



Howard
County

RECREATION & PARKS

Annual Report

JULY 1, 2019 - JUNE 30, 2020



From The Director



In my first fiscal year as Director, it has been my privilege to serve alongside our hardworking staff and volunteers during an unprecedented time in our history. From providing vital day care services to our front line workers to maintaining our parks, the department was an essential outlet for Howard County residents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response to the pandemic, Recreation and Parks created and adjusted activities, events, and facilities to keep participants and staff safe. Each program followed enhanced safety measures, including required face coverings, physical distancing, reduced class sizes, additional cleaning protocols and more.

Despite the adversity of this past year, the 2020 annual report highlights a number of impressive department accomplishments. This included the development of new online camps and activities and the completion of infrastructure improvements at Centennial Park, the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area and Troy Park.

This year's report is also a record of our department's continued growth, from Robinson Nature Center's Sensory-friendly Sundays to exciting new online recreational initiatives Howard County residents could enjoy from the comfort from home.

In these uncertain times, you can rely on the department to continue to provide the level of customer service and award-winning programming that have made us an industry leader among recreation and parks agencies across the country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Raul Delerme".

A. Raul Delerme

Director, Howard County Recreation and Parks

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Howard County Recreation and Parks
7120 Oakland Mills Road
Columbia, Maryland 21046

County Executive: Calvin Ball

Director: A. Raul Delerme

Bureau Chief of Recreation: Laura T. Wetherald

Bureau Chief of Parks: John S. Marshall

**Acting Bureau Chief of Capital Projects,
 Park Planning & Construction:** Robert E. Linz

**Bureau Chief of Administrative
 Services:** Michael H. Milani

FY2020 Advisory Board:

Sylvia Ramsey (Chair)

Edward Coleman (Vice Chair)

A. Raul Delerme (Recording Secretary)

Ryan Etter (Recording Secretary)

Mavis Ellis (Board of Education Designee)

Daryl J. Anthony

Thomas M. Franklin

David Grabowski

Joanne Kiebler

Anna Boyd (Student Member)

Mission, Vision & Core Values



Middle Patuxent Environmental Area

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 and 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



Robinson Nature Center's Nature Detectives Camp (November 2019)



CAPRA AGENCY ACCREDITATION

The Howard County Recreation and Parks Department is accredited through the Commission for Accreditation of Park & Recreation Agencies (CAPRA). To achieve accreditation, the Department was required to meet 151 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.

The department achieved accreditation in 2001 and re-accreditation in 2006, 2012 and 2017. It is one of only 174 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 for best practice.



Bocce Ball Court Ribbon Cutting Ceremony (July 2019)

COUNTY'S GENERAL FUND BUDGET:

1,738,239,441

1. Education.....	42.76%	<div style="width: 42.76%;"><div style="background-color: #0056b3; height: 10px;"></div></div>
2. Public Safety.....	16.46%	<div style="width: 16.46%;"><div style="background-color: #e67e22; height: 10px;"></div></div>
3. Non-Department.....	4.23%	<div style="width: 4.23%;"><div style="background-color: #95a5a6; height: 10px;"></div></div>
4. Public Facilities.....	17.87%	<div style="width: 17.87%;"><div style="background-color: #f1c40f; height: 10px;"></div></div>
5. Community.....	5.02%	<div style="width: 5.02%;"><div style="background-color: #0070c0; height: 10px;"></div></div>
6. General Government.....	10.45%	<div style="width: 10.45%;"><div style="background-color: #27ae60; height: 10px;"></div></div>
7. Legislative / Judicial.....	1.77%	<div style="width: 1.77%;"><div style="background-color: #000000; height: 10px;"></div></div>
8. Recreation and Parks.....	1.44%	<div style="width: 1.44%;"><div style="background-color: #8b4513; height: 10px;"></div></div>

RECREATION AND PARKS BUDGET:

\$48,875,709

1. Recreation and Parks Fund.....	45.3%	<div style="width: 45.3%;"><div style="background-color: #0056b3; height: 10px;"></div></div>
2. General Fund.....	51.2%	<div style="width: 51.2%;"><div style="background-color: #e67e22; height: 10px;"></div></div>
3. Golf.....	1.2%	<div style="width: 1.2%;"><div style="background-color: #95a5a6; height: 10px;"></div></div>
4. Forest Conservation.....	1.3%	<div style="width: 1.3%;"><div style="background-color: #f1c40f; height: 10px;"></div></div>
5. Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPEA) & Grant.....	1%	<div style="width: 1%;"><div style="background-color: #000000; height: 10px;"></div></div>

Completed Objectives



Promo Image for Park RX Program

1

Created a decision-driven committee to gather, review, analyze and share trends.

4

Department supported local pediatricians in developing Park Rx program.

2

Created a survey to identify and research the top three demographic markets by December 2019.

5

Updated inventory of existing partnerships for FY20.

3

Supported and assisted with the Harriett Tubman School development process by creating an operation plan and internal team to assist the Harriet Tubman Advisory Committee.

6

Completed construction of the new Middle Patuxent Environmental Area facility.

Completed Objectives



Pedestrian Bridge Ribbon Cutting at Centennial Park (June 2020)



7

Continued construction of Blandair Park Phase 3.

8

Continued to install sustainable bottle-filler water fountains.

10

Began South Branch Park improvements.

9

Opened Troy Park at Elkridge's fourth field.

11

Opened a new pedestrian bridge at Centennial Park.

Accomplishments



Tree Giveaway (October, 2019)



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES (NACo) AWARDS

This year, Howard County Recreation and Parks was the recipient of two awards from the National Association of Counties (NACo). The two awards were the Weekend Warrior Snack Program and Turf to Trees/Tree Giveaway programs.

The Weekend Warrior Snack Program was created to provide nutritional snack packs for food insecure children on weekends during the summer. Since 2017, 6,273 snack packs have been distributed across five locations in Howard County, with numbers increasing each year (2017-2019). In 2019, nearly 1,200 children participated. The program is administered by utilizing the existing infrastructure of the Howard County Roving Radish, which is managed by the Office of Community Sustainability.

The Turf to Trees and Trees Giveaway programs, offered in cooperation with the Office of Community Sustainability, are designed to promote tree planting among Howard County residents. The goal of Turf to Trees is to increase the overall tree canopy in the county by working with residents to plant trees on private property. Since 2015, Turf to Trees has planted 6,766 trees on approximately 34 acres of land. In the fall of 2019, Howard County held a Tree Giveaway event that resulted in 2,000 trees planted.

2021 Department Goals



Centennial Park Lake

1

Create a database with local editors and television stations to enhance our PIO and marketing efforts.

2

Research and implement ways in which Virtual eSports (eGaming) can be tied to physical activity and enhance virtual programming.

3

Develop and implement an annual Recreation and Parks' Trends Report.

THIS PARK IS PROTECTED BY



4

Expand the Department's Park Watch program to county-owned parks and trails.

5

Develop a Department social equity position statement and review the Department's core values.

REGISTRATION & SCHOLARSHIPS



Programs Offered
Fall 2019 - Summer 2020

6,908

Registrants in Classes,
Programs & Camps
Fall 2019 - Summer 2020

64,288

2020 Summer
Camp Sections

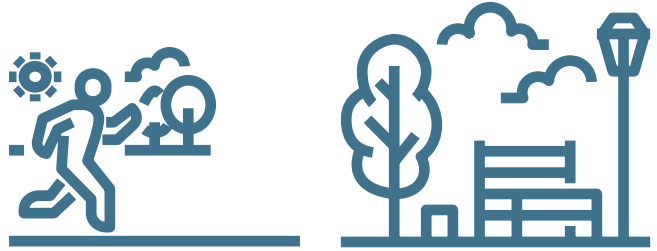
428

2020 Summer Camp &
Program Registrants

7,842

Financial Assistance Provided
Fall 2019 - Summer 2020

\$179,427



PARKS

(8) Regional Parks
(in acres)

2,609

(10) Community Parks
(in acres)

788

(12) Neighborhood Parks
(in acres)

326

Other Land Holdings
(in acres)

27

(4) Natural Resources Areas
(in acres)

1,890

(26) Historic Places
(in acres)

114

Open Space
(in acres)

3,835.59

Total Recreation and Parks
Land Holdings (in acres)

9,768.68

Numbers at a Glance



Belmont Manor & Historic Park

FACILITIES

Belmont Manor & Historic
Park Visitors

24,145

Baltimore & Ohio
Ellicott City Station
Museum Annual Visitors

22,502

Robinson Nature Center
Annual Visitors

27,208

Pavilion Permits

1,112
(\$182,253)



FACILITIES (CONTINUED)

Facility	Rentals/Reservations	Visitors
Gary J. Arthur Community Center	3,279	113,458
Kiwanis-Wallas Hall	33	12,954
Meadowbrook Athletic Complex	15	150,000
North Laurel Community Center	3,844	160,336
Roger Carter Community Center	721	300,714

Number of rentals from July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020

Number of annual visitors from July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020

*COVID-19 restrictions began in March 2020

Numbers at a Glance



Howard County Recreation and Parks

@hocorec · Government Organization

Sign Up

howardcountymd.gov

SOCIAL MEDIA



Recreation and Parks
Facebook Main Page Followers

+ 11.2%
(17,160 followers)

Belmont Manor & Historic Park
Facebook Followers

+ 28%
(1,862 followers)

B&O Ellicott City Station
Museum Facebook Followers

+ 23.4%
(2,969 followers)

@HoCoRec Instagram
Followers

+ 29.3%
(2,837 followers)

@HoCoRec Twitter
Followers

+ 11.6%
(4,941 followers)

Robinson Nature Center
Facebook Followers

+ 6.3%
(9,821 followers)

Social media statistics from July 2019 - June 2020

Adapting to COVID-19



SOCIAL MEDIA

With the cancellation of many Howard County Recreation and Parks programs and events, the marketing team worked with each division to create video content county residents could enjoy from home using the following hashtag #AtHomeWithHoCoRec. Videos developed through this initiative were featured on Facebook and on the new Recreation and Parks YouTube channel.

- The marketing team created printable coloring pages, word searches and other activity sheets.
- Educators from the Baltimore & Ohio Ellicott City Station Museum and Robinson Nature Center created storytime videos, craft activity tutorials and educational mini-lessons.
- Gary J. Arthur Community Center fitness coordinator Sara Schwab recorded at-home fitness videos.
- Under the #HoCoSportsUnited hashtag, coaches and athletes associated with the Sports & Outdoor Adventure division created instructional sports videos.
- The department's collaborative "virtual catch" video received over 2,000 views in its first six hours online and inspired a follow up video.

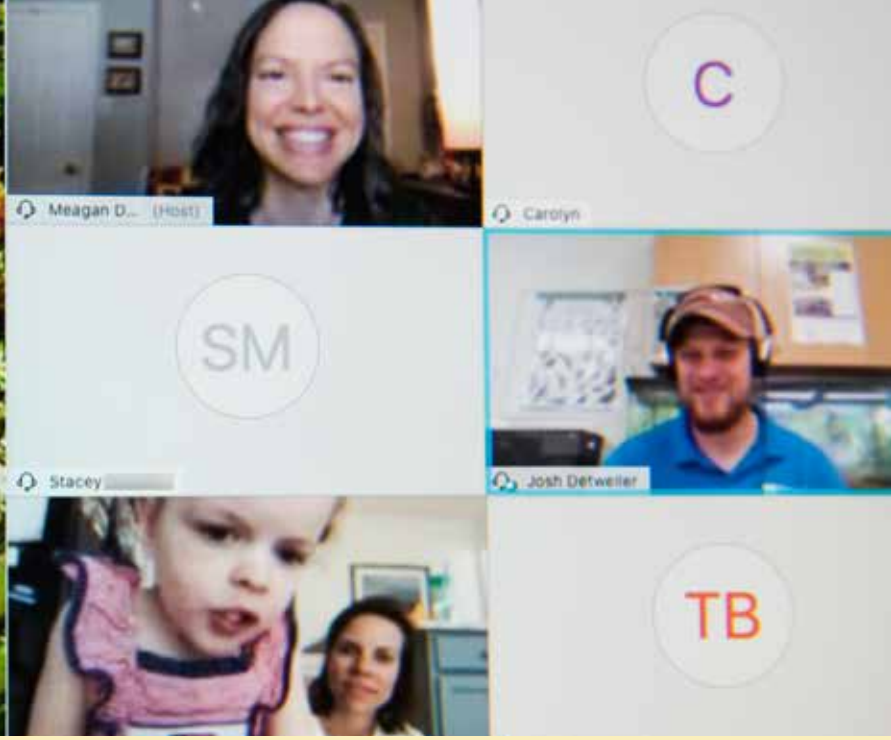
IN-PERSON PROGRAMS

Pickleball: In 2020, the department began offering adult instructional lessons and clinics with new pickleball instructor Marc Austin. The first session of lessons began in February 2020 that included two classes featuring 24 participants.

Tennis: In the Fall of 2019, Howard County Recreation and Parks (HCRP) created a Special Olympics tennis program with 20 participants and expanded its partnership with the United States Tennis Association (USTA). The two new programs were Adult Social Tennis Series with USTA and USTA Youth Tennis Team Challenge.

In June of 2020, HCRP received a \$5,000 USTA Facility Recovery Grant to help reduce some of the tennis-related expenses associated with reopening due to COVID-19. HCRP's partnership with USTA was featured in the September/October magazine issue of *Racquet Sports Industry*.

Adapting to COVID-19



ONLINE PROGRAMS

To help meet the needs of the Howard County community, Recreation and Parks developed online programs for participants of all ages.

- The Therapeutic Recreation division offered many of their popular existing programs, such as dinner manners and trivia, as virtual activities led through Webex.
- Innovative programs like Camp in a Bag and Robinson Nature Center's Camp Came to Me allowed campers and their parents to enjoy fun and educational experiences from home.
- Pre-K programs included Kindergarten Jump Start, Step into School, Marshmallow Math and Mommy & Me Movement.
- Youth and Teen programs included Learn Now Music, USTA Virtual Tennis and Beginning Princess Ballet.
- Adult programs included cooking classes hosted by Chef Ravi and Chef Alba, LaBlast Dance Fitness and Sunday Afternoon Yoga.
- Active Adults/Encore (55 yrs +) programs included Art Chat with Carol Zika, Trivia Time and a Virtual Travel Social Club led by Trips & Tours staff.

EMERGENCY CHILDCARE

See page 28

446
sections of online
programming offered.

The Recreation and Parks
YouTube page launched
in May 2020.

111
videos and online
tutorials were created
between July 1, 2019
and June 30, 2020.



Phase 3 playground

BLANDAIR PARK

Located off MD 175, Blandair Park is one of the county's premier destinations for sports events. The 298-acre park will be completed over seven phases. The West Area (Phase 1) opened in March 2012. The East Area (Phase 2) opened in March 2018. The Play-For-All Playground and Backyard Games Area (Phase 3) is scheduled for completion in early 2021 (see next page for details).

The playground in Phase 3 is being constructed by Commercial Recreation, a subsidiary of Little Tykes.

In July 2017, this park became part of the new bike share program and has a station in the East Area near the parking lot. All areas include interconnected paved pathways with outlets to the county's bike-path system.

Planning for the next phase, located adjacent to the East Area, is already underway (see next page for details).

West Area/Phase 1 (completed)

- Three lighted, synthetic turf multi-purpose fields with bleachers
- Playground with shade structure above part of play area
- Large pavilion/shade structure
- Restroom facilities
- Parking lot with 398 spaces

East Area/Phase 2 (completed)

- Challenge course with an electronic timer, specifically designed for teens and adults
- Five tennis courts
- Pavilion/shade structure
- Two synthetic turf baseball fields with shaded bleacher seating
- Restroom facilities
- Open green space
- Parking lot with 144 spaces
- **Car charging station**



BLANDAIR PARK (CONTINUED)

The Play-For-All Playground and Backyard Games Area/Phase 3 (in-progress)

Construction of the playground area is underway and is expected to be completed in early 2021. Opening may be postponed due to COVID-19 precautions.

Amenities include:

- A playground for children of all abilities with six activity pods, its own shelter, benches, paths, and a surrounding fence. Each pod is themed (barnyard, dinosaurs, space, climbing, music) and geared towards infants, toddlers or children 5-12 years.
- Two croquet courts with synthetic turf and benches
- Three bocce courts and benches
- Three horseshoe pitches and benches
- A pavilion with electricity and water
- Two concrete ping-pong tables and game tables for chess and checkers
- A comfort station, including a family restroom and a storage room
- A parking lot with 124 spaces
- Pathways connecting with the county bike-path system
- Bio-retention areas for storm water management
- Landscaping with shade-trees and other plants

Maintenance Facility/Phase 3B (in-progress)

Construction is scheduled for completion in fall 2020.

Amenities include:

- Maintenance building with workshop and offices
- Storage for equipment and materials
- Parking and fenced yard

Planning for the Next Phase

Adjacent to the West Area along Oakland Mills Road, this newest project will feature:

- A multi-use building with indoor sports courts
- Activity rooms and park offices
- An outdoor skate park
- An outdoor basketball court
- Additional parking



VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

The department engages citizens by providing volunteer opportunities for individuals and groups to make an impact in their local community. Volunteers collaborate and serve alongside employees to create an inspired experience for all. Within the department, several divisions coordinate opportunities for volunteers to enhance our programs, parks, and special events. These divisions include Sports & Adventure Services, Natural & Historic Resources, Parks Operations, Recreation Services, Horticulture & Land Management, Recreation Licensed Childcare & Community Services, and Marketing.

Volunteers donated over
\$1.5 million
in labor costs to Howard
County Recreation and Parks.

The Volunteer Management Team continues to explore models to streamline the process of screening volunteers, research studies, tools, and resources on the value of volunteering. Research includes how to (1) create meaningful volunteer programs, (2) promote and facilitate volunteer engagement, and (3) enhance and increase the participation, quality and diversity of volunteer experiences.

The Emergency Volunteer Management (EVM) Team continues to collaborate with the Office of Emergency Management to develop and maintain emergency plans which encompass response and recovery. This year, the EVM Team welcomed and trained new team members.

213 volunteers self-logged
over **2,015** hours through
HoCoVolunteer.org.

Volunteer hours submitted
by supervisors/coordinators
accounted for another
56,005 hours.

Volunteers



Former Olympian Brandon Slay at Wrestling Clinic

VIPERS WRESTLING

Program	November - December 2019	January - March 2020	Total Number of Volunteers Hour
Wrestling Clinic	576	672	1,248
Recreation Wrestling	10,080	13,440	23,520
Travel Wrestling	3,840	4,800	8,640



SPECIAL PROJECTS

Trips and Tours & Drop-In Programs

The Trip Leader Program continues to grow and our volunteers' dedicated service to the program allows the Trips & Tours group to offer a variety of travel opportunities to the public.

Howard County Recreation and Parks' Free Drop-In Programs are assisted by a small team of regular volunteers. These programs include Wii Bowling at the Bain 50+ Center, trivia, and toss across. The programs are valuable as many of the participants in these programs have limited expendable income. These drop-in programs allow them to be active, social, and enjoy leisure.

25 Trips & Tours
Trip Leaders

5 Drop-In Program
Volunteers

852
Trips & Tours
Volunteer Hours

213
Drop-In Program
Volunteer Hours

Community Knitting & Crocheting Group

The Community Knitting & Crocheting Group was formed over twenty years ago with only three members. Over the years, the group has donated thousands of handmade items to organizations in and around Howard County, MD.

In addition to local requests, in 2019, the group began making donations nation-wide. This group provides volunteers with a creative outlet, an opportunity for socialization, and a sense of contributing to their community. They are an extremely talented group that enjoy sharing new patterns, needlework advice, and giving back.

58 Volunteers Contribute Annually

53.5 Average hours per month
at bi-weekly meetings

1,899 Items donated to 20
projects & organizations

Volunteers



HERP ATLAS 2020

The Howard County Amphibian & Reptile Atlas (Herp Atlas) continues to map the distribution of reptiles and amphibians across the County.

In 2019, the Herp volunteers documented the Cope's Gray Treefrog in the last 10-square-mile map block giving full distribution of this species across the county. The Eastern Kingsnake was also documented in a new map block. This is only the third map block across the County that this species has been documented.

In 2020, the Herp volunteers documented the last Gray Tree Frog (different species than the Cope's Gray Treefrog) needed to give this species full distribution in every 10-square mile map block across the county. Another notable find was the venomous Copperhead in a new map block confirming this species in 7 out of 29 map blocks.

MARYLAND BREEDING BIRD ATLAS

The Department began coordinating surveys for the third Maryland Breeding Bird Atlas. This project will map the distribution of breeding birds every 10-square miles across the state. Results of this project will compare breeding distributions of all species to the previous two atlases. During the first year, 91 bird species were documented breeding in the County. (Not one, but three successful Osprey nests were included for the first time in a Breeding Bird Atlas.)



STREAM CLEAN-UPS

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requires an annual National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System report on what activities the county has sponsored to reduce water pollution. The county holds scheduled volunteer stream clean-ups. Note: Due to COVID-19, some stream clean-ups were cancelled.

Volunteers: 12

Recycled: 1,250 lbs

Volunteer Hours: 41

Trash Collected: 352 lbs

MARYLAND BIODIVERSITY PROJECT

The Maryland Biodiversity Project is a non-profit organization focused on cataloging living things in Maryland. Their goal is "to promote education and conservation by helping to build a vibrant nature study community." Volunteers, naturalists, and photographers help find, catalog, and photograph species around Maryland.

In 2019, Howard County had the distinction of documenting the first *Clavariadelphus unicolor*, a new fungi species for the state. Purple Fringeless Orchis, which is listed on the Maryland Rare, Threatened & Endangered List, was also documented in 2019 during a plant survey.

In 2020, a Red-legged Purseweb Spider was found on park property, an endangered species in Maryland. In addition, two new plant hopper species were documented for the state, *Eratoneura confirmata* and *Eratoneura morgani* as well as three new fungi species, Jewelweed Rust, Black Morel, and Giraffe Spots.

Volunteers



PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY VOLUNTEERS

From July 2019 through June 2020, the Public Archaeology Program welcomed a number of volunteers who assisted with various tasks in the field, laboratory, and public programming (including summer camps).

Volunteers included a core group (10 active throughout the past year) in addition to one-time volunteers. During Open Lab Days, the department welcomed 20 one-time volunteers (families and individuals interested in archaeology).

The Public Archaeology volunteers have been a great asset when establishing new programs.

Volunteers with the Public
Archaeology Program
have logged over

700 hours



The Fiscal Year in Review

This fiscal year, the original planetarium was replaced with a new 4K resolution, dual projector system. Additionally, the center acquired a portable planetarium that will allow the staff to take Earth and Space Science out into the community.

The center continued to incorporate art into its campus and programming. The first Eco-Artist-in-Residence, Sarah Causey, wrapped up her residency with intricate nature murals painted on eight outdoor waste receptacles, now in use around our site. The receptacles add a visual reminder of all the ways we are connected to and influenced by the living world around us. Robinson welcomed four new local artists in the gallery space (Chiara D'Amore, Sally Ann Lentz, Carol Foerster, and Jen Eidson).

Programming Highlights

The Howard County Autism Society recognized the nature center as one of five "autism-friendly" businesses for the significant efforts to improve experiences for those individuals with autism and their families. The center created Sensory-friendly Sundays that were designed for families with kids, teens, and adults with sensory-processing differences, autism spectrum disorder, or developmental disabilities (see page 30 for more information).

Despite the closure of the facility between March 13 and July 12 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Robinson staff prepared for both in-person and at-home camps. Staff created a new take-home program called Camp Came to Me. Through these programs, Robinson was able to serve the needs of families desiring in-person interaction for their children (270 campers) and families desiring safe options for nature-fun at home (145 campers).

Community Partnerships

The Robinson Nature Center has thrived and flourished with support from The James and Anne Robinson Foundation and collaborations with over two hundred community partners. Partners from the business sector, the local community, educational institutions, environmental organizations, government agencies, national associations, and non-profits have proffered time, talent, resources, and services to supplement Robinson's existing resources. The center was able to expand inclusive, sensory-friendly, 55 years +, and virtual programming to further provide quality environmental education.

Robinson took advantage of virtual and networking opportunities that included MPT's Public Online Spring Auction (reaching a new audience of over 15,000 people), the first-ever Virtual GreenFest, and the Howard County Library's STEAM Carnival.

Friends and partners have provided sponsorships, professional development, team building, in kind donations, mentoring, professional expertise and research, material, and financial donations. For example, the Columbia Patuxent Rotary Club joined W.R. Grace to donate funds earmarked for the materials and installation of an outdoor water cooler/filler station.



TICK STUDY

More Steps in Evaluating Tick-Control Strategies

Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks (HCRP), in collaboration with the United States Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and University of Maryland (UMD), launched a study in January 2017 to evaluate integrated tick control strategies on single-family home sites located adjacent to large public lands in Howard County. A first in Maryland, the study as a whole is part of a larger, five-year, Area-wide Integrated Tick Management Project of the ARS.

The five-year, area-wide integrated tick management project is aimed at developing an effective package of minimal pesticide methods to reduce the number of black-legged ticks or at least the percent carrying Lyme disease-causing bacteria.

According to entomologist Andrew Li with the ARS's Invasive Insect Biocontrol & Behavior Laboratory, data from the study will help develop a science-based minimal pesticide control strategy for Lyme disease carrying ticks.

"This project is exciting to me because it is a chance to look at the behavior of a species that is not heavily studied," stated Hummell. "The results I find will hopefully give a better understanding of how we can better manage white-footed mice to reduce ticks and tick-borne diseases."

Seven Components to the Area-Wide Study

The below listed activities will continue for the life of the study ending in 2021.

- 1** Deer Collaring: Tracking movements of adult deer. This phase began in February 2017–April 2017 and then again in January 2018–April 2018. The goal was to collar 50 deer. The deer with collars will continue to be tracked for 24 months (the life span of the battery on the GPS collar). The plan is to track the deer collared in 2017 until February 2019. Deer collared in 2018 were tracked until January 2020.
- 2** Tick Sampling: This activity will occur on 7 sites for the duration of the 5-year project. Sampling with drag nets occurs monthly March–November. Ticks collected are sampled to determine the number infected with the bacteria that causes Lyme Disease.
- 3** Mouse GPS Collars/Tracking of Mouse Movements: This part of the process began in April 2018. In addition, mice captured are ear tagged, tissue samples collected, blood samples and ticks are collected. UMD graduate student Grace Hummell (under the direction of Assistant Professor Dr. Jennifer Murrow) and a team from the University and ARS deployed collars in the spring and tracked the mice. They then recaptured the mice to retrieve the collars and redeployed the collars again to track movements in the fall.
- 4** Bait Boxes: 309 of these were deployed in May 2018, then collected and replaced with fresh bait boxes in July 2018. The boxes will remain in the field until November 2018. They are then collected and weighed to determine how much bait has been consumed.
- 5** Met52 Applications: Tickicide spray applications to vegetation occurred in June and July 2018 at residences agreeing to participate in the study. Subsequent tick sampling will determine if there is a change in the amount of ticks and the percentage infected with the bacteria.
- 6** 4-Poster Deer Feeders: 20 were deployed in October–December 2017. The feeders have been set up in four park sites and will continue to be deployed throughout the study period. They will be monitored with a camera to determine usage and will be tracking the amount of corn consumed and permethrin applied to rollers.
- 7** Home Owner Solicitation: The USDA crew is actively soliciting participation in the area-wide study in the neighborhoods surrounding the study site locations. Participation allows the researchers to sample for ticks at the edge of their properties 2x per month, allow mouse trapping monthly, and allow bait boxes and/or Met52 spray applications to occur on their property.

Recreation Licensed Childcare



Summer Blast Camp, June 2020



Recreational Licensed Child Care (RLC) before and after care, normally held in 23 elementary schools, was cut short this year due to COVID-19. Prior to schools closing, participants took part in various extra-curricular events (for example football, basketball, and cheerleading). For competitive events, teams were formed at each center to then competed against other RLC school sites. Nine schools also participated in the First Tee golf program that teaches children life skills through the game of golf. Fun Fit Fridays continued to be very popular.

November 2019 celebrated the 15th year of the Turkey Bowl, which included eight RLC sites. The 9th annual March Madness Basketball Tournament included 12 RLC teams.

Summer Blast Camps

RLC offered their Summer Blast Camp consistently at six schools. Registration was low due to COVID-19 but still had over 500 children attend. The camps offered a variety of sports, drama, arts & crafts, STEAM, and learning. Staff training moved to a virtual platform.

RecZone

In 2020, Recreation and Parks launched the new RecZone program, designed to help families address childcare needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Open to students in grades K-5, RecZone participants received support for virtual learning assignments and work sessions, and enjoyed crafts, physical activities, and games. The program began in September 2020 at select schools throughout Howard County. The program is licensed through the Maryland State Department of Education's Office of Childcare. Thanks to CARES Act funding, the weekly cost of RecZone childcare was reduced to \$219 per week for extended day options (7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.) and \$185 (9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.) for school day options through December 31, 2020.

Recreation Licensed Childcare



CHILDCARE FOR FRONT-LINE EMERGENCY WORKERS

After schools closed in March, Recreational Licensed Child Care staff developed a child care program for the children of emergency and essential employees held at the Robinson Nature Center. This program was held Monday to Friday, from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. between March 23 to June 23. Children enjoyed games, art, STEM activities, nature walks, and more. Highlights included a socially distanced egg hunt and a virtual visit from NASA employees. Strict safety protocols were in place for the entire length of this program.

The department partnered with the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) to provide free breakfast and lunch to Emergency Child Care program attendees.

The partnership continued with the HCPSS Grab-and-Go food program that also provided department summer camp participants (both indoor and outdoor camps) with a free lunch.

On average, 165 contingent and part-time staff supervised the RLC programs during the 2019-20 school year. Training classes were offered to help staff maintain their continuing education unit credits.

From July 6 to August 28, the HCPSS Grab-and-Go food program served almost **2,400** free meals



RECREATION-INSPIRED SPORTS FOR EVERYONE

RISE



RISE PROGRAM

In March, Recreation and Parks teamed up with Howard County Government, the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) and the Horizon Foundation to launch RISE (Recreation-Inspired Sports for Everyone), a new after-school sports program. Through initial pilot programs at Murray Hill Middle School, Thomas Viaduct Middle School and Bonnie Branch Middle School, RISE encourages middle-schoolers to stay after school twice a week for two hours to play a variety of sports. The program is offered for a standard \$70 fee, with a reduced fee of \$35 for students enrolled in the FARMs (Free and Reduced Meals) program. In the spring, RISE saw 91 participants across the three pilot locations.

Therapeutic Recreation & Inclusion Services



SENSORY-FRIENDLY INITIATIVE

In 2019, the Robinson Nature Center created new programming and materials to address challenges faced by visiting families with kids, teens, and adults with sensory-processing differences, autism spectrum disorder, or developmental disabilities. New initiatives, including the Sensory-Friendly Sunday program hour (allowing visitors to enjoy a calm environment before normal business hours) and the center's complimentary sensory backpacks (with items such as noise-reducing headphones, fidget toys, a Robinson "Nature Explorer" badge and a sensory friendly building map), are part of a larger accommodational effort to address sensory-sensitivities. These new accommodations were developed in partnership with a team of Leadership Howard graduates as part of their Community Impact Project.

2,424

Participants signed up for
inclusion programs at a cost of

\$533,153

(\$220 per participant)

485

Participants in inclusion
accommodation services at a cost of

\$263,799

(\$544 per participant)





Encore Adventures - Paddling

ENCORE PROGRAMS

Adapting to Changing Demographics and COVID-19

Howard County's population is aging, and the department is creating new programs and services to accommodate the changing demographics. The first annual Encore Showcase was held on October 2, 2019 at Meadowbrook Athletic Complex during Howard County's Active Aging Week. This free event offered fitness, art, archery, and meditation demonstrations and information tables about different programs the department offers for older adults. This inaugural event had 75 visitors in attendance and received positive reviews.

In 2020, the Active Aging team added several new programs, including a new cooking series hosted at Belmont Manor, an extended holiday excursion to Cape May, New Jersey, and a mindful meditation program. The team held its first bocce program featuring two 55 + leagues. At the end of the season, champions were crowned for each league following an exciting set of championship tournaments.

When the coronavirus hit Howard County and the department had to cease holding in-person classes, several Active Aging programs were able to resume online. The staff hosted weekly fitness, art, trivia, and bridge classes using the Webex platform to keep older customers engaged and active. This transition has proven essential as we continue to expand our online programming in to future seasons as needed.

- | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Art | • | Dance | • | Encore Adventures | • | Lifelong Learning |
| • All Things Glass | • | • Beginner Ballet for Active Adults | • | • Archery | • | • Bridge Seminar |
| • Basic Zentangle Workshop | • | • Dance on Broadway | • | • Intro to Fishing | • | • Bridge Handplay |
| • Digital Photography 101 | • | • Social Square Dancing | • | • Paddling | • | |
| • Stroll & Paint | • | • Learn to Swing Dance | • | Fitness | • | |
| • Shooting with a Smartphone | • | • Drop-in Square & Round Dances | • | • Beginner Mat Pilates | • | |
| • Stained Glass Workshops | • | | • | • Fundamentals of Modern Table Tennis | • | |

Adult Programming Trends



Beginners Ballroom & Couples Dance

TOP TEN ADULT CLASS SECTIONS

1. Watercolor & Oil painting with Brenda Kidera
2. Couples & Line Dance with Mo and Barb Dutterer
3. Beginners Ballroom & Couples Dance with Jim Watts and Lucy Moran
4. International Cooking with Ravi Lahori
5. Bollywood Dance
6. Art Lecture Series with Ann Wiker
7. Musical Theater Programs with Drama Learning Center
8. Musical Muses Choir
9. Dance Class with Kinetics Dance Theater
10. Networking & Social Programs with International School of Protocol



Wine and Paint

NEW TRENDS & SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS

1. Beginning Bridge
2. Wine and Paint
3. Gluten-Free Cooking & Baking
4. Improv
5. Introduction to Ayurveda

Special Events



TRUCK OR TREAT

October 26, 2019 | Gary J. Arthur Community Center

Children and parents celebrated Halloween and the 13th anniversary of the Gary J. Arthur Community Center. Attendees were invited to dress in costume to trick-or-treat at the trucks, tractors, emergency vehicles, and more, while meeting some of your hometown heroes. Each vehicle was represented by various County agencies, nonprofit groups, and local businesses. Children enjoyed live music, hayrides, face painting, children's activities, giveaways, and story time.



47TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY MART

**December 7, 2019
Gary J. Arthur Community Center**

Shoppers know this is the place to find unique handcrafted items and home décor. Annually, the community is invited to shop for seasonal gifts and merchandise created by 130 juried artisans. The past few years included mule-drawn carriage rides from a local farm, door prizes, and a children's craft corner.



**Headphone
Zone**



Quiet Area

SENSORY-FRIENDLY SUNDAYS

**Sundays each month
Robinson Nature Center**

In September 2019, the Robinson Nature Center began offering monthly visiting hours intended for families and individuals with sensory processing differences, autism spectrum disorder or developmental disabilities. See page 30 for information.



Centennial Park

PROMOTING INDIVIDUAL ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP BY EXAMPLE

These meadows are open to the public and designed to support Howard County's native pollinator species. Each is maintained through annual winter mowing, careful spot spraying of some invasive plants and regular volunteer weed removal events.

Western Regional Park

Contains a five-acre, warm-season grass meadow planted in 2000.

Centennial Park

Includes two pollinator meadows. There is a four-acre meadow that was planted in 2015 with a plant species mix. The meadow was generated in consult with the Howard County Bird Club. A second 1.5-acre meadow area which was converted in 2018.

Daisy Meadow

Has a 1.5-acre meadow established in 2016. This parcel of land was purchased after a group of concerned citizens petitioned the County Council to preserve it.

Schooley Mill Park

Hosts 32 acres of early succession habitat. In 2018, a one-acre area was converted to the pollinator seed mix.



Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPEA)

PROMOTING INDIVIDUAL ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP BY EXAMPLE (CONINTUED)

Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPEA)

Clegg's Meadow is an approximately eight-acre area of native, warm-season grasses that were first planted in 2001. An additional three-acre area nearby was planted. These areas serve as nocturnal roosting fields for breeding woodcock. The fields contain a variety of forbs that serve as both nectar and larval host plants for a variety of pollinators.

The MPEA is an official Monarch Butterfly Way-Station through MonarchWatch.org. Since 2010, it has participated in efforts to provide monarch habitat, tag, and recover tags along the monarch migration routes.



Belmont Manor & Historic Park

In 2019, the department planted a three-acre upland meadow. The restoration is to improve the habitat value for a variety of beneficial pollinators such as butterflies, bees, moths, and small mammals. Restoration began in the fall of 2019 with invasive tree and shrub removal. The area was tilled and seeded with a wildflower and grass mixture in the spring of 2020. Once established, wildflower meadows are ecologically friendly landscapes that are beautiful to look at and require minimal maintenance.



Virtual Golfing at iGolf72 (March 2020)

iGOLF

This year, Howard County Recreation and Parks began offering virtual golf programs through a partnership with iGolf72. These programs, open to youth and adult players, allowed registrants to practice and play on indoor virtual courses from around the world. Although spring sessions were cancelled due to the coronavirus outbreak, iGolf72, Junior Golf League at iGolf72, and Adult Golf League at iGolf72 were offered in Fall 2020.



VIRTUAL FITNESS CHALLENGE

This past spring (during the COVID-19 outbreak), the department held the first-ever Virtual Fitness Challenge. Participants set a personalized goal (25K, 50k, 75k, or 100k) and tracked their progress as they ran, jogged or exercised at home using our downloadable Virtual Fitness Challenge log. Those who submitted their completed log by July 8 received a celebratory medal. There were 25 participants, ranging in age from 5-64.



DANIELLE BASSETT

Danielle Bassett is the first to help out when asked and always goes the extra mile to get her job done. Her enthusiasm for her work is contagious and she is very well respected by her peers. She has forged valuable relationships with the public, that included establishing a partnership with Inner Arbor Trust, organizing concerts and programs at the Chrysalis in Symphony Woods, overseeing our popular Summer Concerts and Traveling Bands outdoor performances, and creating the annual Solar Fest program at Alpha Ridge Park.

In addition to her regular job duties, Danielle was assigned to lead the Virtual Program Team at such a vital time for the department. This team was crucial during the COVID-19 outbreak because it helped programmers to create virtual opportunities for Howard County residents stuck at home. Danielle led weekly meetings and did research on Webex to help prepare staff for this new virtual journey. She made herself available to anyone with issues or questions. Danielle is not only there to help, but to give advice and find solutions. This new area of programming was made seamless thanks to her leadership. Danielle had a clear vision, delegated as needed, and got people to feel comfortable doing things that they did not think were possible.

The department commends Danielle on her willingness to help and her commitment to excellence.

Volunteer of the Year



ERIC PELLAK

Eric Pellak has dedicated countless hours to Recreation and Parks as a coach in the Columbia Baseball League over the past five years. Two years ago, he decided to step up to assist with administrative duties and has served as the Director of Baseball ever since. Eric has helped with team formation, schedule building, rule adjustments, league communications, and many more items integral to providing quality sports experiences to Howard County's youth.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Eric prepared for a gradual return to sports through a modified baseball league. He created the CBL 5-on-5 Co-Ed Baseball League in Phase One of the reopening plan. He prepared procedures to limit the number of players and coaches on the field and put into place on and off the field safety protocols in line with CDC and local Health Department guidelines. This league was one of the first sports programs to return to in-person play and when registration opened for the new program, it filled in one week. He secured coaches and worked on the field plans, put together game schedules and rosters all within 72 hours. Parents appreciate the modifications and have been very pleased with the safety preparations and enforcement from Eric.

Eric is on-site for every game with sanitizer in hand and name tags to space out players in the bench area. He is one of the most dedicated youth sports volunteers our department has ever had and it is an honor to name him the Volunteer of the Year.

We received wonderful testimonials from parents about the adapted summer and fall baseball leagues. Part of one testimonial is the following:

"...With the precautions that CBL took, we felt comfortable letting our son participate in CBL this summer and fall... When quarantine guidelines were implemented, our player [was] kept at home with no other children to play [with] outside... It has been wonderful to see him out there getting the much needed exercise and also getting together with his teammates. Many smiles, laughter and fun experiences have been had in addition to the skills he is learning... His spirits have definitely lifted being able to play ball and keeping a sense of normalcy in his young life... In addition to our players, the parents have had the opportunity to share commodity in this worried time."