

2011 Richmond Heights Recreation in Review



Family Day Picnic – July 17, 2011

Watermelon eating contest

2011 Recreation in Review

Recreation was again challenged to offer our same quality programs and events while working through this economic downturn.

Casino bus trips continued to be a popular form of entertainment for many of our residents. In 2011, the participants traveled twice to Seneca Allegany Casino, twice to the Rivers Casino, once to Meadows Casino and twice to Presque Isle. This totaled seven excursions for 2011.

In 2011, I hired an additional assistant manager for the pool, added hours to the pool maintenance position and had a quarter of my salary deducted from the pool budget. In addition, we had torrential rain in the spring and a cool start to the summer. Despite all of this, we were able to cut expenses even further at the pool.

- All managers kept a strict eye on pool staff hours. We were able to schedule lessons to accommodate our staffing better. Guards were cancelled when campers were on field trips due to this style of staffing.
- We dropped down a guard on late day shift and evening shift by mandating that the front desk person be a certified lifeguard. This way the manager could step in to the front desk role if the lifeguard was needed for pool rotation.
- No increases were given to managerial staff.
- Minimal raises were given to “full time” staff. Part time lifeguards made the same pay regardless of the number of years with the City.
- The pool and sprayground closed when school began.
- The pool closed if the temperature was 65 degrees or colder.

An event to highlight our excellent lifeguards was initiated by Richmond Heights Recreation in 2005. It is entitled “Lifeguard Challenge”. In 2011, we again hosted the event. Five teams competed: Richmond Heights, Wickliffe Pool, Highland Heights, and Lyndhurst. New this year – Mayfield Village! The event began with a serious free style relay. The other races provided much amusement to the onlookers. These included a greased watermelon competition, a sports themed obstacle course and the always

anticipated “synchronized” swimming demonstration. Richmond Heights won the “synchronized” swimming portion, but the overall crown went to Lyndhurst. This year featured “sports” as the overall theme. Over \$400 in donations was given to the Paratore family of Highland Heights. Leo Paratore Jr. has been battling cancer.

Family Day 2011 was transformed into the Family Day Picnic on Sunday, July 17th due to budget cuts. Our Family Day shirts were designed, gratis, by Lifeguard, Mary Jane King. Once again, we set up staff to sell wristbands to Family Day patrons to reimburse the City for the cost of the entertainment. We were able to continue to offer the rides at very low ticket prices. Fortunately, the civic organizations stepped up to the challenge as well and we had a good turnout of groups selling hot dogs, hamburgers, popsicles, slushies, funnel cakes, popcorn and pizza. The inflatables for the park this year included the Wrecking Ball and the “Cars” Bounce. We offered face painting with ride purchases and Family Time Entertainment did their usual excellent job with games for individuals and families. Dina Greisl, Sgt. Denise DiBiase and Chief Rowe had the tremendous task of choosing a Teen Citizen for the year. After individually interviewing the teen candidates and reviewing the recommendations from their schools, Michele Svonavec was selected as the runner-up and Joshua Dingus as the Teen Citizen of the Year. The candidates this year also included: John Maher, Brittany Mattson, Brianna Mattson, Olivia Forte and Thomas Vendeland. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Don Lazar and his incredible service team for their excellence in wiring and preparing our park. As usual, Service sets up the tents that we have purchased over the years.

Recreation was again awarded the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District Grant. This grant was used in two ways – the first with the Richmond Heights Elementary school and the second with the community and those adjoining us. Recreation set up a paper collection competition in the elementary school. Students were given two weeks to bring in newspapers, phone books and the like. The teachers were encouraged to utilize the growing stacks into their lesson plans. Simple math lessons for the younger children and impact on the environment for the older children. We also had writing and art contests for individual students on recycling. Every school day, the counselor at the school also gave a recycling tip to drive the point home. The winning class, who collected over 800 inches of paper, was rewarded by getting to tour a recycling company and a free lunch at our newly renovated McDonalds. It was wonderful to see parents also helping their children by carrying in stacks of paper that had been collected from neighbors! The Abitibi recycling unit on the school grounds was filled twice

with all of the recycling and the school earned money from that as well. This contest was covered with photos and a story by the Sun Messenger. The other part of this grant was used for hosting our first ever Shred Day. Most of the grant money was spent on advertising this event. We advertised in the Sun Messenger, the News Herald, the Plain Dealer and Cleveland.com. People not only came from Richmond Heights and surrounding communities but also as far away as Avon Lake on the west side of Cleveland. Each car was restricted to three boxes and we did get behind when we let people drop off more. We know to be stricter for our next shred day!

The City was also awarded a \$30,000 playground grant through the Community Development Block Grant by Cuyahoga County. Councilwoman Miesha Headen, Finance Director Lynda Rossiter and I worked with the community and the county on putting this grant together. We were awarded the full amount of the grant to be used towards playground tiles for the Richmond Heights Elementary School. The school agreed to purchase and install a new swing set and the contractor installed the rubber tiles. Installation was completed in the fall of 2011 and we are already looking at how to renovate the rest of the playground for the children in the near future.

The City Halloween Party was held on Friday, October 28th. With a perfect fall evening, Recreation entertained about a hundred participants with a ghostly bean bag toss, mask making, graveyard cupcakes, wrap-a-caramel apple, popcorn, pizza and refreshments. The Kiwanis Hall was decorated in orange twinkle lights, spider webs and flying ghosts. The hayride was truly a haunted hayride this year as the first ride went out never to return. With all the rain, the hayride became stuck in the mud. A great time was still had by all in the Kiwanis Lodge however. Thanks also to the Benander family who normally hand out treats at the baseball fields, but came inside after the hay ride was cancelled.

Recreation had its thirteenth annual Richmond Heights Craft Show on Saturday, November 6th. It was a perfect fall day for our show. We had 50 tables dedicated to our crafters! Thanks again to Nancy Benander and Anthony Gimellia for all their hard work in coordinating this event. The Garden Club sold out of all their desserts and made quite a bit on their raffle baskets again this year. Nancy and I also made and sold cinnamon rolls, bread pudding, apple crisp, pumpkin pies, chili, cabbage and noodles, a variety of muffins, baked potatoes and sweet potatoes, pizza and popcorn. All in all, it was another very successful event.

This was our fifteenth year for our Breakfast with Santa! This is always a 'sold out' event. Besides Mr. and Mrs. Claus (Terry and Kathy Yerkic), we had "Mickey and Minnie Mouse" posing with the younger children giving out candy canes with gummy figures. Santa and Mrs. Claus gave out small boxes of breakfast cereal. The children also enjoyed face painting, making beaded snowflakes and decorate-your-own polar bear cupcakes. The children and their parents dug into fresh hot pancakes and sausages made by our Service Department volunteers on griddles provided by our American Legion Post. Recreation Board members, volunteers from our Garden Club and students from a home-schooled group, Richmond Heights Key Club, St. Paschal Baylon PSR, Benedictine High, Beaumont High, Laurel High, John Carroll University, Ursuline and Notre Dame College assisted at various activities. Once again, a true community effort!

Recreation sponsored the following programs in 2011:

Spring Training Camp	Golf Camp	Cheerleading
Indoor Soccer	Soccer Camp	Preschool Soccer
Swim Team	Exer- Swim	Basketball Camp
Basketball Leagues	Winter Volleyball	Spring Volleyball
Swim Lessons	Safety Town	Tennis Camp
Coed Softball League	Dance Classes	Jumping

Exercise Classes

We held our second Pooches at the Pool event! Owners and their dogs were invited to the pool on Saturday, August 27th. \$1 admission was charged per person and profits were donated to the South Euclid Dog Park. Also on hand were representatives from K9 Kingdom, South Euclid Dog Park, and the South Euclid Dog Rescue. Dr. Ramsey from the Euclid Veterinary Clinic was on hand for the 'ask a vet' questions. We had over 100 dogs enjoy their time in the pool and the sprayground.

Park volunteer, Howie Briggs, volunteered his time in the spring and fall (when the pool is not open) to unlock the pool restrooms for patrons of the

park. Our thanks to them for providing this valuable, and for many, timely service!

Recreation Coordinator, Anthony Gimellia was able to obtain University Health System/ Richmond Heights Hospital to donate \$7,500 again towards our Recreation program! This figure helped us to meet our budget without cutting salaries or programming any further. Anthony also worked hard in 2011 on baseball field rentals. He was able to bring in \$11,620 in rentals alone and he feels confident that that figure will increase in 2012. This amount was about \$3,500 lower than we had anticipated due to the excessive rain we experienced in the spring and fall of 2011. High schools were unable to complete their seasons due to the rain in the spring! Anthony continues to be a top-notch editor and publisher of the Richmond Heights City Edition. I know that many of our residents use this publication faithfully for current information on a wide range of topics encompassing all services offered by the City.

The Recreation Department functions well because of the flexibility and caring attitude of the people who work in here. We truly appreciate the many people who make us 'look good'! Our thanks to:

- The Mayor and Council for their ongoing support of our department and our programs.
- The Recreation Board for their help at all of our special events and their guidance in regulating our programs.
- Dina Greisl and Joyce Kandrach who assist us with customers, Information Board, City Edition, copying, faxing and too much more to mention.
- Our Finance Director, Lynda Rossiter, for her financial advice and assistance.
- Our Police, Auxiliary Police and Fire Departments for their professionalism and their assistance whenever we have a need.
- And special thanks to the Service Department without whom we would not have a pool to swim in or fields to play on. Also, Service has our overflowing gratitude for all of their work on Family Day.

It continues to be my privilege to be the Richmond Heights Recreation Director.

Teri Drda
Recreation Director