

2016 Annual Report

BLUFFTON PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Presented by: Pam Vanderkolk, Superintendent

January

Weekday Walkers - 443 (for season)	Homemade Card Class - 5
Knitting Lessons - 8	Crochet Lessons - 5
Theater Thursday - 30	Theater Thursday - 31
Tot Time - 191	

January gives us the time to organize our thoughts and programs for the remainder of the year.

February

Stuff & Fluff – 51	Knitting Class – 4
Tot Block Party - 21	Chilly Chili Run – 170
Crochet Lessons – 8	Mother/Son Dance – 195
Daddy/Daughter Dance – 279	Theater Thursday – 25

The Tot Block Party is an event led by Molly Hoag from the Purdue Extension office. Toddlers and their caregivers are given the opportunity to be creative using different types of blocks. We thank the Ouabache State Park and their staff and House of Hope (they provide the chili) for their assistance with the Chilly Chili Run. We also appreciate the Bluffton Regional Medical Center and the Wells County Library for their partnership with the Theater Thursdays. We are grateful for the continued cooperation and support of the Wells County 4-H Park for the use of their facility for the Daddy/Daughter and the Mother/Son Dances. The theme this year was Super Heroes and it was very well received. We even hired Optimist Prime, a Transformer character, to make an appearance at both dances. He was a huge hit!

March

Spring Coloring Contest – 45	Tot Gold Hunt/Bank Tour – 15
Crochet – 2	SLR Camera Class - 8
Theater Thursday – 33	Card Class – 8
Underwater Egg Hunt - 122	

Special thanks to the Wells Fargo Bank for the Tot Bank Tour and Bluffton-Harrison MSD for partnering with us on the Underwater Egg Hunt. We filled the school pool with thousands of colorful Easter Eggs and the kids gathered them up in baskets and mesh bags. There was a golden egg in each age category for a special prize and then each child left with a goodie-filled prize bag. We held this event instead of an outdoor egg hunt this year since Easter was so early and the weather could have been an issue.

April

Pee Wee Soccer – 60	Aerial Princess Tea Party - 214
Theater Thursday – 45	Senior Exploration – 57
Laundry Soap Sales - 145	Dinosaur Egg Hunt - 150
Sr. Exploration Carry – in – 50	Homemade Card Class - 6
Special Olympics - 145 athletes and 125 spectators	

Thanks to BHMSD, Bluffton HS athletes and Athletic Boosters as well as the Wells County Y with us to offer the exciting and heart-warming Special Olympics event. This is a great program that we look forward to hosting each year. We enjoyed another successful Princess Tea Party and appreciate Sue from Sassafras for allowing us to host it at her restaurant each year. The Dinosaur Egg hunt was also a little spin on our typical Easter Egg Hunt. The plastic eggs were stuffed by Bi-County clients and filled with dinosaur toys and candy.

May

Summer Striders – 19	Swim Lessons – 184
Pee Wee Swim Lessons - 14	Theater Thursday – 34
Homemade Card Class –11	Women Self Defense Class – 26
Spring Bike Tour of Parks – 75	Rock Steady Boxing - 10 (average)
MLB Pitch, Hit & Run - 10 (very cold & rainy)	Basket Weaving Class - 6 (max)

The Spring Bike Tour of the Parks continues to grow as does the Women’s Self Defense Class. Det. Lt. Jim Paxton does an amazing job teaching the women of our community how to protect themselves. The Summer Striders walking program is also growing in attendance.

June

Chicks Run – 195	KoolAid Hair Dye – 13
Art in the Park – 62, 60, 50	Grandpa & Me – 55
Yoga in the Park - 79	Sole Sisters - 10
Tot Music Time – 11 (max)	Loom Hot Pad - 8
Tennis Lessons – 485 for summer	Tennis for Tots - 8
Bead Happy Jewelry - 39	Egg Drop Challenge – 30
Piano Play/Discovery – 2	Meet the Piano – 9
Tot Parachute Day – 25	Tot Lego Day - 23
Rock Painting – 86	Bowling – 25
Tot Chalk it Up – 24	3D Coloring – 28
Designer Hair Ribbons – 36	Wood Kit Crafts - 27
Tech Take a Part Day – 27	Finger Nail Art – 21
Touch-A-Truck – 640	Kids Garage Sale – 13
Pee Wee Painters - 36	Geodesic Dome – 11
Tot Bubble Day – 26	Paper Sculpting - 23
Tot Nature Hunt - 20	Culinary Kids (Colonel) - 22
Fuse Bead Magnets – 20	Card Making Class – 9
Tot Balloon Day – 35	Theater Thursday – 27

June - continued

Jr. Police Day – 5	Funky Flip Flops – 36
Nature’s Bounty Class – 5	Employee Cookout - 80+
Pee Wee Basketball - 21	Pickleball - 106
Wet Wacky Wednesday - 16, 36, 30	Abstract Organic Sculpture - 14
Bubble Dash - 70	Foam Party - 450+
Pickleball Tourney - 15 teams of 2	Rock Painting - 86
Dinosaur Dig - 50 (maxed out)	Animal Explorers - 106
Matchbox Car Play Day - 67	Soggy Jog - 85
Rough & Muddy - 112	Concert Celebration - 60
Worry Dolls - 29	Zentangle Coloring - 24
Zendoodle Drawing - 19	

Special thanks to Studio 88 for partnering with us and offering free piano lessons again this summer. The Pickleball League really grew this summer and we thank Ron Bowman for his dedication to that effort. Special thanks also to LA Brown for his continued assistance with the Touch-a-Truck every year. The Matchbox Car Play Day was a big hit! We had ramps from cardboard tubes and other types of obstacles for them to send their cars through. There was also bubble wrap for them to drive over and pop, paint to drive through to make great pictures with and then to end it all, a car wash! A bubble-filled tub of water. The event was so popular we extended the time by a half an hour because the kids just didn't want to leave! We also hosted our first ever Employee Cookout at Roush Park. This was our way of letting them all know how much we appreciate all they do to assist us throughout the year, but especially in 2016 as we were transitioning between maintenance supervisors and was very short on staff and very long on tasks. The other city departments came through for us and we were very grateful!

July

Tot Fire Dept. visit – 30	Kehoe Concert - 146 (Bob Gray Orchestra)
Drawing Camp – 22	Tot Water Blob Day - 13
Summer Striders II – 17	Tot Clay Day – 24
Squish & Sculpt – 21	Finger Nail Art – 31
Archery - 25	Worry Dolls - 28
Iron Kid Triathlon – 112	Homemade Cards – 8
Tot Ice Excavation – 36	Jump Rope - 12
Minions movie – 70	Hotel Transylvania 2 movie - 80
Kehoe Concert - 35 (Stampede String Band)	Inside Out Movie - 251
Kehoe Concert - 70 (Lima Marimba Ensemble)	Hungry Human Game - 22
Cinderella Movie– 80	The Good Dinosaur movie - 24
Wet Wacky Wednesday – 79, 54, 63	Wood Grain Art - 18
Community July 4 th Celebration - 500 +	Balloon Animals - 24
Amazing Race - 7	Newspaper Towers - 9
Book Sculpting - 9	Reed Basket Making - 17
Theater Thursday - 26	Art in the Park - 53, 35, 34

July continued

Our thanks to the Bluffton Fire Dept for their continued support of our Tot Visits. Attendance was up for our movies & concerts from last year since the weather was much drier than in 2015, although still not where we like it to be.

August

Kehoe Concert – 150 (Cadillac Ranch Band)	Wet Wacky Wednesday – 79
Adult Triathlon – 130	Robotics Encounter - 7
Women’s Self Defense Class – 27	Kehoe Concert – 148 (String Shift)
Theater Thursday – 15	Homemade Card Class – 6
NFL Pass, Punt & Kick – 50	Kehoe Concert – 240 (Minister’s Quartet)
Teacups & Tutus - 67	Squirt Gun Fight - 36
Giant Slip & Slide - 151 (& 86 spectators)	

A shout out of thanks to the Wells County Foundation for their generous grant that funds our summer movies and to all those who served on the Kehoe Concert Committee for another great season. Special thanks also for all those who sponsored and donated for the concert series. Our Volunteer of the Year was Lisa Beck. Lisa has assisted us for many years as our starter for the IronKid Triathlon. She is amazing with the kids, so encouraging and fun! She has also led our Summer Striders walking/fitness program for several summers and is just an all-around steward for our department! We are grateful to all she does for us.

We’d also like to thank the BHS Football staff for another successful NFL Pass, Punt & Kick event. We had three (3) kids from Wells County participate in the State Finals at the Indianapolis Colts game. Abram Gehrett won first place in his age group, and then Isabella Stout place 2nd in her group and Riley Tappy was 4th. This was Riley’s fifth year of making it to the state and Isabella’s second.

September

Fall Coloring contest – 77	Star Gazing – 17
Harvest Hustle 5K – 125	Homemade Card Class - 7
Fall Senior Exploration – 50	Theater Thursday – 28
Fight Against Drugs Seminar - 14	

Harvest Hustle numbers are growing, although we had great weather, so that helps! The Fight Against Drug seminar was rescheduled due to low numbers and then did very well! We continue to appreciate the Fort Wayne Astronomical Society for their continuing partnership of coming to our community to share their telescopes and knowledge on the stars, sun and planets.

October

Tot Fire Dept. visit – 5	Outdoor Soccer – 30
Senior Carry-in Lunch – 50	Card making class – 7
Great Pumpkin Hunt/Star Gazing – 450	Theater Thursday – 14
Pumpkin Dunkin – 150	Crochet Class - 14
Youth Cross Country Meet - 60	Zombie Run - 111
Autumn Adventure – 1,632	Weekday Walkers - 154
Tot Time - 61	Pee Wee Soccer - 28

Although our number was down by about 200 this year from last year on the Autumn Adventure, it is still hard to complain when you have more than 1,600 attend an event! The Zombie Run was a new adventure for us in partnership with the Ouabache State Park. What a fun night that was! We hired professional face painters to come and turn our volunteers and runners into zombies. Most came very well dressed for their part. The campers truly enjoyed watching the runners as they made their way through the park. It has been highly requested to repeat in 2017!

November

Tot Post Office tour – 4	Theater Thursday – 20
Homemade Card Class - 6	Adult Volleyball League - 7 teams
Crochet Class - 14	

November is our next slowest month as we wind down the year. Activities in the city gym pick up though with leagues and open gym.

December

Tot Candy Cane Hunt - 10	Paws & Claus – 108 humans, 59 dogs
Winter Wonderland – 259	Winter Coloring contest – 93
December Dash 5K - cancelled due to ice	Santa's Mailbox – 165
Theater Thursday - 36	

Our Winter Wonderland numbers were down some from 2015. It was a brutally cold night and we are sure that attributed to those numbers. The December Dash 5K had to be cancelled for the first time due to icy conditions. We could have skated on the streets and greenway, but running would not have been recommended! The Paws & Claus event is another program that is enjoying increased participation.

Grants received: \$42,286.00

Donations received: \$14,719.00

Volunteers: 237 Total hours: 1,398 (approximate figures)

Participants: 13,350 estimated

Improvements made: \$421,473.00

Vandalism/repairs: \$855.50

Income:

Roush #1 Concessions - \$22,672.09

Roush # 2 Concessions - \$1,749.45

Jefferson Concessions - \$2,470.05

Pool Concessions - \$14,851.39

Pool Admissions - \$24,920.67

Pavilion Rentals - \$2,780.00

Washington Park (inside) - 18 rentals, (outside) 17 rentals

Roush Park pavilion - 5

Lion's Park pavilion - 2

Wabash River Pavilion - 1

Kehoe gazebo - 4 rentals

Gym & K-9 Kommons - \$12,231.00 K-9 Kommons Members - 44

Pool rentals - 25 / \$4,680.00

Pool visitors - 13,406 / 71 days

Gym visitors - 1,023

Gym memberships:

City employees: 25 Single WC residents: 37 Family WC residents: 30 Total: 92

COMPLIMENTS

Congratulations on receiving the IPRA Outstanding Professional award! What an accomplishment, to be recognized by your peers at the State level! I am extremely proud of you and the work of your department. You are a strong leader and it shows in everything you do. Again, congratulations, I am proud of you! -Susan

Great job today! I truly appreciate all your hard work in showing us your programs. I would love the slides from today's presentation! Thank you very much. - Phil

I thoroughly enjoyed your presentation at IPRA and I am amazed at how much you do with such a small staff. I would appreciate it if you could send me the power point that you used at IPRA. It had so many good ideas that I can pass on to our staff. Thanks. -Jean

Fun event and awesome blocks! (Block Party) - Nancy

Great event as always wonderfully organized! Great job Bluffton Parks!!!! - Mona

Thanks for a great evening of FUN!!!! All of our family enjoyed it! (Hero & Villains Dance)
Aimee

FaNtAsTiC job done by Bluffton Parks!! We had a blast, totally worth the drive from Ft Wayne!
(Mother Son Dance) - Heather

There looks like tons of things we can do!!! (summer recreation guide) - Dakota

Thanks for all your help. And thank you to the Parks Dept for offering so many fun activities!
(summer rec) -Kristi

Thank you so much to everyone who had a part in this day. It is an amazing experience , that I am so thankful we were able to be a part of. My daughter had an amazing time, and I don't think I was without a smile the whole time either. Hats off, and princess curtseys to all of you!
Thank you! (Princess Tea Party) - Kaleigh

Thanks for the opportunity and for being an amazing Parks Dept! - Andrea

Awesome pictures, I had so much fun working today. It also brought tears to my eyes a few times today as I was watching the BHS boys I was working with run alongside and cheer on the athletes. Great job to everyone today!! (Special Olympics) - Jennifer

What great pictures, and what a great event!!! So glad I live in Bluffton where people care for each other!!!! (Special Olympics) - Angela

The Parks Department is one of our community's brightest assets and is far too easy to take for granted. It's difficult to find complaint in any of the activities, pricing, facilities or staff. I'm VERY pleased to see the park updates and hope to see more! We live near the greenway, city gym and splash pad; those were major factors in choosing our home. My family appreciates all the effort of the Parks Department and cannot thank you enough. (collected during a survey)

Just want to thank you so much for another "most enjoyable" spring exploration program. I have many wonderful friends that I don't see often. The classes were so worthwhile and the teachers so prepared. Thanks for planning and coordinating this wonderful program (Sr. Explorations) - Joyce

Wells County has an awesome Parks Department. Always coming up with great activities for the community - Jenny

The grandkids enjoyed this morning as I did (theater Thursday) - Mariann

Thanks to the Bluffton Parks Dept for creating fabulous free family events! These kiddos had a blast! (foam party) - Jenny

This was awesome! Thanks so much for doing it! Can't wait to run again next year! (mud run) - Rachel

Love the pictures and course! Thank you!!!! (mud run) - Kim

Sometimes the best part of being a grown up is not having to act like one all the time! Thanks for giving me the opportunity to play in the mud Bluffton Parks! (mud run) - Brooke

I love this Parks Department! I've never seen another town go out of their way so much for the kids! They provide so many things to do! - Tonya

@BlufftonParks I'm thankful for our Parks and the staff who keep them family friendly, safe, and fun! Lisa

Thank you, Bluffton Parks, for this summer program. My sisters and I really enjoyed it! (Yoga in the park) - Linda

Thank you, and please pass on my thanks and appreciation to the Parks Department and Police Department and Peyton's for having Jim Paxton teach this class on self defense. It was excellent and I will be sure to attend again in the future. (Women's Self Defense) - Donna

This was an outstanding group of musicians! Beautiful evening! Thanks to the sponsor . (Kehoe Concert) - Kayleen

Beautiful Sunday night to conclude Kehoe Park concerts! All of the singers were fantastic!
Thanks for this event - Kayleen

Thank you all so much for hosting this event! Our nephews had a blast and are ready for you all to do it again next year. (Squirt Gun Fight and Giant Slip & Slide) - Stephanie

Thanks so much the grandkids had a blast (Squirt Gun Fight and Giant Slip & Slide) -Lisa
Thank you for this and other activities you do for kids :) - Dixie

thxs for all u do for the kids! They had a blast and loved it and the food! Thxs forgiven church 4 the food! (Squirt Gun Fight and Giant Slip & Slide) -Monica

The classes, teachers are so interesting and above all the social time with so many friends I have made. You seniors, you don't know what you are missing. (Sr. Explorations) - Patricia

This is a donation to the "Rock Steady Boxing" program. Thank you for offering this program in our community - my dad benefits tremendously from it! He looks forward to the class and loves all the instructors :) so much! We appreciate all you do - We have the BEST Parks Dept around!! (Rock Steady Boxing) - Terri

We moved here a few months ago. We chose Bluffton, after researching all of the surrounding areas, solely because there are so many free or low cost events going on all throughout the year. I know how much work and planning must go into making these events run smoothly. I just wanted to let you know that our family thinks that YOU GUYS ROCK!!!! Keep up the great work! - Deloris