

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT 2014 Year in Review

Your Community Parks – Discover...Play...Celebrate

There is no doubt that our community parks are valued and appreciated. We know that from both the comments we receive and the consistent use of our parks and trails. Our community values their parks, and park staff and the Park Board are committed to the continued improvement of our park assets and programs. The park system includes the J.W. Denver Williams Memorial Park, David Williams Memorial Park, Galvin Park, Southeast Community Park, Point Park, the Lytle Creek Preserve, the Luther Warren Peace Path, the 4-C Bicentennial Trail, and the tennis courts located at Wilmington High School.

This year has been an eventful year in many ways. We continued work on transforming the **Southeast Community Park**; including new play equipment, fitness equipment, resurfacing the basketball court and signage.

Most of the improvements were made possible by a grant from the Clinton County Foundation and a Community Development Block Grant, with active participation from community members.



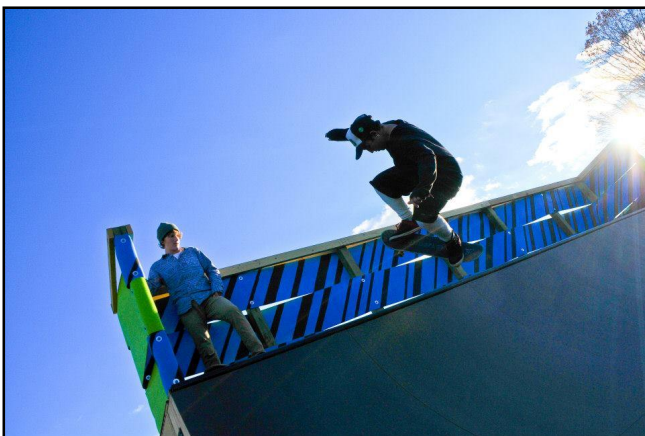
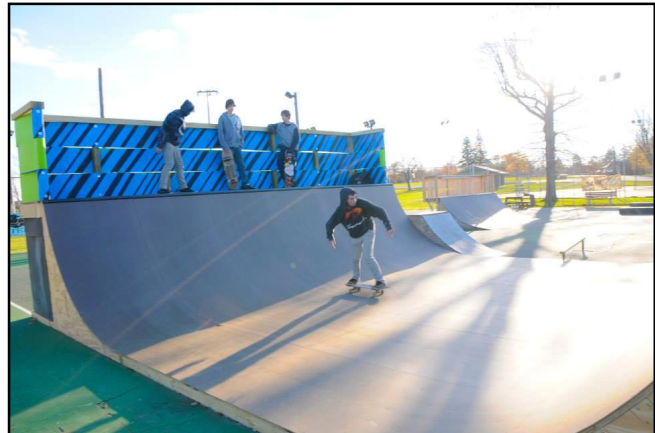
Southeast Neighborhood Park



With the kick start in the form of a \$2000 donation, we made great progress toward the vision of a leashless dog park in the **David Williams Memorial Park**. Volunteers have stepped forward to assist with design and fund-raising. The area was recently excavated and seeded, and at the very end of 2014, we were notified that we will be receiving ODNR NatureWorks grant funding to assist with the fencing, which is typically the most costly component of a public dog park. We are optimistic that in the summer of 2015 we will be able to open this new park feature.



In early November we cut the ribbon on a new half pipe skate ramp located on the skate spot where an old tennis court was decommissioned in 2013. That effort was led by Mark Noland and made possible with donations from the Clinton County Foundation Social Innovation Fund, Clinton County United Way, Clinton County Sheriff's Office DARE program, Friends of the Wilmington Parks, the Clinton County Skatepark Association, and many volunteers.



***New Half-Pipe Skate Ramp at
J.W. Denver Williams Park***

Highlights of the year from a facility standpoint also include several other improvements to the playground areas, rehabilitation of the restrooms and concession stand at **David Williams Memorial Park**, fish stocking and new educational kiosk at the pond at **J. W. Denver Williams Memorial Park**, additional benches and planting new trees.



In a partnership with Lytle Creek League of Conservators, the Lytle Creek Audio Tour was implemented along the **Luther Warren Peace Path** and **4-C Bicentennial Trail**. Developed and produced by local conservator, John Deignan, the tour features smart-phone QR codes that access audio files covering a wide variety of nature-based content along the trails. There are also MP3 players and speakers available to users.

With continued pressure on the local economy, we will need to continue to be creative in developing funding sources and in cost-cutting, without sacrificing services the community expects and deserves. Resourcefulness with regard to utilizing volunteers, creating alliances and partnerships, and securing sponsorships and grants will be the key to our continued progress.

2014 partners have included the Clinton County Master Garden Volunteers, Wilmington Garden Club, Clinton County Skatepark Association, United Way of Clinton County, Clinton County Sheriff's office, Lowes Home Improvement, Ohio Department of Natural

Resources, Ohio Division of Wildlife, David Williams Family, Cornerstone Foundation, Clinton County Foundation, Wilmington Baseball Association, Wilmington High School Interact Club, Wilmington College, local Boy Scouts, and many others.

The creation of the new Wilmington Park Legacy Fund through the Clinton County Foundation will allow park supporters to make charitable contributions to support the park system. The mission of the new charitable fund is to enable City of Wilmington Park system improvements and programs to benefit the community with an emphasis on leveraging the funds to have a multiplier effect with regard to grants, in-kind donations and volunteer activism.

ATHLETICS

The year 2014 was a great year for athletics at the park. We implemented online registration and continued our pay-to-play sports policy this year, with our numbers growing or staying equal to past years. Park leagues included 205 adults, 1050 youth and were made possible in large part by the 84 volunteer coaches.

The year started off with basketball, where we saw our numbers increase from the previous year. The season ran over a couple weeks because of cancellations of games due to snow. During basketball we had a change in the Athletic Coordinator position.

Spring soccer had an increase of 32% from the previous year. Spring was wet and cold at beginning of season, and due to cold weather, the season was pushed back a week. Once the season started, leagues were very competitive and, with high school soccer players officiating, ran very smoothly.

Baseball had the highest numbers we have had in recent history. This year a practice schedule was created for the first time to help coaches and parents. There were many rain-outs and makeup games, but the season was still completed by July 4. Umpiring duty this year was done by high school baseball players and young adults with vast knowledge of the game.

Adult volleyball and softball numbers were consistent to numbers with previous years.

Fall soccer was played on just two nights this year. Numbers were similar to previous year. The season started in late August to avoid the cold temperatures in mid-to-late October. The season was very successful, and we look forward to continued growth in the program.

New this fall was our Pre-School Soccer Program. More than 30 pre-schoolers, three years and older, participated in the clinic-style program. We plan to continue this popular program.

We look forward to 2015. Our goal is to improve our sports programs, giving every kid an enjoyable and great learning experience.

Looking Forward

In 2015 we have a full slate of opportunities. At **J. W. Denver Williams Memorial Park** we will be resurfacing a tennis court and one of the basketball courts, developing plans to

improve the Nathan Hale Trail area, and creating a handicapped accessible fishing area. At the **Southeast Community Park** we will be installing additional play items and a tile art wall feature, made by City of Wilmington fourth and fifth graders under the direction of Jennifer Furrier, Tucson tile artist.

The **David Williams Memorial Park** will have a new leashless dog park and walkway.

We will be re-decking the **Peace Path** bridges, adding features to the **Lytle Creek Nature Preserve**, and beginning the development of the future **Stuckey Farm Park**.

Thanks to the hard work and generosity of many, we have wonderful park assets. We must be determined in our resolve to care for the park legacy that was formally begun with the 1950 dedication of the **J. W. Denver Williams Memorial Park** and to continue to improve the facilities and natural resources in our care.

These are your parks - let us know how you would like to get involved. Parks do indeed build community!

Submitted by:

Lori Kersey Williams

Parks and Recreation Director