

# columbus parks & recreation department

## 2011 Annual Report



**Administrative offices:**  
22nd & Sycamore Streets  
P.O. Box 858  
Columbus, Indiana 47202-0858

**(812) 376-2680**  
**[www.columbusparksandrec.com](http://www.columbusparksandrec.com)**  
**Ben Wagner, Director**

## greetings from columbus parks & rec!

We started the year gearing up to take over the newest City facility, The Commons. After our official opening to the public this spring, we have continued to “work out the kinks” that come with moving into a new building. The public reception of our new “community living room” has been tremendously positive, and we thank you for your continued patience as we adjust to this new space. We also welcome our new “neighbors”, Scotty’s Burger Joint and Puccini’s restaurant. We are sure they will continue to enrich our downtown.

In addition to taking over management and maintenance of The Commons, our Department has been busy improving our local parks and recreation opportunities. We are proud of the new playground now serving the residents near Ninth Street Park. We are encouraged

by the improvements to both Hamilton Center Ice Arena and Donner Aquatic Center, including the addition of a new water slide this summer. We end the year with plans to expand our People Trails. Finally, we thank Mayor Fred Armstrong for his 16 years of support and leadership and welcome Mayor-Elect Kristin Brown to her new role as leader of our City.

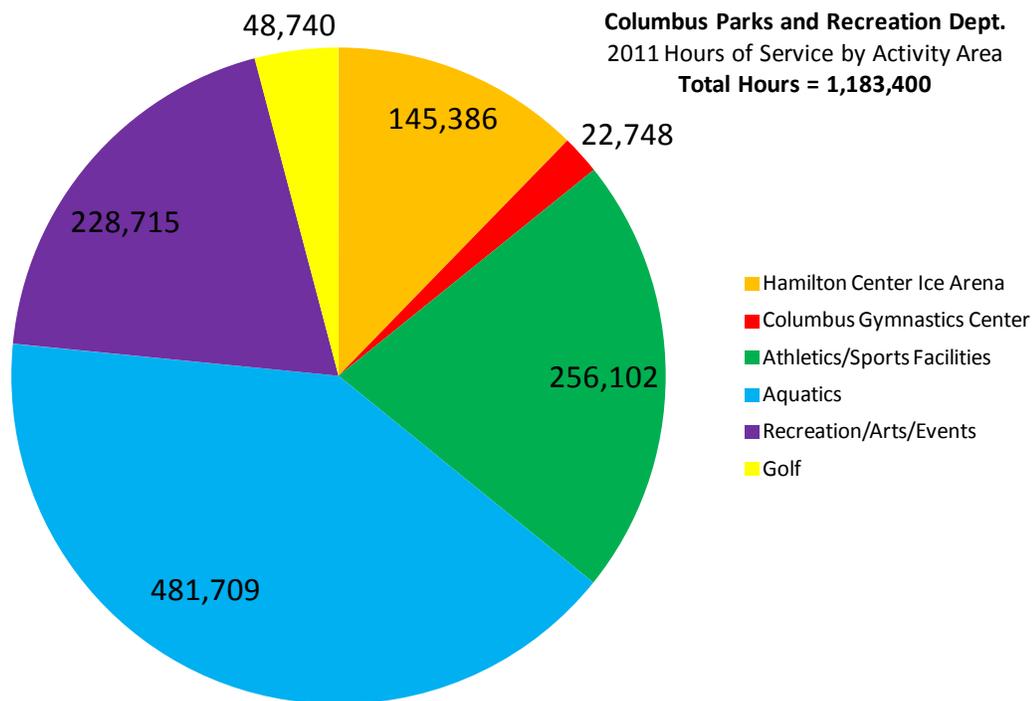
As always, thank you for supporting us and our mission of “Enriching Lives, Building Community”.

Sincerely,



Ben Wagner, Director

## programs at a glance



In 2011, Columbus Parks & Recreation Department continued tracking the “hours of service” we provided to our users. This year, we provided over 1.1 million hours of service (the equivalent of 49,308 days) to our users. This amount is an increase by 35% over 2010. This does not include users of our People Trails and parks which, while not measured, is considerable. Of the hours of service reported, 41% of our customers spent time participating in aquatics based activities

at Donner Aquatic Center and Foundation for Youth, 22% of customers spent time participating in athletics based activities at various facilities and 12% spent time at Hamilton Center Ice Arena. By using “hours of service” as a measure, we are able to compare all programming areas equally and can better measure the impact that Columbus Parks & Recreation has on the health and well being of our citizens.

# program Highlights

## Athletics

- 3,400 youth participated in baseball, soccer, sports camps, and our NEW girls' fast pitch softball league.
- In 2011, over 4,600 adults participated in softball, kickball, volleyball, soccer, rugby and 3 on 3 basketball.
- This year, Columbus Parks and Recreation Department was host to 25 baseball, girls' fast pitch softball, and adult slow pitch softball tournaments, bringing over 11,700 visitors to our community.

## Columbus Gymnastics Center

- Registration for classes at Columbus Gymnastics Center increased from 927 to 952 enrolled for 2011 (a 3% increase).
- This summer, three weeks of cheerleading camps were offered: one for ages 3-5, one for ages 6-8 & one for ages 9-12. These camps brought in an additional 60 children to the facility this summer. Based on their success, these camps will be offered again in 2012 as well as gymnastics & tumbling camps.
- The Columbus Power Elite cheer group returned to Columbus Gymnastic Center as a rental in June after a two year absence. They are renting space for 9 hours per week for practice for 2 squads. We welcome this group back to CGC.
- Birthday party rentals for 2011 increased almost 15% from 2010. We hosted 170 birthday parties in 2011.

## Donner Aquatic Center

- Donner Aquatic Center enjoyed another successful summer. 32,706 visits were recorded at our public sessions, Master swim and private rentals. Free sessions were attended by 11,918 free swimmers.
- Over 313 children participated in private swim lessons this year.
- Our American Red Cross Swim Lessons were attended by 883 students this year (up 40 students from 2010).

## Hamilton Center

- Hamilton Center held the second annual Skating Extravaganza in October and it was a great success. Over 100 adults and children attended to learn about the skating programs offered at the rink.
- A very successful Hamilton Center Variety Camp was held in August. Youth ages 6 through 12 were introduced to speed skating, figure skating and hockey, which resulted in new registrations and interest in our activities.
- In the month of May, Hamilton Center put in a new arena ceiling, lights, windows and doors in an effort to

reduce costs. This has reduced energy consumption as well as kept the ice in great condition over the hot summer months.

## Recreation and Special Events

- The "Come Out & Play" free, supervised playground program for ages 6-12 had record breaking attendance this summer!!! For the month of June, we had 1,318 visits to the program by children ages 6-12 (nearly the attendance we saw during the entire summer last year). Visits increased over 30% from 2010 (from 1,337 to 1,917).
- Field trips continued to be popular in 2011. Tuesday field trips to Donner Pool for the Ninth Street & Pence Street Park children saw a 30% increase in attendance. A new Thursday field trip this summer was to the NEW Commons playground. Over 133 children participated over the two weeks this trip was offered.
- The popular "American Girl Doll Camp" was again offered in our day camp schedule this summer, with 50 girls registering for one of two camp sessions. These sessions were full in less than a month. Camps for ages 8-12 were very well attended this summer, with 106 children participating in three camps.
- The third annual Mill Race Rummage Sale held on September 17, attracting the largest number of booths sold to date. 75 booths were purchased by over 50 vendors. Some vendors purchased 4-5 booths each. Once again, over 600 people attended the sale to shop, raising over \$1,300 for the Columbus Park Foundation's fund for free and reduced-cost children's programming.

## Park Operations

- Park Operations worked to install a new playground at Ninth Street Park, replacing a very old, damaged playground. This neighborhood park and playground is well used by the residents of the neighborhood and we expect this playground will be very popular during the warm weather months.
- Park Operations staff worked diligently with architects, general contractors, and City Leadership to complete construction of the new Commons facility and implement maintenance plans that will ensure the facility is maintained at the highest standards for years to come.
- Over 1,934 volunteer hours were recorded working with 20 different groups or agencies on 14 different projects.

## The Commons reopens in Columbus

2011 brought many changes to Columbus. For the Columbus Parks and Recreation Department, a new facility was added to their list of responsibilities. This is not just any facility, but the “community living room” - the new, redesigned and rebuilt Commons!

Mayor Fred Armstrong and the Commons Board elected to put the maintenance and management of this multi-million dollar facility under the umbrella of the Department. While very welcomed, the addition of The Commons to our management list did require a

few changes. First and foremost, new staff needed to be added. In March 2011, we welcomed Lisa Westenberger as Commons Manager and Danny Brown as Facility Manager. Danny and Lisa quickly got to work, hiring the incredible maintenance staff and office staff we now employ. They are blended, seamlessly, with current employees and have been hard at work for several months now, all dedicated to making The Commons the best facility in Columbus.

Re-opening the community’s living room, after many years without it, required a large celebration.

Several staff members, including Director Ben Wagner, were part of the Commons Celebration Committee, led by the late Alice Curry. The Committee planned the many events in May and June that re-introduced the community to this

new space that was so reminiscent of the old. While elements of the old structure remain, such as the original Cesar Pelli iron framework, Jean Tinguely’s Chaos I sculpture and a redesigned playground

(now renamed for community leader and philanthropist, James Henderson), other features were improved upon and solved the issues experienced in the former space. A second floor performance space features a permanent stage, a cherry wood dance floor, and many “nooks” for conversations during large and small events alike. A new conference room, dedicated to Xenia Miller, now allows not-for-profits a space to conduct meetings at no charge. The smaller stage in the Miller-Tangeman lobby, now highlighting Chaos I, allows for smaller gatherings or adds a more intimate space for larger ones.

Our Department was, and continues to be, proud to be the caretaker of this incredible new facility. We are encouraged by

feedback from the community and ever amazed by the creative ways in which it is already being used. **If you have not already done so, we invite you to visit The Commons. You may also reserve the space for your own use anytime - learn more about this amazing space at <http://www.thecommonscolumbus.com> or contact us at (812) 376-2681.**

