

columbus parks & recreation department 2008 ANNUAL report



Administrative offices:
22nd & sycamore streets
p.o. box 858
columbus, indiana 47202-0858

(812) 376-2680
www.columbusparksandrec.com

greetings from columbus parks & rec!

Like other City departments, the Parks and Recreation Department has faced its share of challenges in 2008. As we prepare for a new year, we are looking to improve how we do what we do. Our staff is already hard at work on Continuous Improvement Projects that will save both staff time and precious financial resources. Our goal is to provide the highest level of service possible despite the challenges we face in 2009.

and Recreation Department believe we are making a positive difference in our community and in the lives of the thousands of individuals that utilize our facilities or enjoy our services during the year. We are confident that with the support of our City leaders, our Park Board, Park Foundation Board and the community, we will continue to enrich lives and build community for years to come.

In the pages that follow, our Department highlights our accomplishments in 2008. We are proud to serve the people of Columbus, Bartholomew County and the surrounding area. Whether hosting national sporting tournaments or providing opportunities for families to gather and spend time together, we at Columbus Parks

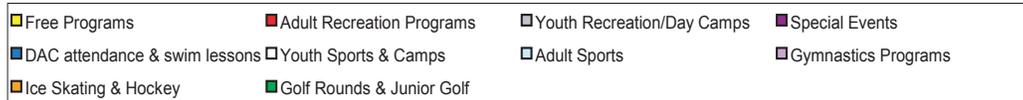
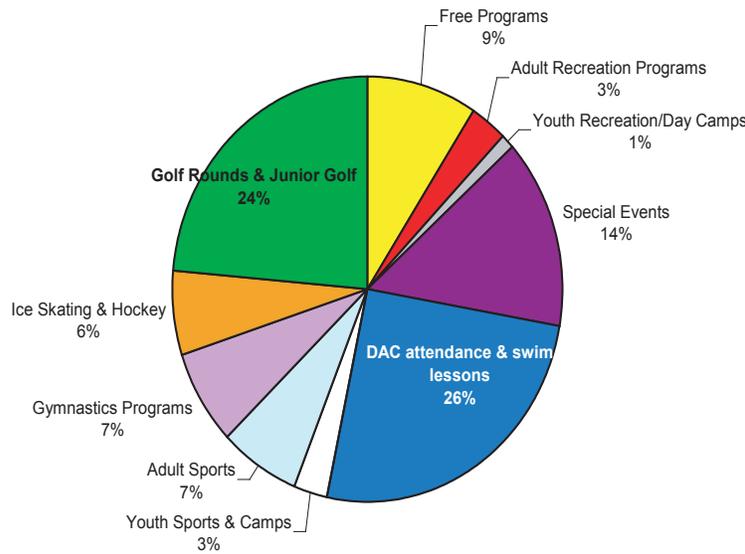
Sincerely,



Chuck Wilt, Director

programs at a glance

2008 Participation in Columbus Parks and Recreation Department Programs



In 2008, Columbus Parks and Recreation Department served over 125,000 visitors at various venues and facilities. Nearly half of our visits were generated from users of Greenbelt and Rocky Ford Par-3 Golf Courses and swimmers at Donner Aquatics Center. Special events, such as two USSSA World Series events at Lincoln and Clifty Parks, concerts at Mill

Race Park (including the first annual Rock the Park concert and the Hospice of South Central Indiana benefit concert) generated 14% of our total visitors this year. Youth events, primarily those geared toward kids ages 3-12 years of age, proved to be popular once again in 2008.

program highlights

Athletics

- 3,700 youth participated in sports programs in 2008. Youth soccer continues its success with nearly 2,200 participants. Youth baseball saw an increase to 625 youth participants. Sport Camps had over 500 youth learning new skills in a variety of sports which include baseball, softball, soccer, basketball and volleyball. Over 400 participants enjoyed our tennis program this year. Special thanks to Mike Burt, Director of Tennis, and his instructors, Columbus Youth Soccer Association (CYSA) and the Babe Ruth/Columbus Parks and Recreation Baseball Board for their hard work and dedication, and to all Baseball sponsors for their financial support.
- In 2008, there were approximately 4,800 adults that participated in softball, kickball, volleyball, table tennis, soccer and 3 on 3 basketball. The Columbus Softball Association (CSA) saw an increase to 218 teams and nearly 3,300 participants in summer and fall softball leagues. Kickball has annually grown in numbers with 12 teams and nearly 180 participants in 2008. Volleyball maintains strong numbers with 650 adults participating in winter, spring, summer, and fall leagues. Adult soccer is growing again, with over 140 participants in the summer league.
- Tournaments continue to be a big business for the Columbus Parks and Recreation Department. In 2008, there were over 600 teams and 8,200 participants visiting Columbus to participate in tournaments, resulting in over \$12 million to our community. The USSSA Girls Fastpitch World Series was a big hit again this year with 83 teams and nearly 1,200 athletes. This year was the first year the Columbus Parks and Recreation Department hosted the USSSA Baseball World Series with 62 teams and over 850 athletes. Another big success was the USSSA Slowpitch E-National tournament with 76 teams and over 1,000 participants.

Columbus Gymnastics Center

- Enrollment in gymnastics classes has exceeded expectations and is now at its highest level in several years and continues to rise into 2009.
- A non-competitive cheerleading class was offered this year and has proved to be a very popular addition. Parents and participants have given very positive feedback about the class to staff.
- Birthday party and private rentals at CGC have been booming in 2008. We are currently booked during the first few weeks of the new year and anticipate demand for rentals to continue well into the year.

Donner Aquatic Center

- Donner Aquatic Center had 21,428 paid swimmers to public sessions, 9,565 free swimmers and 29 rentals.
- Donner Swim Club hosted 3 swim meets in 2008 at Donner Aquatic Center.

Hamilton Center

- Hamilton Center has had 6,600 skaters at public sessions in 2008.
- Columbus Youth Hockey has scheduled over 100 home games this season.
- The IU figure skating club hosted a collegiate skating competition attended by 8 colleges.

Recreation and Special Events

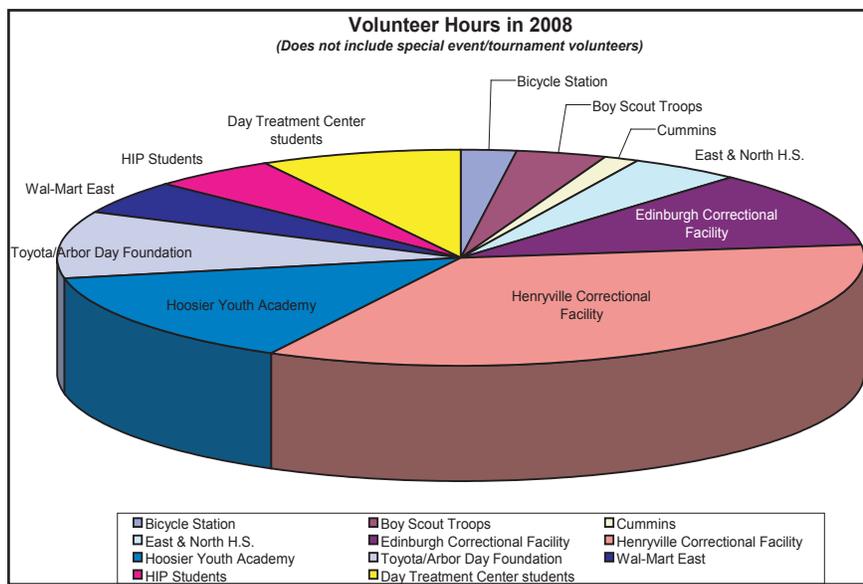
- Interest in programming for children ages 8 and above continued to be strong and increase in 2008. Registration for the annual "Super Sitters" workshops doubled from 2007 to 2008 from 33 students in 2007 to 60 in 2008. The summer day camp program for this age group increased in registrations from 146 in 2007 to 155 in 2008. These camps include: Kids In Motion, Camp SuperKids, Project: A*C*T and Project D*R*A*M*A.
- The 7 week "Come Out & Play" supervised playground program saw an increase of 30% from 1,300 children in 2007 to 1,683 in 2008. The addition of the new "Jump Into Fun" jump rope workshops and "Little Chefs" cooking classes increased participation to 25 more children in 2008.
- Special events and 20 rentals from various organizations, including such events as walks and weddings, generated over 18,000 visitors to Mill Race Park in 2008.

Park Operations

- For Arbor Day 2008, Park Operations teamed up with the Arbor Day Foundation and Toyota and planted 100 trees in Noblitt and Lincoln Parks. Toyota not only donated the money, but also donated the labor to help plant the trees. Two members of the Arbor Day Foundation flew in from Nebraska to join us for the festivities. One hundred trees is approximately a \$10,000 donation to the park system.
- Park Operations was actively involved with the impact of the flood. We worked almost a month dealing with the cleanup, and were blessed with numerous community groups helping in the cause. The Henryville Correctional Facility responded with two bus loads of inmates for two weeks to help in the cleanup. They were exceptional in the amount of help they provided. Every one of them worked, and worked hard, at the Golf Course, Athletics and Mill Race Park. We estimated that Parks and Recreation received approximately \$10,000 worth of labor, all for the price of a pizza party.
- Park Operations employees attended 358 hours of seminar and workshop training in 2008. These included Mid-States Horticultural Expo, Indiana Green Expo, IAA Annual Conference, Park & Rec Maintenance Management School, IDNR Advanced Tree Workshop, Sustainable Native Plants Seminar, ISA Annual Conference, and IDEM Flood Workshop.
- Park Operations employees also received 179 hours of health and safety training in 2008. This included Ask a Nurse, Department Safety Committee meetings, and monthly employee health and safety meetings.

2008 projects

- In April 2008, **Dan Burden** visited Columbus with the help of the City of Columbus, Columbus Park Foundation, Healthy Communities, INASLA, and others. He completed a walkability study on the community and gave a presentation to the community. This was a great way to educate local professionals and the community on the importance of having a city that is pedestrian friendly. He gave us the honor of being named a "Walkable City".
- A partnership with the BCSC allowed for the installation of lights, cameras, and a voice component to **Freedom Field Playground** in an effort to reduce vandalism. This installation was completed by Forster Electric and Staublin Technology Service.
- The local community came together and developed the **Columbus Indiana Dog Park Association**. Through public input, research, and site visits, Clifty Park's wooded area was selected as the proposed site for a dog park in Columbus. They are working on fundraising to develop this park. The goal is to have the construction and maintenance of the dog park completely funded by the association and community. If a success, this could be a model for future park additions.
- Columbus in Bloom donated a new addition to Donner Park. During a wind storm one of our trees blew over, leaving a 6' stump. Columbus in Bloom sponsored the carving of two bears in this stump by a local artist, Rick Nasby. This was a great success and we have gotten many positive comments about our new bears.
- The June 7 flood caused major damage to **Greenbelt Golf Course**, which caused an addition of many projects during 2008. These included:
 - Milestone Construction repaired the extremely damaged middle bridge and installed a new temporary low water crossing at the north end of the golf course.
 - Skobel Enterprise repaired and replaced all damaged sections of fence.
 - Repp & Mundt helped restore the maintenance facility to the way they had previously restored it earlier in the year.
 - Midwest Environmental completed an environmental cleanup on the Chemical Storage Building.



- Much work has been put into getting **Hamilton Center Ice Arena** back in shape. We have worked to get the Energy Management System up and running, installed doors on the men's restroom stalls, installed safety netting around the rink, and completed some preventative maintenance projects. Much research has also gone into reprioritizing Hamilton Center's capital project list to focus on reducing energy costs.
- In partnership with the Bartholomew County Recycling Center, we received a grant to purchase recycled material products. We purchased 3 picnic tables and a bench for **McCullough's Run Park** and 3 picnic tables and a bench for **Blackwell Park**. Though the flood in June washed two of the tables at McCullough's Run Park down the creek, we now have all in place and they are loved by the park visitors.
- The flood brought quite a bit of damage to **Mill Race Park**. Skopos, a sculpture designed by Ric Bauer in the 1980s, washed down the river and was missing for nearly a month. A young fisherman spotted the sculpture in the river near the Senior Center. With great support from the community and Fox 59, Tom Wetherald and Rick Miller saved the day. Skopos was removed from the river and is a constant reminder that not all was lost in the flood. Taylor Brothers Construction has since secured Skopos with welding and bolts so that it will stay in place during future floods.
- In partnership with the Park Foundation, we ordered **25 "C" shaped bike racks** that have been sponsored by a variety of people in the community. These bike racks will be located along Washington Street and at City Hall, Donner Center, the Columbus Area Visitors Center and the Airport. We hope to have these installed in 2009.
- We have been working to revise HNTB's contract for the **People Trail Connections project**. Due to the cost of the project and length of time to design and build this project, we are analyzing how to proceed. Currently, we are researching the idea of putting the Fairgrounds trail on hold and moving forward with the trail to Owen's Bend Park. This is a shorter trail with fewer property owners and could result in a more expedited process of spending the TE grant that was obtained in 2003.