



Howard County

RECREATION & PARKS

ANNUAL REPORT 2016

live. work. play.

FROM THE DIRECTOR



It is my pleasure to present to you the annual report for fiscal year 2016.

This fiscal year we began two important processes: one that cement our status as a leading recreation & parks agency and another that charts our future over the next decade. We began the process of being re-accredited through CAPRA and are working to develop our Land Preservation, Parks, & Recreation Plan, which will be completed in 2017.

CAPRA recognizes park and recreation agencies for excellence in operation and service. Only 141 recreation & parks agencies in the nation are CAPRA accredited. The Land Preservation, Parks, & Recreation Plan is a comprehensive plan that guides our department forward in all aspects, from conservation to recreation.

I firmly believe that the work our staff does in parks, recreation services, and natural resources makes our department easy to support. It never ceases to amaze me the wide range of

services we perform. Our staff manages more than 9,000 acres of parkland, and in this fiscal year ran 7,020 programs and camps. Our staff is enhancing natural areas by removing invasive species. They are preserving the history of our county in the 25 historic sites we manage. They are providing excellent child care services in many of Howard County's elementary and middle schools. They execute large-scale events such as the July 4th Festival and Fireworks and Wine in the Woods.

I encourage you to look through this report to learn about our diverse offerings and the community we serve. It is my honor to lead this department and the excellent staff that makes Howard County a great place to live, work and play.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John R. Byrd".

John R. Byrd
Director
Howard County Recreation & Parks



Howard County

RECREATION & PARKS

7120 Oakland Mills Road
Columbia, Maryland 21046

County Executive: Allan H. Kittleman
Director: John R. Byrd

FY2016 Advisory Board

Joel Goodman (Chair)
Sylvia Ramsey (Vice Chair)
John R. Byrd (Executive Secretary)
Cynthia Vaillancourt (Board of Education)
David Brown (Board of Education)
William Santos (Planning Board)
Thomas Franklin
Joanne Kiebler
Daniel Tracy
Michael Smith (Student)

MISSION STATEMENT

Mission

To responsibly manage natural resources; provide excellent parks, facilities, and recreation opportunities for the community; and ensure the highest quality of life for current and future generations.



Vision

The Department of Recreation & Parks strives to deliver recreation and leisure opportunities that will improve the health and well-being of the community and to serve as model stewards of the environment by managing, protecting, and conserving our resources for a sustainable future.



Core Values

- Exceptional Customer Service
- Professionalism
- Accountability
- Knowledgeable, Well-trained Staff
- Teamwork
- Integrity
- Trend-Setting



ACCREDITATION

Howard County Recreation & Parks is accredited through the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA). To achieve accreditation, the Department was required to meet 144 standards encompassing all operations contained in leisure services. These professional standards serve as an aid for improving performance and maintaining quality. They provide park and recreation agencies with an ability to evaluate their operation, while achieving and maintaining a level of efficiency and effectiveness. Howard County Recreation & Parks achieved accreditation in 2001 and re-accreditation in 2006 and 2012. Howard County Recreation & Parks is one of only 141 accredited agencies in the United States.

CAPRA recognizes park and recreation agencies for excellence in operation and service. Charged with providing high quality services and experiences, park and recreation agencies across the United States turn to CAPRA Accreditation as a credible and efficient means of achieving these goals, while providing assurance to the public that the agency meets national standards of best practice. CAPRA accredits departments and agencies that provide park and recreation programs and services.





Howard County
RECREATION & PARKS

live

work

play

GOALS FY2016

1 Complete the 2017 Land Preservation, Parks & Recreation Plan

Objectives:

- 1) Select a consultant to research and manage the project. ✓
- 2) Conduct a thorough needs analysis of county residents. ✓
- 3) Conduct public meetings to solicit resident input. ✓
- 4) Complete the Plan by July 2017. ✓

2 Expand Partnerships with other government and private entities to enhance program opportunities

Objectives:

- 1) Work closely with the Howard County Public School System to expand youth sports opportunities in Columbia elementary and middle schools for baseball, volleyball, and basketball. ✓
- 2) Seek sponsorships and naming opportunities from private corporations as an alternate source of funding for capital and operating budgets. ✓

3 Improve the Department's fiscal status in the SSF

Objectives:

- 1) Audit the Department fee structure across the board to determine if we are competitive with other service providers. ✓
- 2) Maximize opportunities for sporting events at turf fields. ✓
- 3) Enact auditors recommendations for managing the SSF. ✓

4 Secure management contract for Timbers at Troy Golf Course

Objective:

- 1) Select a qualified management company and negotiate a contract that will relieve the county's financial burden for the operation of the course. ✓

5 Begin Phase 3 for Blandair Park, Phase 2 for Troy Park, and design East Columbia Library Park. ✓



At GreenFest in April, the Department held its first of three public meetings to develop the Land Preservation, Parks & Recreation Plan. Additional meetings were held in July and September of FY17.



Blandair Park Phase 3 includes the maintenance building, an accessible playground, a backyard games area, shelter and restrooms.

GOALS FY2017

1 Complete and implement the 2017 Land Preservation, Parks & Recreation Plan

Objectives:

- 1) Share data with public and staff in a transparent format.
- 2) Review and incorporate needs assessment data.
- 3) Review and strategize Community Inventory of Programs and Parks.
- 4) Review and incorporate User Demand and Trend Analysis data into programming and facility management.

2 Expand Partnerships with other government and private entities to enhance program opportunities

Objectives:

- 1) Expand special events and general programming options in 10 core areas.
- 2) Seek sponsorships and naming opportunities from private corporations as an alternate source of funding for capital and operating budgets.

3 Improve the Department's revenue and fee fiscal status

Objectives:

- 1) Continue to review and assess revenue and fee policy with levels of need.
- 2) Determine if we are competitive with other service providers.
- 3) Explore opportunities for sporting events at turf fields.
- 4) Focus on funding alternatives for Therapeutic and Recreation Inclusions opportunities, scholarships and special needs areas.

4 To become re-accredited through CAPRA/NRPA

Objective:

- 1) September 2017 data will confirm finalization of process.
- 2) Start process for 2021 and focus on transparency of 151 standards.

5 Complete Phase 3 for Blandair Park, Phase 2 for Troy Park, and East Columbia Library Park.

Objectives:

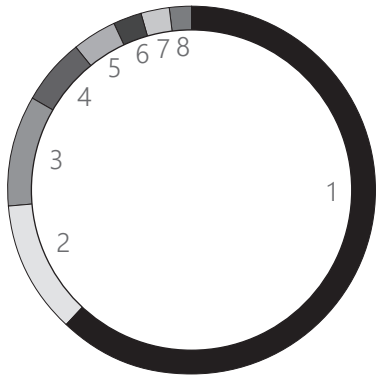
- 1) Complete design for Phase 3 of Blandair and Troy
- 2) Complete design and break ground for ECL Park



BUDGET

Total General Fund Budget

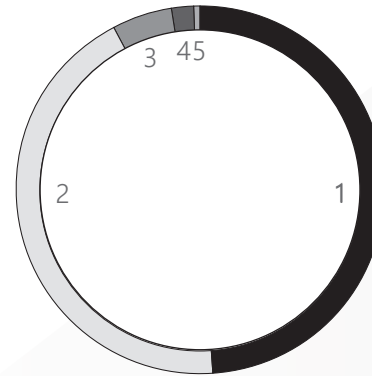
\$1,457,854,393



1	Education	59%
2	Public Safety	12%
3	Non-Department	11.9%
4	Public Facilities	6.1%
5	Community	4.5%
6	General Government	2.6%
7	Legislative / Judicial	2.6%
8	Recreation & Parks	1.3%

Recreation & Parks Budget

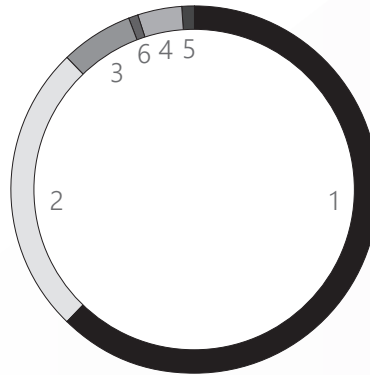
\$45,981,557



1	Park Fund	50%
2	General Fund	42.6%
3	Golf	5%
4	Forest Conservation	2.1%
5	MPEA & Grant	0.3%

Recreation & Parks Expenses

\$39,499,580



1	Salaries	62.4%
2	Contractual	25.7%
3	Supplies	6.1%
4	Fleet	3.8%
5	Other	1.1%
6	Capital	0.9%

in parks

regional parks (acres)

2,609.2

neighborhood parks (acres)

326.1

natural resources areas (acres)

1,887.3

historic places (acres)

114.5

other (acres)

26.8

open space total (acres)

3,638.3

open space approved for transfer (acres)

139.3

deeded open space (acres)

13.7

Drell property (acres)

4.0

total recreation and parks land holdings

9,390.5 acres

live

in parks



SOUTH BRANCH SKATE PARK OPENS

On June 11, the South Branch Skate Park in Sykesville opened. The 10,500-square-foot skate park, commonly referred to as Shrimp Town, is the third skate park in the Howard County Recreation & Parks' system, joining the North Laurel Skate Park and Centennial Skate Spot. The South Branch skate park was designed and constructed by Spohn Ranch. The design was finalized with input from the skating community and construction began

in October 2016. The skate park was included in the Department of Recreation & Parks' Fiscal Year 2016 capital budget; final cost was \$530,000.

Located at 350 West Friendship Road, just across the Patapsco River from downtown Sykesville, South Branch Park and the skate park is a partnership between Howard County Government and the Town of Sykesville.



HAL OBSERVATORY OPENS AT ALPHA RIDGE

The Howard Astronomical League (HAL) Observatory opened at Alpha Ridge Park on July 25. This was a partnership between Recreation & Parks, HAL, private businesses, and residents of Howard County. The structure is 18'x18' and 8 feet tall with a 15-foot diameter dome that houses the Paul S. Watson telescope, a 12-inch Newtonian telescope originally built in 1937 and restored for use today.

The observatory will also house a library with more than 250 donated books. The observatory will host monthly public star parties and Recreation & Parks will coordinate with HAL to offer additional programs.



FIND YOUR PARK

The National Park Service created the Find Your Park movement to celebrate its 100th birthday. Howard County Recreation & Parks celebrated with the "Find Your Park" booklet, which featured maps of eight of the County's parks and directions that lead visitors to a rubbing post located within each park. Don Redden of North Laurel and his grandchildren, Adam (2), Tommy (7) and Jamie (10), completed the booklet and were chosen in a random drawing to win the grand prize, camping equipment from REI.

FIND YOUR PARK

*People around America are finding their park every day.
Find yours in Howard County.*

- DISCOVER 8 OF OUR PARKS THIS SUMMER
- WIN GREAT PRIZES • GET UP, GET OUT AND GET ACTIVE
- SPEND QUALITY TIME OUTDOORS ON YOUR OWN OR WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

HOW IT WORKS

To participate, pick up a "Find Your Park" booklet to document your adventure and become eligible for prizes. Each of the eight parks included in the booklet contain a special "Find Your Park" post with a rubbing plate to document your visit to the parks. Place the corresponding park page on the plate and make a rubbing with a pencil or crayon.

GET YOUR BOOKLET

Summer Seasonal Concerts | 10000 MD 108, Ellicott City, MD 21037
 Monday-June August Booklet and Rubbing Plate Available at the Book Rack
 Howard County Recreation & Parks | 10000 MD 108, Ellicott City, MD 21037

WIN PRIZES

Any person who wins all eight parks and enters a prize drawing will be selected by our staff. Prizes include a REI camping gear prize bag and a REI prize bag. Prizes are available while supplies last.



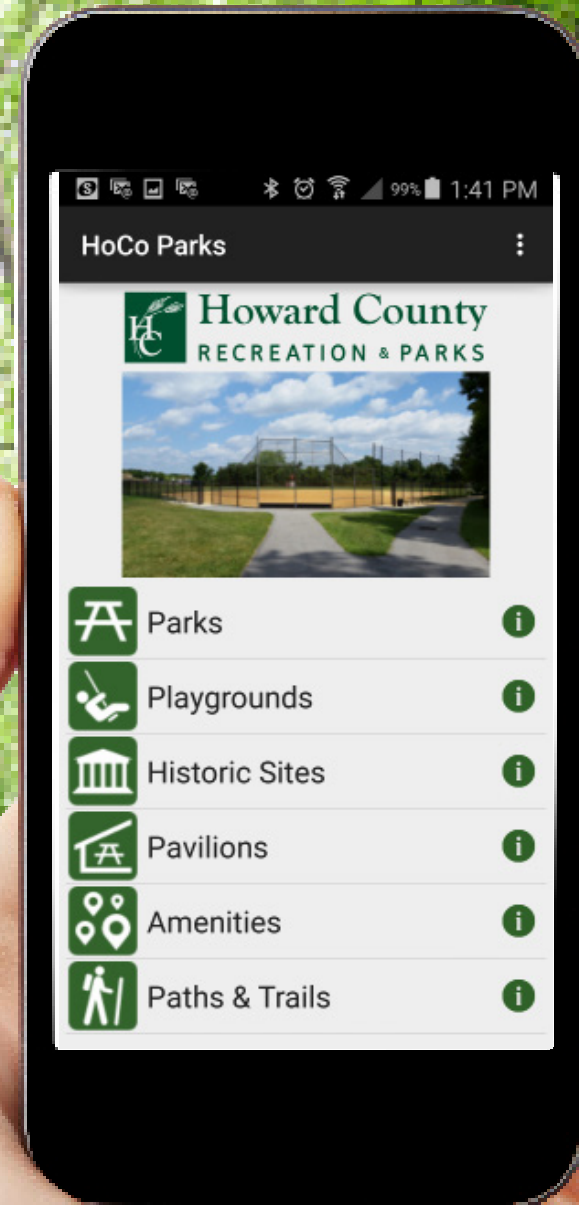
PARK APP RELEASED

In November, the Department released the HoCo Parks App, an interactive mobile app that showcases Howard County's more than 50 parks and enhances a visitor's experience with several helpful features.

Users can find in Howard County Parks...

- Nearest park or park amenity (ex: tennis or basketball courts)
- Maps & directions
- Trail lengths & elevations
- Park information
- Contact a Park Ranger
- Save your location (Apple only)

The app has received more than 1,600 downloads since its release.



live

in parks

BY THE NUMBERS

7,560 staff hours picking up loose trash and emptying trash/recycle cans in Zone 1, which has 200 cans.

43,600 pounds of recycling collected by Zone 2, an increase of more than 11,000 pounds over 2016.

12,000 square feet of sod needed to top-dress 22 athletic fields in Zone 3.

16.5 miles of stream waterways cleaned through removal of debris and log jams in Zone 4.



NEW PESTICIDE RESTRICTIONS

The Department initiated a new policy and procedure that restricts the use of neonicotinoids within the park system. Neonicotinoids are a class of insecticides related to nicotine that affect the central nervous system of insects.

Recent research suggests that pesticides that contain neonicotinoids negatively affect populations of pollinator species such as honeybees, native bees, butterflies, and other insects. Therefore, the County is taking a proactive approach by restricting their use.

pesticide usage in FY2012 (ounces)

15,218.89

pesticide usage in FY2016 (ounces)

4,554.81

a decline in usage of

70.1 %

COUNTY CHAMPION TREE SUCCUMBS TO DUTCH ELM DISEASE

The Howard County Champion at Belmont Manor & Historic Park succumbed to Dutch Elm disease and was removed in July. The tree was the second-largest English Elm in Maryland and estimated to be about 250 years old. Tests conducted by University of Maryland experts confirmed that the 95-foot tree has the disease, which does not have a cure and can be spread to other trees.

Dutch Elm Disease is caused by a fungus and is transmitted by the elm bark beetle. Since Howard County acquired the Belmont property in 2012, it has treated all elms on the property every other year as prescribed by experts. Trees can still contract the disease despite treatment.





NATURE PLACE OPENS AT RNC

The Nature Place at Robinson Nature Center opened on September 20. The Nature Place is designed to provide an area of nature exploration, discovery and adventure for children. The space features a building area, nature art area, music and movement area, large climbing log, log steppers, and underground tunnel slide. It also includes original wooden animal carvings by Columbia artist Evelyn Mogren.

The Nature Place was built by Robinson Nature Center and Recreation & Parks staff with the consultation of Nature Explore, a nonprofit specializing in outdoor classroom development. The James & Anne Robinson Foundation donated more than \$5,000 to purchase materials and natural carvings for the project.

live

history

PFI CELEBRATES ANNIVERSARIES

On September 27, the Department celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Patapsco Female Institute Historic Park and the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Friends of the Patapsco Female Institute. The event was a collaboration of Recreation & Parks and the Friends of PFI, which together have worked closely with scout troops, local garden clubs and others to provide a wide array of educational opportunities, including history tours, field trips, living history events and archaeology programs.



live

future

KITTLEMAN ACCELERATES FUNDING FOR BLANDAIR PARK

In March, County Executive Allan H. Kittleman accelerated funding for the 3rd phase of development for Blandair Park in Columbia.

The announcement was made in the 298-acre Blandair Regional Park located off Maryland Route 175 in Columbia. The \$3.25 million project, Phase 3 of a multi-year investment, will feature a "Play-for-All" playground, designed for use by children of all abilities, and include an area for back-yard games, such as bocce, croquet and horseshoes, as well as a maintenance facility serving the entire park, a dog-park, picnic shelter and restrooms.

The first phase of Blandair Regional Park, opened in 2012, contains a sports facility with three synthetic-turf, multi-purpose playing fields, a playground, restroom and pavilion. The second phase, now under construction, includes two synthetic-turf ball fields, five tennis courts and another playground and restroom. Phase 2 is expected to be complete by spring of 2017.



live

future



LAND PRESERVATION, PARKS & RECREATION PLAN UNDERWAY

The Department began seeking input from residents for its Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP), a comprehensive plan produced every five years that guides the department on key issues, trends and plans for managing and enhancing the systems of preserved public lands, parks and recreation facilities.

The first public meeting was held at GreenFest in April. Two more will occur in FY2017 and the plan is to be complete in 2017.

Producing an LPPRP is a prerequisite for Howard County's participation in Maryland's Program Open Space, which provides grants for the acquisition of land for conservation and park purposes as well as for the development of public recreation facilities. In fiscal year 2016, the county added 153 acres of land through the program, and in total manages 3,638 acres of land purchased through it.

The Department has contracted Boston-based Sasaki to assist in developing the LPPRP. Sasaki is a planning and design firm of 250 people that works locally, nationally and globally, across multiple scales. Sasaki comprises architecture, interior design, planning, urban design, landscape architecture, graphic design and civil engineering, as well as software development.

work

above & beyond

In FY 2016, the Department had 211 full-time positions (4 frozen); 74 active part-time benefitted; 940 contingent workers (an average of 455 working 40 hours/week). Of the professional staff, 17 are Certified Recreation & Parks Professionals (CPRP); 4 are American Sport Education Program certified (ASEP); and 2 are Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists (ASEP). Out of all staff 2% have 35+ years of service; 4% have 30-34 years of service; 7% have 25-29 years of service; and 4% have 20-24 years of service.

EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR

Shawnte Berry

Manager, Volunteers and Special Projects

Shawnte oversees the volunteer service that allows so many Howard County citizens the opportunity to give back to the community, become more social and part of a group, create new hobbies and build new life skills.

Bob Linz

Operations Supervisor

Bob manages construction projects for the department and is integral in making sure Wine in the Woods goes off without a hitch every year.



work

above & beyond

DIGGING OUT

In January, Howard County was hit by a historic blizzard, dropping upwards of three feet of snow in some parts of the county. Recreation & Parks employees were called into action, arranging 141 transport missions, plowing miles of roadway and clearing school sidewalks.

CLEANING UP

On June 21, Howard County was hit a tornado that stayed on the ground for 13 miles. The tornado and storm caused the most damage around Western Regional Park and the western part of the county, where Recreation & Parks employees were called to help cut down trees and clean up debris.



work

above & beyond



GIVING BACK

Led by park ranger Alvin Stewart, Recreation & Parks employees collected more than 350 toys to donate to Toys for Tots. The toys were collected at Department functions and donated by employees themselves.



Howard County unveiled a new volunteer database, making it easy for those who want to volunteer to find opportunities and register to participate. On a user's account dashboard, you can view your volunteer schedule and keep track of the hours you've spent volunteering.

Since debuting, 4,384 volunteers have registered on the website for more than 100 volunteer opportunities.

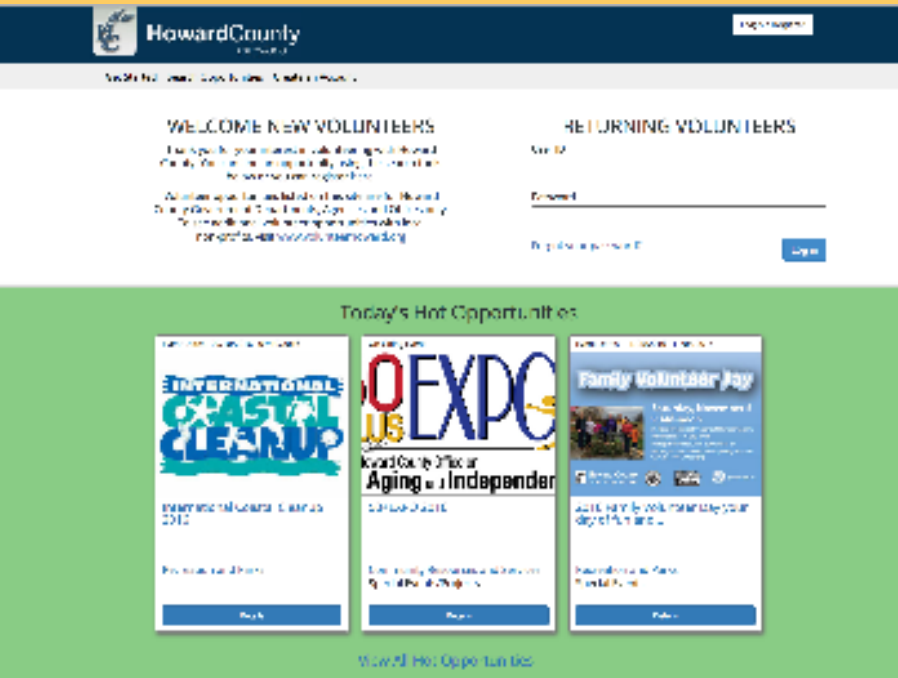


Volunteers at a Glance

In FY16, there were 3,845 volunteers who donated approximately 23,761 hours to the Howard County Department of Recreation and Park's operations, saving the department over \$559,800.91 in labor costs. These individuals and groups have enhanced Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks by donating their valuable time, skills, and resources to assist the various divisions.

Left: Jackie Zipf of the Community Knitting and Crocheting Group made a blanket specifically for a veteran at Hospice of the Chesapeake

Below: Family Volunteer Day with County Executive Allan H. Kittleman.



work

volunteers

VOLUNTEER TREE PLANTINGS

The Forestry section conducted two volunteer tree plantings during FY2016. The fall 2015 planting took place at Glen Brook open space along the Little Patuxent River and was part of the Students Branching Out II Grant. Volunteers from 'Leadership U' along with County Executive Allan Kittleman planted 175 trees along the stream to enhance the riparian (stream) buffer. The spring 2016 planting was completed by volunteers at Cedar Lane Park (East) to celebrate Earth Day. The volunteers, along with 'Miss Earth' contestants, planted 50 native trees within an existing forest conservation site that will help in reducing storm water runoff and provide tree canopy coverage.



play

at a glance

programs offered camps offered

5,800 **1,220**

filled programs/camps

1,171

participants

102,834

scholarships

\$657,371



play

spotlight



SENSORY-FRIENDLY CAMP WINS LERN INTERNATIONAL AWARD

The Sensory-Friendly Nature Explorers Mini-Camp, a summer camp designed for children with sensory issues, won the Learning Resources Network (LERN) Best Programming Award at the group's annual conference. A collaborative program between the Department's Therapeutic Recreation Division and the Robinson Nature Center, the camp was designed for children 4-8

years old with activities to accommodate their sensory needs. Camp activities engaged smell, touch, and hearing senses and encouraged frequent movement and tactile stimulation. Campers could choose different activities to meet their needs. The camp filled to capacity with 18 children and had 10 children on the waitlist.

play

spotlight

Christmas *in the Park*

The first Christmas in the Park was on December 3 at Centennial Park and attended by more than 400 people. It featured caroling, costumed characters, and a tree-lighting ceremony with County Executive Allan H. Kittleman.





In January, the Department launched the Go50+ Fitness initiative. Geared toward adults 50 and older, GO50+ combines affordability and accessibility in one membership. The membership package provides access to four fitness facilities (North Laurel, Gary J. Arthur and Roger Carter Community Centers and the Ellicott City 50+ Fitness Center) for \$75 per year. The new package includes an optional Roger Carter pool membership for an additional fee.

FY16 memberships

1,410



play

spotlight



PRISMS ARTISTS SHOW OFF THEIR ART WORK AT ROBINSON NATURE CENTER

In May, the Robinson Nature Center hosted an art display for the PRISMS program. Offered through the Department's 55+ Adult Program, PRISMS is a community-based program designed for adults of all ages with a dementia-related diagnosis. PRISMS provides participants with a safe environment where they can engage in social interactions, recreation and leisure pursuits, and maintenance of functional

abilities while providing extra support to help facilitate aging-in-place. With 11 participants currently in the program, each PRISMS session is 10 weeks long. Each session includes a visit to the Robinson Nature Center where the artwork is currently on display until Wednesday, May 18. Many of the paintings were completed after program participants visited the Nature Center, drawing inspiration from the natural world.

play

spotlight

KITTLEMAN GOES TO CAMP

Howard County Executive Allan H. Kittleman turned back the clock and attended four Recreation & Parks camps. He tickled the twine at Super Hoops Basketball; showed off his spirit at Just Cheer Camp; hit some birdies at Badminton Camp; and picked up a stick at Ultimate Sports & Games.

Kittleman promoted the importance of regular exercise and fitness, in conjunction with National Parks and Recreation Month.



FOUR INDUCTED INTO COMMUNITY SPORTS HALL OF FAME

The Community Sports Hall of Fame honors outstanding individuals who have gained prominence and/or have made a substantial contribution to community sports in Howard County. The 2015 induction class includes Clifford Crown, Todd Del Tufo, Jack Milani and Barbara Rosato.

In search of a chance to play softball, **Clifford Crown** (not pictured) answered an ad in a local newspaper seeking men for a 55-and-older pickup softball program. Soon after joining, Cliff became the organizer of the group which made its official debut in April 1994 with only 12 men. The program has grown since its early days and continues to flourish today with more than 45 participants.

In 11 years, **Todd Del Tufo** (top) has worn many hats with Howard County Vipers Wrestling Program, from coach to travel team commissioner and even president. Made up of nearly 400 wrestlers ranging in age from four to 14 years old, the Vipers provide the county's youth the opportunity to experience wrestling in a fun, structured and disciplined environment. Todd has been tireless in his leadership and commitment to the organization.

Using his charisma, perseverance and dedication, **Jack Milani** (center) has had a profound impact on the county's sports scene. He has coached, officiated, developed new programs and managed programs to make them stronger. Even before his children were involved, Jack volunteered with the Western Howard County Youth Baseball/Softball League. He is also one of the founders of the Western Howard County Warhawks, Central Maryland Football and Cheer, Mid-Maryland Youth Football and Cheer and the Greater Howard County Club Lacrosse organization. He was instrumental in lobbying for the construction of Western Regional Park and was a key player in the design and construction of Blandair Regional Park and Troy Park at Elkridge.

Thirty-five years ago, **Barbara Rosato** (bottom) stepped in to volunteer with the Western Howard County Youth Basketball program. Since then, she has served the organization in many capacities including primary leader, officer and administrative director. She has registered players, answered questions, bought and distributed uniforms, collected and deposited checks, and paid referees. With her never-ending smile and can-do attitude, she has put in tens of thousands of hours and is the programs longest-serving volunteer.



BY THE NUMBERS

	Gary J. Arthur	North Laurel	Roger Carter
Fit4U swipes	18,179	12,505	58,416
Go50+ swipes	10,273	3,372	14,456
Member swipes	26,812	22,078	5,862
Daily visit - gym	1,575	3,262	5,119
Daily visit - fitness	856	818	5,843
Total Center users	201,591	196,537	281,619
Total use (rentals, programs)	5,429	5,912	1,038



The logo is a black square containing the letters 'H' and 'C' in a stylized, white, serif font. A white leafy branch extends from the top right of the 'H' and curves over the 'C'.

Howard County
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ANNUAL REPORT 2016

Concept and Design: Seth Hoffman