept (near the current park), and the impact of economic/fiscal/employment in the community.

On October 14, 2019 the City Council accepted the study by CSL and commissioned the City Manager to develop a strategy to answer many of the questions in the study about what it would take to actually achieve a facility expansion. This included an assessment of potential partners, fundraising, land acquisition, and a timeline in relation to other projects with Parks and Recreation as well as the City.

Testimonial

Christine Hensley

"Des Moines is extremely fortunate to have such a strong corporate community and one that values the significance of public private partnerships. We assume all cities work like this. However, I have learned we are truly the exception... If there is community support for a project, we will find a way to make it happen.

This allows us to continue to invest in quality of life amenities which has made us a very desirable place to live, work and play."
Building Momentum
Thanks to the approval by the Des Moines City Council of LiveDSM as a component of the City’s comprehensive plan, PlanDSM, in December of 2018, the Parks and Recreation Department now has a new roadmap for the future of parks and recreation services in Des Moines. LiveDSM is guided by five goals detailed below along with highlighted accomplishments from 2019.

**EQUITY**
This goal defines equity as the equitable delivery of parks and recreation services, where “parks” are redefined and brought to residents in ways that are meaningful, accessible and healthful to you, your friends, family and neighborhoods – Des Moines’ parks, trails and public spaces are everywhere.

Highlights include the development of a new scholarship program for students that qualify for free and reduced lunch through Des Moines Public Schools. Students that qualify will now receive $5.00 swimming lessons and youth athletic offerings through Des Moines Parks and Recreation.

**ATTRACTION**
This goal calls for supporting year-round programming that attracts people to parks and exceptional programming and services deliver all-season opportunities for current and future park system users.

Highlights include the development of the first community activities guide for programming offered by the department. The first one was published in the spring and the second in the fall of 2019. Another highlight will be the start of a new Parks and Recreation Board sub-committee focused on recreation programming and will provide a voice for the city’s residents in the types of programming offered by the department.

**HEART**
This goal calls for making parks and trails the heart of the community, where all residents have a high quality park or trail within a 10-minute walk from their home. Where neighbors love their nearby parks and trails and see them as ever-active hubs of connection, learning, reflection and play. All embrace facilities of community pride and inspiration.

Highlights include the city of Des Moines being ranked by the Trust for Public Land as part of their annual Park Score rankings which rank the 100 largest cities and their park system on aspects of their systems from funding the amenities, to number and size of parks and what percentage live close to a park or trail. In the 2019 ranking Des Moines was #39 out of 100 and 70% of its residents live within a half mile of a park or trail.
**NATURE**

This goal calls for improving natural systems with a deep commitment to ecological stewardship translates to healthy ecosystems; high quality land, water and wildlife; and tremendous resilience for natural areas and biodiversity in the park system—despite change over time.

**Highlights include** the redevelopment of several parks with an eye toward ecological improvement of the land within each park. Parks improved in 2019 that include improved ecological stewardship include: Ashby Park woodland restoration, Whitmer Park renovation, Witmer Park renovation and pond dredging, MacRae Park pond dredging and the Laurel Hill scattering ground.

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**INNOVATION**

This goal seeks to launch new approaches to parks and recreation services where Des Moines Parks and Recreation creates a highly professional foundation for its work-serving as a launch point for new ways of thinking about parks, partnerships and meeting public needs.

**Highlights include** the approval of major changes to Chapter 74 and Chapter 34 of the City Code which governs the use of parks and cemeteries. These changes modernized the code sections to better match how people use parks, expanding the hours of use, banning the use of tobacco products and clarifying old and outdated sections. Additionally, the City Council approved rules for all parks and facilities for the first time. Developed as a book of all rules that are not covered in City Code it can now be an easy reference for staff and anyone in seeing all parks and facility rules.
Looking Ahead
LOOKING AHEAD TO 2020

- Ashby Park Woodland Garden Nature Trail
- Bates Park Sprayground
- Bill Riley Trail Underpass
- Birdland Park and Marina Master Plan
- Dog Park Security Upgrade (gates and cameras)
- Drake Park Shelter Renovation
- Drake Park Sprayground
- Ewing Park, Central Iowa Trail Association Advanced Loop
- Fourmile Community Recreation Center Remodel – Phase II
- Futsal Court at Birdland Park
- Glendale Cemetery Pond Improvements
- Gray’s Lake Park Planting Improvements
- James W. Cownie Baseball Park – Field 8 Expansion
• James W. Cownie Baseball Park
  – Scoreboard Updates

• James W. Cownie Soccer Park
  – Field #9 Scoreboard (Pending)

• MacRae Park Road Phase 3

• MLK Jr. Park Splash Pool Filter Replacement

• Nahas Pool Painting

• Northwest Pool Structural Reinforcement Work

• Pioneer Columbus Community Recreation Center Landscape Improvements

• Riverview Park Playground

• Union Park Rocket Slide Renovation

• Waveland Clubhouse Roof and Window Improvements

• Weeks Middle School Park

• Woodland Cemetery Monument Restoration