ADMINISTRATION

The Administrative Division of the Town of Normal Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for overseeing all recreational programs, services, parks and facilities provided to the residents. Facilities that are administered by the Department include the Anderson and Fairview Aquatic Centers, Champion Fields Softball Complex, Community Activity Center, the Connie Link Amphitheatre, Ironwood Golf Course, Maxwell and Shepard Dog Parks, Safety Town and the always popular Constitution Trail.

The Department employs 34 full-time employees and over 650 part-time employees throughout the year. The department also offered over 400 programs during the past year.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- Numerous capital construction projects occurred within the community that provided improved recreational facilities and amenities. Some of these included:
  - Renovation of the zero-depth entry surface at Fairview Family Aquatic Center.
  - Construction of the Underwood Park parking lot and trail access.
- One **new staff member** joined the Parks and Recreation team this year: Amy Champ, part-time office associate.
- Continued support of the Special Opportunities Available in Recreation (SOAR) program with fiscal and facility resources. SOAR provides programming and resources for individuals with disabilities. SOAR provides aide assistance for several participants in our programs.
- **Fourth of July Fireworks Celebration** in Fairview Park was attended by more than 2,500 guests and watched by thousands more remotely. Face painting, balloon artists and inflatables were family-friendly activities featured – in addition to food trucks.
- **Awarded OSLAD grant** for Maxwell Park, receiving $400,000 in matching funds. Design completed in 2019. Project will be completed in 2020 and 2021.
- Hosted **Arbor Day celebration** with Unit 5’s Glenn Elementary, including the planting of two trees (Black Gum and Kentucky Coffeetree) at Broadview Mansion.
- **Partnered with McLean County Greenways** to locate two geocaches – one in David S. Anderson and Fairview Parks.
- **Staff attended professional development opportunities** at IPRA State Conference in Chicago, NPRA National Conference in Baltimore, USA Softball Annual Meeting, CIRCLE Connections and several more.

**2019 Staff**

- 34 Full-Time
- 650 Part-Time and Seasonal

**34.5% Cost Recovery**

FY2018-2019 Department-Wide
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

The Marketing and Communications Department is responsible for providing timely information to the Bloomington-Normal community. Information is delivered through guerilla and traditional marketing and public relations activities that promote our high-quality programs and services. A variety of communication outlets are used to distribute information in an accurate and timely manner. These outlets include:

- Broadcast Media: Radio and PBS Kids (New for 2019)
- Print Media: Newspapers and Magazines
- Social Media: Facebook, Instagram and Snap Chat
- Websites: Intranet and Internet
- Official Department Publications: Program Guides (3/year)
- Print Materials: Brochures, Flyers, Posters
- Video: Department Commercial and Drone Footage
- Community Outreach: Festival ISU, Snyder Companies, Back 2 School Alliance, ISU Athletics, Cultural Arts Day of Play, and Normal Cornbelters

The Marketing and Communications Department goals are to: educate our community as to the benefits of parks & recreation and help foster program development, position the department favorably against its competitors, and ensure there are multiple avenues to obtain information about the Department.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- Instagram account @NormalParksandRec went from 744 followers to 1,156 (55% increase)
- Facebook Likes went from 4,587 to 5,598 (22% increase)
- Promotional video for Easter Egg Hunt was produced.
- Designed a professional NPRD Rentals and Reservations Brochure.
- Redesigned the Special Events section of our website and built-out a webpage for each event.

Highest Reach - 13.2K & 680 Post Clicks

665 Reactions – Comments & Shares
PARK MAINTENANCE

Park Maintenance operations involve the general maintenance and upkeep of Town of Normal parks, trails and municipal properties including an outdoor Amphitheatre, two aquatic centers, athletic fields and facilities and the management of horticulture and forestry activities. Operations are directed by three Park Maintenance Supervisors and the field staff is comprised of 16 full-time employees, 8 part-time employees, and various seasonal workers. Essential responsibilities include providing comprehensive maintenance to the twenty neighborhood and community parks, comprising over 340 acres, and to the approximately fifteen linear miles of the Constitution Trail within the Town of Normal.

Maintenance tasks include park and trail cleaning, trash and litter removal, landscape and tree care operations, and athletic field preparations and renovations. Park Maintenance staff provides mowing operations to parks, trails, municipal properties, creek banks, retention basins and street right-of-way areas. Staff also provides detailed maintenance and repairs to all park structures and amenities including restroom buildings, picnic shelters, drinking fountains, playgrounds, irrigation and lighting systems, picnic tables, park benches, landscape beds and stone planters. Specialized care is provided to Uptown Normal, the David S. Anderson Aquatic Facility, the Fairview Family Aquatic Center, the Connie Link Amphitheatre, and the Champion Fields ball diamond complex. The Park Maintenance staff provides attention to many other facilities including the Maxwell Park Disc Golf Course, the Fairview Skate Park, the One Normal Plaza in-line hockey rink, all athletic fields, tennis and basketball courts, two community gardens and two off-leash dog parks.

The Park Maintenance staff provides support to the Children’s Discovery Museum, the Normal Theater, the Community Activity Center, the Normal Public Library and the Immanuel Bible Foundation at the Broadview Mansion. Maintenance staff also provides support for recreation, athletic and aquatic programs, Uptown festivals and special events, and for other projects and events within the community. Staff is responsible for snow and ice removal operations at various parking lots and municipal properties, including the removal of snow from the Constitution Trail. Staff provides operational and preventative maintenance and repairs to pool mechanical equipment and pumps at the aquatic centers. Over the winter months, staff performs preventative maintenance and needed repairs to the entire fleet of mowers, trucks, tractors, utility vehicles, trailers and other park maintenance equipment.

The Park Maintenance horticulture and forestry staff emphasizes urban beautification, landscape improvements, and professional tree and plant care within the Town. Horticulture crews design, plant and maintain over one hundred landscape beds throughout the community including the Uptown area. In 2019, forestry crews pruned 460 trees in park areas and along Town streets. Crews also removed 612 trees throughout the Town. During the spring and fall months, staff planted 268 trees in Town parks, along street right-of-way areas and on the Ironwood Golf Course.
ACCOMPLISHMENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- Painted the interior and exterior of the **Fairview Family Aquatic Center**, updated the facility information and directional signage and installed new exterior landscape plant material.
- Installed a **new pool water heater** at the Fairview Family Aquatic Center.
- Constructed a playhouse resembling a **post office at Safety Town** in Carden Park.
- Installed an additional **tee-ball field** in Carden Park with an infield dirt mix, side perimeter fencing and player benches.
- Replaced the composite shingle **dugout roofs** at the Champion Fields Complex with steel panel roofing material.
- Laser graded fields #5-8 at **Champion Fields** to improve playability after rain events and top-dressed with Diamond Pro Red infield conditioner.
- Due to overly wet spring conditions, an analysis of turf conditions was completed at Champion Fields. A **turf management plan** was implemented incorporating aeration, sand, lime and gypsum into the soil and turf.
- Constructed a batting cage at the **Oak Street Ball Field**.
- Installed a **turf irrigation system** to the outfield area of the David S. Anderson Park ball diamond.
- Through the Living Tribute Program, parks benches with mounted **recognition memorial plaques** were installed and dedicated in park areas and along the Constitution Trail.
- Forestry crews installed **seasonal light pole banners and holiday tree lighting** throughout Uptown.
- Two trees were planted at the **Broadview Mansion**, dedicated as part of the Arbor Day festivities.
- Made improvements to the Towanda, Vernon and Sister City Gardens area of the **Constitution Trail** that included removing brush and foreign growth, rebuilding/repairing retaining walls and constructing new wooden protection railings.
- Constructed a **greenhouse for tropical plant storage** behind the Ironwood Golf Course Maintenance Barn.
- Added **aerators** to the Park West pond and the Northtown Road west pond to **help improve water quality and maintain safe oxygen levels**.
- Park Maintenance staff **assisted with many community events** during the year, including: Rock the Block, Make Music Normal, Special Olympics Street Dance, 4th of July at Fairview Park, Sugar Creek Arts Festival, Sweet Corn Circus, Day of Play, Medici Oktoberfest, Halloween Haunted Trail and Uptown Holiday Santa Station.

**Urban Canopy (Tree Stats)**
- 460 Pruned
- 612 Removed
- 268 Planted

**20th Straight Year**
Tree City USA Community
IRONWOOD GOLF COURSE MAINTENANCE

The 2019 golf season was another great season for Ironwood Golf Course Maintenance. Golf course staff includes the Park Supervisor, Maintenance Specialist and Irrigation and Spray Technician. There are also seven part-time staff for nine months of the season. The golf course staff is responsible for daily mowing and grooming of 120 acres. Greens are maintained between .110 and .135 of an inch and also rolled 3-4 times per week; tees and fairways are maintained at 5/8”, and primary roughs are mowed at 2 ½-3”.

Ironwood Golf Course is surrounded by an additional 80 acres of native fescue grass. The native grass areas have added a challenge for the golfers while providing a distinct character to the golf course. From an agronomical perspective, these areas require less pesticides and less mowing which allows staff to focus efforts in our other more manicured areas. Ironwood Golf Course has continued to improve its overall condition over the past years. With these improvements and the other daily maintenance practices that staff implemented this season, Ironwood and the Town of Normal will continue to provide great playing conditions every day.

Much like 2018, the start of the 2019 golf season was very slow - it snowed in mid-April. It was one of the wettest springs in recent memory. Many of the agronomic practices planned in the spring were postponed due to rain. There were some areas of the golf course we could not mow for several weeks.

Summer was more normal. Staff removed flower beds on the golf course and installed concrete pads. New signage was installed on the pads and new benches on the par 3 holes. The result is a much cleaner and cohesive look, all while reducing the maintenance around the tee areas. Staff installed aerator fountains for ponds on the golf course. Two fountains were installed in the pond on hole 14, and one larger fountain on the 5th hole.

Golfers are looking for affordable options, yet they do not want to sacrifice on course quality. Ironwood is affordable and the conditions are in line with other much higher-priced golf courses in this area. As Ironwood maintains conditions at the high level that golfers have become familiar with, and consistently adds new and improved practices to the golf course, it gets the attention of the golfing community. The ongoing capital improvements at the course, and goals set at Ironwood, continue to push the maintenance staff to provide the best playing conditions possible year after year. Ironwood is one of the most desired courses to play in the Bloomington-Normal area and the Golf Maintenance staff is committed to keeping it that way.
ACCOMPLISHMENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- Installed **new signage and benches** on the golf course for a more cohesive and cleaner look on the golf course. The concrete has allowed us to reduce maintenance to those areas, so that we can focus more on the golf course.
- **Staff installed fountains** on the ponds at Ironwood, increasing the aesthetic value, but also helping mix oxygen into the ponds to improve the quality of the water.
- Staff installed stop signs and other signage on the course to help make the golfers more aware to be cautious while crossing the roads in the subdivision.
- Staff **removed years of debris and sediment** from some of the ditches in Ironwood. This allowed for better water flow and allowed other playing surfaces to dry faster.
- Due to the **Emerald Ash Borer infestation**, all of the Ash trees on the golf course have been removed and many of the stumps have been removed as well. Golf course staff will continue to replace trees for the foreseeable future in order to re-establish the tree population on the course with many different varieties of trees. Some of these include maples, oaks, elms, and bald cypress.

**Practice Areas**
- Driving Range – accommodates 75+ golfers
- Putting Green – 6,000 square ft.
- 7-Hole Short Course – 30 to 70-yard distances

**Course Breakdown**
- 120 Acres – Mowing & Grooming
- 80 Acres – Native Fescue Grass
IRONWOOD GOLF COURSE

The Golf Course Division is responsible for the administration of all operations related to Ironwood Golf Course, a Roger Packard Design which utilizes large areas of fescue grasses and maturing trees to shape the course. These operations include round play, golf tournaments and outings, driving range, clubhouse rentals, lessons, junior play and a concessions area. Ironwood serves as the host course for high school and university golf teams, and nine golf leagues.

The Division employs two full-time positions including a Manager/Golf Pro and an Assistant Clubhouse Manager. Approximately 12-part time seasonal staff work at the pro shop.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- **Revenues** at Ironwood Golf Course in 2019 reached **$730,000**, a majority being green fees and cart rental fees. As area golf courses adjusted rates, Ironwood continued to offer the same excellent value on greens fees, season pass options and frequent player cards.

- **Junior Golf** at Ironwood Golf Course continued to have high participation levels with a total of **210 juniors** for 2019. These juniors participated in one or more of the programs offered: junior high golf, junior golf clinics, intro to junior golf and new in 2019: winter clinics. Ironwood leads one of the largest junior golf programs in the area.

- Ironwood Golf Course has been selected as one of the ‘Best Places to Play’ by voters, according to local media outlets. These high standards have led to Ironwood Golf Course being awarded a **USGA qualifier** location for USGA Amateur Championship and **C.D.G.A. qualifiers** for Illinois State Amateur and Mid–Amateur.

- Ironwood was host to several local fundraisers, including the MARC First, Boys and Girls Club, Pan-Can and Golf for a Cure events. Ironwood is also host to one of the largest Jr. Golf Tournaments in the country, in the **State Farm Youth Classic**.

- Ironwood continued with the junior high golf league for Bloomington/Normal. A total of **7 junior highs** participated in the five-week spring season. Ironwood also hosted **all eight golf teams from Unit 5**, and both the men’s and women’s golf teams from **Illinois Wesleyan University**.

- Ironwood Clubhouse is utilized 12 months a year for meetings, rehearsals, receptions, birthday parties and golf outings. **Ironwood Clubhouse** hosted **82 events** throughout the year.

21,750 Rounds
Rounds of Play

67 Outings
Golf Outings & Tournaments
AQUATICS

The Aquatics Division provides visitors opportunities to experience outstanding aquatic facilities at Fairview Family and Anderson Aquatic Center. Aquatics offers recreational swimming, a swim team, water aerobics, swim lessons, private rentals and birthday parties during the summer months, as well as a strong swim lesson program for the winter months at our Unit 5 high schools.

The Aquatics Division also certifies lifeguard candidates who are employed with Normal Parks and Recreation and surrounding area facilities.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- Fairview Family Aquatic Center was host to 61,361 visitors during the 2019 season, while Anderson Aquatic Center had 28,883 visitors.
- Lifeguard Certification Courses (and re-certification courses) were held at Normal Community High School in March and April. Staff certified 97 lifeguards with Jeff Ellis and Associates program during the 2019 season.
- Swim Lessons were offered at Fairview and Anderson Aquatic Centers, and at Normal Community West and Normal Community High Schools.
- Aquacise classes and Lap Swimming were offered again at Fairview Family Aquatic Center. Total attendance for all Aqua Fitness programs was 626.
- The Normal Parks Swimmin’ Sharks hosted six home swim meets at Anderson Aquatic Center. The Sharks ended the 2019 season with just one loss!
- On June 8 and 9 the State of Illinois Special Olympics athletes and families were in town for the state games. More than 500 athletes, coaches, and their families were welcomed to Fairview to swim all day. Athletes and coaches were admitted free of charge. A total of 332 athletes visited.
- The 4th of July $1 Early Bird swim continued as 170 visitors were in attendance.
- Parent’s Night Out, kids-only pool parties were continued at Anderson Aquatic Center. The Hawaiian Luau theme had 11 participants. The Christmas in July themed party had 16 participants. Children enjoyed dinner, supervised play time in the 2 main pools while listening to music and playing themed games.
- The 4th annual Penny Plunge was hosted on July 16th and included a presenting sponsor Mid-Illini Credit Union. Over 20,000 pennies and $1 coins were dropped into the pool, and over 50 youth participants were on hand to dive for coins and special prizes.
- Hosted inaugural Superhero Day at FFAC on July 13. The themed day was included with admission to the pool. It included a photo area, games, giveaways and special guests!

2,688 Participants
NPRD Swim Lessons

90,244 Visitors
Total Visitors to AAC & FFAC
BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Before & After School Program provides students with recreational, educational, and social opportunities in a safe environment. Students enjoy playground and gym time, recreation activities, games, crafts, and free time to work on homework. The program is offered at eight Unit 5 elementary school sites in Normal. The school sites include Colene Hoose, Fairview, Glenn, Grove, Oakdale, Parkside, Prairieland and Sugar Creek. The program meets in each school site’s gyms and multipurpose rooms.

The Before School Program meets 6:45-7:30 a.m. and the After School Program meets 2:30-5:30 p.m. The Late Start Day Program occurs on Unit 5 Late Start Days (typically twice per month) and run from 6:45-8:30 a.m. Time Out, Winter, Spring Break and Summer Programs were offered throughout the school year.

The Recreation Supervisor, Assistant Recreation Supervisor and 85 part-time staff oversee the program. Volunteers assisted from ISU’s Education Department and Normal Community High School’s Business Club. ISU’s Kinesiology and Recreation Department provided student volunteers and student-led group projects throughout the year.

The program partners with community groups through coordinated on-site programs, including the Children’s Discovery Museum and Normal Public Library. These groups provide learning opportunities for students and allow them to experience something exciting and new.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- **Time Out Programs were offered on 21 days** that Unit 5 was not in session. First-time field trips included Sky Zone, Tanner’s Orchard, and Wildlife Prairie Park. An on-site field trip was offered that included laser-tag and an interactive challenge activity.
- **Time Out Programs were offered during Summer Break.** There were **148 participants** that were enrolled in the week-long program. The **Winter Break Time Out Program was also offered on 4 days**, and **200 participants** were enrolled.
- Students in the After School Program participated in **on-site field trips** with a few of the local sports mascots, Zumba Jr. for Kids, and programming from the Children’s Discovery Museum and Normal Public Library.
- **A total of 2,868 students were enrolled** in the Before/After School Program during the 2019 calendar year.

**Quote from Participant:** “I have fun at the after-school program. I get to see my friends, and we have fun playing games in the gym every day. My favorite game is Capture the Flag!” – Youth, Age 7
PERFORMING ARTS

The Performing Arts division is responsible for performing arts programs, day camps, management of the Connie Link Amphitheatre and Safety Town at Carden Park. Connie Link encompasses summer theatre programs, concerts, and the outdoor Dress Up movies. New additions include adult dance programs and new rental opportunities at Connie Link.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

A new cooking class the first week of June instructed by our local high school Culinary Arts teacher. The class was a ‘No Bake’ class since we don’t have a facility with a culinary kitchen. The program was a success meeting its maximum participation of 15. Due to the program’s success, cookie decorating classes were started for youth and offered in October and December with a total of 22 participants. Plans are to continue seasonal cookie decorating classes as well as expanding the summer cooking classes.

The Tiny Tumblers program remains a popular offering for winter, fall and summer sessions for those 3-4 years of age. It had 4 full classes that meet on a weekday or Saturday morning. The summer weekday classes meet at a Unit 5 elementary and the Saturday class meets at the CAC. All sessions totaled 50 participants. The Summer Gymnastics program is still seeing promising participation numbers with an increase from last summer to 48 participants.

The Argentine Tango program continues successfully throughout the year with classes being offered in the fall, winter and summer. There were 42 registered participants an increase from last year to 68 that took advantage of the drop-in option. The adult ballroom dance program, Let’s Bring Back Dance, meets on Tuesday nights at the CAC and highlights a different type of dance each month. There are also social dances each month at the CAC or the Lafayette Club. The CAC hosted 5 social dances in 2019.

The Youth Dance program has several of the classes seeing their maximum participation. New dance programs and instructors were introduced including Lyrical/Contemporary, Youth Tap and Jazz. There is a fall, winter and summer session of the program as well as a few week-long camps during the summer. The fall and winter sessions feature a family open house where the participants and the instructor get to showcase their hard work and talents. Refreshments after are a must and enjoyed by all those attending. Participation included: Heel to Toe – 47, Creative Movement – 20, Pre-Ballet – 16, Ballet 1 – 19, Tap – 10, Hip Hop – 47 and Jazz – 5. We continue to offer the Adult Beginner and Intermediate Tap classes during the fall, winter and summer and this year we had 33 participants.

The parent/child programs Let’s Dance and Tumble with Me remain a popular choice and will continue to be offered three seasons - fall, winter and summer. The total number of kids enrolled this past year was 75 – plus all the parents.
The Circus Birthday Parties have remained popular with a total of six parties (no parties are available during May – August). Our unique Circus Arts program with partners Cirquemania continues with a total of 22 participants during winter, spring and fall sessions.

**DAY CAMPS**

The three summer day camps continue to meet the maximum participation for a total of 240 youth. Officer Leipold from the Normal Police Department made his annual visit to talk to the campers about bullying issues and how to be a good kid. The McLean County Disaster Services also made a visit to each of the camps and provided educational materials and activities. The summer day camps as well as the other outdoor summer programs continue to be a bigger challenge due to recent changes in the weather pattern. Most of the day camps have an alternate indoor space secured but those continue to be increasingly difficult to obtain and use due to space issues. Fairview Day camp had three different weather related indoor locations this summer - Oakdale and Prairieland schools and the Community Activity Center. Staff member Bryan Koch introduced disc golf to the Maxwell Day campers and then held a disc golf league during the duration of summer camp.

New art camp Picasso in the Park was offered the first week of June in Underwood Park. It was a Monday- Friday camp, with early drop off at 7:00am and continued through 3:00pm. The staff introduced various types of art and the 15 children enjoyed their art projects as well as two afternoons at Anderson Pool and free play. The new camp was deemed a success and will be offered again next summer.

**CONNIE LINK AMPHITHEATRE**

The outdoor Dress Up Movies program continues to be a fun and unique experience for children, their parents as well as other grown-ups. The May movie was cancelled due to weather but rescheduled at no extra cost for May 2020. Additional movies in July, August and September while continuing to schedule around Summer Theatre’s stage presence. The indoor movies at the Normal Theater are a popular choice since weather is not an issue. Out of the six outdoor movies, Boss Baby had over 110 attendees and The Grinch in November ended up being a full house at 350+.
High School Summer Theatre performed Mamma Mia! and How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying. The outdoor elements were not kind this summer with 4 of the 16 shows being cancelled due to rain and heat, resulting in lower attendance than the previous seasons at 3,168. Excited for the new parking lot in Underwood Park opening next summer, as that will provide great relief for crowds of 400-plus.

The Children’s Theatre program continues to be a popular choice for 2nd–8th graders with both sessions meeting their new maximum of 40 participants, an increase from last summer. The shows in 2019 were Frozen, Jr. and Freaky Friday. The first two weeks of each session still work best indoors at the CAC, and the last two weeks of the sessions are held at the Connie Link Amphitheatre. The group performed for one of the Terrific Tuesday dates and used it as a dress rehearsal. There were also performances held in the evening.

The summer Sounds of the Connie Link Amphitheatre Concert Series continues to be popular from a performer’s perspective. There are more groups that would like to perform than the facility can schedule in a season. New groups continue to rave about the facility and are thankful for the opportunity to perform. Some of the new groups on the schedule this summer were: Rocky Ford Rounders and Unfinished Business. Adam Larson, accomplished saxophonist, held his annual indoor performance at the Normal Theater. A few local favorites performed to big number audiences: Biscuits-N-Gravy (150) and Brass Band of Central Illinois (225). Rocky Ford Rounders, Turas and Heartland Jazz Orchestra, The Bygones and Retro Fit all performed to 100+.

The very popular Terrific Tuesdays program continued at the Connie Link Amphitheatre. A lot of preschools, day cares and young families are able to come to a one-hour long, free performance throughout the summer. The Twin City Tale Spinners continue to bring their storytellers to the program during the month of June. Julie K, Big Music for Little Hearts, remains to be a regular visitor from Peoria. The Children’s Theatre program held a dress rehearsal on July 30th. Penelope Pirate & Friends and Cirquemania were great additions on July 9 and July 23.

SAFETY TOWN

Safety Town now has its very own Normal Post Office to join the Hospital and Normal Police Station. The talented Park Maintenance staff desined and fabricated the post office over the winter. The facility continues to entertain local preschoools, day care centers and individual’s birthdays. There were 8 organizational rentals, 4 birthday parties and 3 private rentals. Visits to Fire Station #3 and the visit from Police Officers Dobson, Street and Zabukovec continue to be a big hit with the children.
ADULT SPORTS & FITNESS

The Adult Sports and Fitness Supervisor coordinates sports league play, adult fitness programs, and scheduling of all ballfields including Champion Fields. In addition, the position coordinates several sports trips throughout the year. Recent division additions include new fitness formats and pickleball programs.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

Softball Leagues are offered in the summer and fall. Summer leagues hosted 44 teams in 7 leagues across men’s recreation, co-ed and church leagues. Fall leagues consist of men’s recreation and co-rec with 24 overall teams. Fall leagues began after Labor Day and continued through early October.

Soccer League was offered in the fall. This 7-on-7 league comprised of 10 teams playing games at Champion Fields on a 40 x 70-yard field.

Winter Drop-In Basketball is held November – March two nights a week; Wednesdays at Sugar Creek and Thursdays at Kingsley Jr. High. Participants pay $2.00 per night to play pick-up games of basketball.

Fitness Classes are offered throughout the year at the CAC. Classes include: POUND, Total Body Blast, PiYo, Zumba, Yoga, and Vinyasa Heart-Beat. Nearly 700 fitness registrations - over half receiving a senior discount!

Five baseball trips were offered in St. Louis, Chicago and Milwaukee.

Pickleball continues to be one of the fastest growing sports, as evidenced by the constant play at Ironwood Courts. According to John Lutes, B-N Pickleball Club member, the Ironwood courts are known to be some of the premier outdoor courts in central Illinois – “Tournament quality”. Starting in 2020, the Department will sponsor “Play Day” tournaments over 3 holiday weekends.

CHAMPION FIELDS COMPLEX

Champion Fields continued to be very busy during the spring, summer and early fall. The highlight of the summer was hosting the USA Softball 12A Nationals July 22-27, along with 12 other weekend tournaments. The larger tournaments included BNGSA Field of Dreams (80 teams), BNGSA Firecracker (68 teams), BNBA Renegades Baseball 12U (42 teams), USA Softball State (42 teams), and IESA State with over 4,000 in attendance!

Champion Fields Concessions also experienced a busy and profitable year. The stands were open mid-April through early October. Sales exceeded $125,000. A total of 30 part-time staff worked throughout the summer.

“BNGSA’s partnership with Champion Fields and Normal Parks and Rec is a very healthy one and an integral part of what makes the tournaments we host together a positive experience for everyone involved.”

- Mike Egenes, BNGSA Travel Coordinator
YOUTH SPORTS & TEEN PROGRAMS

The Teen and Youth Sports division is comprised of teen, youth and facility responsibilities. Teen trips and a summer camp are coordinated as well as youth sports programs. Youth sports programs are developed throughout all seasons, including the recent introductions of pickleball, wrestling and chess. This position also oversees the Community Activity Center schedule and rentals, in addition to all soccer practice reservations.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

The *Biddy Ball, Youth and Jr. High Basketball* programs for boys and girls in K–8th grades had 185 players participating. The Department is partnering with the Jr. NBA program for 2020.

*Pee Wee All Sports* is an introduction to sports program for 3-5 year olds. This past year we had 117 participants. The young people experienced baseball, soccer, hockey, track and field, basketball, and football.

Normal and Bloomington partner to offer the *Safe Sitter Babysitting Certification Course*, offered six times during the year. This course teaches babysitting skills to students 11-15 years old. Forty students registered through Normal for the program.

*Fencing* continues to serve as a niche sporting opportunity for children. The program takes place at the Community Activity Center. The program had 37 participants over three sessions in 2019.

*Learn to Ride* is a horseback riding program with a partnership with a local farm. In addition to riding, participants learned to groom, saddle and bridle a horse. The program filled within days of registration opening. We had 86 youth participate in the second-year program over three weekends.

The *MLB Pitch, Hit & Run* was hosted at the Corn Crib on May 5th. The free competition is broken down by age group and into softball and baseball divisions. Participants are awarded for hitting the baseball the furthest, throwing the most strikes and running the bases the fastest. We had 50-plus youth try their hand at advancing to the regional competition.

The *Youth Soccer* program for ages 3-8 had over 230 participants during the spring and fall sessions. Our partnership with Illinois Fire Juniors brought in an additional 250-plus participants for summer. A total of almost 500 participants!

The *Wee Ball, T-Ball and Pre Ball* programs were offered for children ages 3-8, with 263 youths taking advantage of the programs. The addition of a second skinned field at Carden Park will be an important addition for summer 2020!

*C.O.B.R.A. (Children Outside Being Really Active)*, for boys and girls in 2nd-5th grades, gave kids the chance to be active outside for 2 ½ hours twice a week during the summer. This summer we had 43 participants in the program.
The Parks and Recreation Department offers a full-day summer camp for teenagers called **Teen Adventure Camp** for students entering 7th-10th grades. The camp is divided into three, three-week sessions and is based out of the Community Activity Center. The camp had 114 participants!

**Youth Pickleball** returned for the second summer, while **Youth Tennis** was taught at four different levels. The programs had 74 total participants, a drop from the previous year.

Children participated in running, biking, and swimming in this year’s **Intro to Triathlon**. 29 children ages 5-12 competed in the one-day event that took place at Anderson Aquatic Center and Chiddix Jr. High plus three training dates.

The Parks and Recreation Department offers **Youth Volleyball** programs in the fall. Age levels include a K-1st introductory clinic, plus leagues in the 2nd-3rd, 4th-5th, and 6th-8th grade divisions. Volleyball had 128 participants this year.

**Lacrosse 101** is an introduction to the sport of lacrosse for children ages 6-13. NPRD partners with the Bloomington-Normal Warriors Lacrosse club. The program had 17 children participate in the six-week session.

**Little Iron Wrestling’s** second year program for children in grades K-4. It is a partnership with Unit 5 and Normal Community wrestling coaches. The program had 27 participants.

A recent partnership with an **SAT prep course** was developed in 2018 and continues to evolve now that the SAT is now the required test by the Illinois State Board of Education.

**COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTER**

The **Community Activity Center** had another busy year. The building was host to a variety of NPRD programs - adult fitness classes, youth ballet and dance classes, fencing and chess to name just a few. Aside from hosting numerous internal programs, the facility is home to Heartland Theatre and hosted various outside groups. The Penguin Project, a special needs theater group, used the Community Activity Center as a rehearsal space in the Spring. The facility hosted elections, baby showers, wedding receptions, fundraisers, birthday parties, retirement parties and wrestling events. The building continues to receive minor aesthetic upgrades that make it more attractive for potential renters.

---

### Learn to Ride
- Participation Increase: +478%

### “To the Max” 2K
- Registration Increase: 150 → 248
SPECIAL EVENTS PROGRAMMING

The Special Event division coordinates a series of holiday-themed events throughout the year. Current events include Haunted Trail during Halloween, Christmas-themed programs, and our Easter Egg Hunt. We hosted our 2nd Annual Obstacle Course Race in 2019 as well. Volunteer recruitment is paramount to the success of these events.

ACCOMPLishments

The Town of Normal Easter Egg Hunt welcomed over 2,400 people to The Corn Crib on April 6th. Over 30,000 Easter eggs were scattered over the field during four different egg hunts. The Doggie Easter Egg Hunt, a partnership with Bloomington-Normal Jaycees, hosted over 100 dogs!

The 2nd annual Obstacle Course Run was a success, and had a dozen sponsors for the “To the Max” event. The 2K race had 248 people compete and included 15 obstacles. The race was held on September 15 at Maxwell Park, and utilized Dust2Glory Fitness as an event partner.

Fourth of July activities were hosted at both Fairview Family Aquatic Center and Anderson Aquatic Center, with over 2,000 in attendance. The Early Bird Swim and “Proud to be an American” themed day continued to impress with over 160 people.

The Haunted Trail event ran on October 10-12 for Non-Scary and 18-19 for Scary weekend due to ISU’s late homecoming. Over 6,000 people attended over the 5 nights with features including an activity area, meet and greet, and crafts. We had over 383 volunteers. Canned goods were again accepted in lieu of admission fees for the first weekend, and attendees donated 2,372 pounds.

Phone Calls from Santa were held on December 10 and 12. This event was offered free of charge to residents. Local volunteers were utilized to help make phone calls to children. Volunteers called over 125 children in two nights.

Breakfast with Santa was held on December 7 & 8 at the Community Activity Center. Activities included a Santa’s Workshop station with crafts, custom “Make Your Own Reindeer Food” station, create your own ornament, new décor, and a new holiday backdrop for group Christmas Carols and photo opportunities. In total, 139 participants registered.

Total 2019 Participation: 9,217