

**GREAT PARKS!
GREAT EXPERIENCES!**

43% of the community survey respondents felt that the city parks, trails and recreation facilities make Kalamazoo a more desirable place to live.
(Community Needs Assessment)



Life is best enjoyed when time periods are evenly divided between labor, sleep and recreation...all people should spend one-third of their time in recreation which is rebuilding, voluntary activity, never idleness.

- Brigham Young



Milham Park



PARKS & RECREATION
Great Parks, Great Experiences!

**CITY OF KALAMAZOO
PARKS & RECREATION**

ANNUAL REPORT 2013



A park can be a vehicle for creating social organization and community. If it doesn't catalyze something else, it's not going to be a great contribution to the neighborhood.

- Gregory D. Squires
Professor of Sociology and
Public Policy and Public
Administration

George Washington
University

Division Highlights

The Parks Division began 2013 with only two full time AFSCME employees and did not fill the three other open positions until July, which resulted in significant cost savings. Two Park Coordinators and one Landscape Coordinator began working in July with adjusted schedules that allowed for better customer service, reduced overtime and provided logistical support for recreation events like *Lunchtime Live*, *Movies in the Park*, and the *Candy Cane Hunt*.

Parks staff assisted with Kik Pool maintenance operations, which was a significant change from 2012, as the former staff person responsible for pool maintenance left the department as part of the ERI/SAP. The Parks Manager and Recreation Manager ensured the smooth operation of the pool.

The LaCrone Park improvement project was completed in 2013, providing the neighborhood with new play features, landscaping and a restroom facility. A grand re-opening celebration was held in June to celebrate the park improvements, with the *Kalamazoo Deacons Conference* providing food and activities for park neighbors and the community.

City parks successfully hosted:

- 173** Private events (*weddings, family reunions, 5K races, photo shoots, etc.*)
- 166** Private sporting events (*slow and fast-pitch softball tournaments, Ultimate Frisbee Tournament, baseball tournaments, etc.*)
- \$86,000** Revenue generated from city parks hosted events

Strategic Partnerships

Kalamazoo in Bloom and *Master Gardeners* provided vision, leadership, knowledge, volunteer labor coordination and financial support that helped keep Bronson Park, City Hall and Crane Park looking beautiful for residents and visitors. The dedication and hard work these groups/individuals provided was invaluable to the city.

The *Friends of Woods Lake* are key partners that provided vision, ownership and volunteer labor at Woods Lake Park, which kept the park and surrounding area beautiful.

The *Kalamazoo Deacons Conference* provided vision, ownership and volunteer labor at LaCrone Park and was instrumental in the installation of the recent improvements.

Parks staff is working with the *Kalamazoo Growlers* staff, who are planning their 2014 season. Opening Day for the *Growlers* will take place on May 30, 2014, with a night game at Homer Stryker Field.

Economic Impact

Revenue for park rentals paid to the City of Kalamazoo was over \$86,000. The parks and athletic facilities hosted many events in the community that provided an economic impact to the city. These included softball and baseball tournaments at Versluis-Dickinson Softball Complex as well as soccer and football games at Mayors' Riverfront Park.

The Parks Division provided logistical support to other events that made an economic impact, including the *Kalamazoo Marathon* and the *Kalamazoo Institute of Arts Annual Art Fair* at Bronson Park.

66% of those surveyed feel it is very important that the city provide quality recreation programs, events and services. (Community Needs Assessment)

RECREATION DIVISION

Division Highlights

Seven new youth development programs were offered at the Youth Development Center in 2013. We continued our partnership with the Oakwood Neighborhood Association and provided an after-school/homework-help program during the school year.

The city contributed funds that were paired with grant funds from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, allowing the 2013 Summer Youth Employment Program to hire approximately 100 youth ages 14 – 17. This program was a partnership with KRESAYOU.

The department partnered with four elementary schools and provided a *Lunch-n-Learn* program. These schools included Milwood Elementary and Woods Lake in the winter/spring and Spring Valley and King-Westwood in the fall. This program was funded by the elementary schools and provided structured programs during the lunch hour by Recreation Division staff.

Recreation staff offered *Tutor Time*, which is an after-school tutoring program for Kalamazoo Public School students who met four days per week for 1 ½ hours each day. Western Michigan University Medallion Scholars provided tutoring help and proved to be great mentors for the students.

Over 300 students participated in elementary and middle school intramural programs like kickball, flag football, golf, bowling and soccer with participating schools: King-Westwood, Spring Valley, Lincoln, Milwood, Prairie Ridge, Washington, Winchell, Linden Grove, Maple Street, Hillside, St. Augustine and Kalamazoo Christian.

Strategic Partnerships

Recreation staff cultivated and developed over 40 partnerships with local organizations which provided a variety of recreation program opportunities.

New Partners

- COPS/KDPS
- The Event Company
- Fresh Fire Church
- Gazelle Sports
- Kalamazoo Gospel Mission
- Kalamazoo Sport and Social Club
- Kalamazoo Valley Museum
- Peace House
- Vanguard Ministries
- We Outrun



My son is a first grader at Millwood Elementary. He started out the year behind several levels in reading, in part because he attended a kindergarten with different standards. The tutoring program not only helped him get his homework completed every night, but they also helped him with extra reading. By the end of the 10-week program he had moved up two levels in reading at school and established great homework habits.

- Jill Wesolowski
Kalamazoo resident

Economic Impact

7,700

Participants registered for recreation programs and staff provided over 3,000 hours of instruction to youth.

10,000+

People attended special events like *Movies in the Park, Lunchtime Live, Candy Cane Hunt, Tree Lighting, Holiday Workshop, Family Fun Fest, Safe Halloween, Harvest Fest and the Egg Hunt.*

30+

Local businesses provided donations of money, gift cards, prizes, food, etc., to support recreation programs and special events.

\$229,000+

Generated in revenue from recreation programs and events.



ADMINISTRATIVE

57% of the community survey respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with the overall value their household receives from the Parks & Recreation Department. (Community Needs Assessment)



Mission

The Department of Parks and Recreation serves as a vital and integral part of the Kalamazoo community. The mission of the Parks and Recreation Department is to create a community of neighborhoods where people live, work and play. We accomplish this by being good stewards of the environment, providing dynamic parks, trails and recreation programs for all citizens and by promoting youth development initiatives in support of healthy families.



THE CITY OF
Kalamazoo
PARKS & RECREATION
Great Parks, Great Experiences!

Mayors' Riverfront Park
251 Mills Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49048-2434
269-337-8191

kalamazoocity.org/departments/parks-and-recreation



*Based on 32,433 households and 74,262 residents (2010 United States Census Bureau information).

The department is utilizing social media to promote programs and activities and to engage residents.



Facebook Statistics*

- 918** Page likes, up from 636 page likes
- 4,533** Total number of engaged users (the number of people who engaged with our page, which includes any click or story created)
- 544** Highest number of engaged users in one calendar day on 8/31/13
- 63,066** Total reach (people who have seen any content associated with our page)
- 8,175** Max total reach in one day on 8/31/13

*Facebook data is from July 1 - December 14, 2013

In 2014, the department will begin to utilize Twitter.

Economic Impact

Events like *Lunchtime Live!* engaged local businesses to create an economic impact. The table below illustrates the number of food vendors and retail vendors that participated weekly. If 100 people spent an average of \$10 each of the eight weeks the event was held (conservative estimate), a direct economic impact of \$8,000 could be projected. This event was not budgeted and was made possible by musicians playing for a nominal fee and the Parks & Recreation Divisions working together to coordinate logistics.

	July 12	July 19	July 26	Aug. 9	Aug. 16	Aug. 23	Sept. 13	Sept. 27
# Food Vendors	4	10	3	8	5	8	6	5
# Retail Vendors	6	7	4	6	5	5	4	3
Activities	0	1	1	2	3	2	1	2