



Recreation Division Annual Report



2020

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YEAR END SUMMARY

The Recreation Division of the Parks, Recreation, and Facilities Management Department continues to be committed to providing comprehensive, high quality recreation programs for the community of Appleton. We know recreation is a key part of the quality of life in any community, and especially so in Appleton. Throughout the year we remained committed to providing balanced, value-focused programming for all ages and abilities.

While 2020 will certainly go down as one of our most challenging years, it was also a year in which we were able to truly showcase the importance of what we do and the value we provide to the community. For the first time in recent history our department was faced with the challenge of dealing with a nationwide pandemic. There were many challenges we encountered including having an entire team working from home, program/facility cancellations and closures, staff changes, and trying to find our new “normal”. The Recreation team was very proactive in creating engagement with the public and developing content to keep the community active and invested (social media posts, new events, a new story walk, scavenger hunts, website resources, etc.).

Program development was key in 2020. When the decision was made to cancel youth programs for the summer and not open the pools the Recreation Division team immediately started developing creative ways to engage the community and provide outlets for people to still be active. We successfully implemented over twenty new programs/events. Many of these new programs/events allowed us to showcase our amenities in the parks and connect people with nature during a time when being outdoors was encouraged.

Partnerships and outreach continue to be a large part of what we do. As you will see in the report, we have some continued partnerships and as well as some new partnerships we have pursued. We seek out partnerships and outreach opportunities to promote what we do and utilize community resources to advocate the importance of Parks and Recreation.

2020 brought us many staff changes with the resignation of two of our full time Recreation Programmers and the retirement of our lead administrative/customer service position. Staff was tasked with additional responsibilities throughout the year but did so willingly and with a team centered mindset. I am especially proud of my team for their continued passion, dedication, and perseverance.

We are looking forward to continuing to serve this great community in 2021!

Staff Notes/Trainings

- Jeff Brazzale joined our Recreation Division team in June and Olivia Kovac joined our team in August. Both hold Recreation Programmer titles.
- Former Programmer, Kabel Helmbrecht, along with Pool Manager Teona King, attended the WPR Aquatic Seminar in Baraboo on Thursday, January 9. Topics covered were techniques to motivate staff to provide excellent guest services, active deck supervision, water training techniques, and lifeguard training information
- Liz Konrath enrolled into the Certified Park and Recreation Professional Certification program and is scheduled to take the exam in March of 2021.
- On April 29 Niki attended a webinar put on by the Aspen Institute titled “Coronavirus and Youth Sports: How to Play During the Crisis”.
- Liz attended CVMIC’s Leadership Soft Skills training.
- Liz, Jeff and Niki attended CVMIC’s Facing Bias educational session.
- Erin Zintek became YPAD certified. This organization stands for Youth Protection Advocates in Dance. This education will help instructors keep students healthy, happy, and safe in dance.
- On June 25 the Recreation Division Staff attended a social media training with BConnected Marketing. They review our social media accounts and website and then come in with recommendations for us on how to improve and to talk about trends/best practices. This year the session focused heavily on Instagram.
- Jeff and Niki attended the Wisconsin Parks and Recreation Association training “Jumping into Esports”.
- Jeff and Liz were trained by the United States Tennis Association (USTA) in their Safesport certification. Topics included Child Abuse prevention, Harassment and Bullying.
- Eileen Gravunder retired as our front line customer support staff person in December.

Recreation Programs / Enrollment

Pre-School/Early Childhood

This year we created a new Outdoor Tots class offered by our talented early education instructors. Both instructors have an extensive background in early childhood programming, and currently teach virtually in preschool programs. They played an integral part in planning the curriculum for our new classes offered outside at the Scheig Center. Come rain or shine these teachers offered two 45 minute classes, where students were accompanied by a parent. We implemented safe guidelines and followed the City’s policies of social distancing as well as mask wearing. We also offered three different classes indoors at the studios. We were able to utilize the large space of studio three as well as the waiting room leading into the studio. The students and parents were socially distanced, and wore masks. The classes focused on colors, imagery, moving their bodies, numbers, and sensory experience. We



were only able to run half of this session due to instructor illness, and increasing numbers of COVID-19 cases. Our most popular class continues to be our parent/child Groovy Tots. We canceled our Preschool extra classes, and were also unable to run our Tap-Jazz-Ballet and Tumbling classes in the fall.

Due to COVID-19, we made the decision to cancel our Friday Fun program. This program runs mid-June through mid-August for ages 3-6 that take place in various parks throughout Appleton. We look forward to offering this program in 2021.

	<u>Participants</u>
Preschool Tots	46
Indoor Fall Classes	15
Preschool Extra	0
Appletots Outdoor classes	10
Preschool Dance	39
Tumbling Tots	46
Friday Fun	0
Zumbini	0
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Total	156



Youth Activities

Our Youth Open Gym program had another solid year of attendance in 2019/2020. The program ran from November 23, 2019 through March 1, 2020. This was the third consecutive year in which we were able to offer 2 locations each Saturday, Ferber Elementary School and McKinley Elementary School. Overall open gym participation numbers remained strong with only a 2% decrease from 2018/2019. While attendance at Ferber was robust, attendance at McKinley was disappointingly low for most of the season. We had targeted McKinley as a Teen Core site but will be re-evaluating that for the 2020/2021 season. Feedback from the public in regards to Open Gym availability remains overwhelmingly positive, and we feel the community greatly appreciates having this programming amenity available to them on an annual basis and continues to support it strongly.

KidStage is our partnership program for kids ages 4 – 12 who have an interest in theatre skills. Due to COVID-19, we were not able to offer as many classes as we typically do each year. In early 2020, KidStage offered a Frozen production, showcasing Anna and Elsa and their epic adventure to bring the family together once and for all. We filled this class over capacity at 35 participants. Due to COVID-19, our Kidstage Partners canceled both summer and fall productions.

Due to COVID-19, we made the decision to cancel Camp APRD. Prior to canceling this program all 8 weeks of Camp were full with 30 kids enrolled each week.

Due to COVID-19, we made the decision to cancel our partnership program with Backyard Hackers. This is a



STEM computer based children’s programming class for ages 6-17.

Skateboard class was scheduled to be held in conjunction with the NEST (North East Skateboard Trust) at the Telulah Skate Park. However, this year due to COVID-19 we did not have skateboarding. We look forward to next Summer partnering with NEST again and offering skate boarding to the community.

Our marketing partnership with Karate America and The Academy’s Karate Fun programs continues to be a great way to introduce youth to Karate and gives an opportunity for them to explore martial arts in a 4-week session. We were able to continue this partnership in 2020. Due to COVID-19, enrollment was significantly less than normal.

Due to COVID -19, we made the decision to cancel the Urban Riders program. This program is an education bike program and is offered each summer for ages 8 – 18 taking place at Telulah Park. This program is broken into two age/ability groups that focus on how to handle a bike safety while biking city streets and trails and learning basic rules of the road.

The summer playground program is always one of our most popular programs for the summer serving hundreds of kids. The program was scheduled to run June 15 – August 13 at thirteen sites for ages 6-13. Unfortunately due to COVID-19 we did not hold the program this summer.

	<u>Participants</u>
Open Gym	1070
Backyard Hackers	0
KidStage	35
Karate	25
Camp APRD	0
Playground Program	0
Archery Instruction	0
Skateboard Instruction	0
Urban Riders	0
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Total	1,130



Youth Sports Leagues/Camps

The youth basketball program for boys and girls continued its strong momentum in 2020, increasing participation levels by 8%. The league ran from January 11 through February 29. Games were hosted at Einstein Middle School, Madison Middle School, and Huntley Elementary School. Once again, much of our growth can be attributed to enthusiastic turnout at the K through 2nd grade levels, along with strong retention and modest growth at the 3rd through 6th grade levels, as well as the 7th & 8th Grade Teen Core basketball league. There were some issues with staff commitments, but we were able still able to provide enough coverage through the season. The program format and vision continue to resonate with parents, with an intense focus on lesson planning, intentional skill progression, and reinforcing a culture of inclusion, encouragement, and nurturing a lifelong interest in the game.

The youth baseball, softball, t-ball, teen core leagues have grown tremendously over the past five years. This has turned into one of our most popular youth sports leagues. With the COVID-19 virus

we spent a good month planning and preparing for how we would be able to run the leagues. We made the decision to bump everything back one month (games starting the week of July 6) in hopes families would feel more comfortable with signing up their kids. This would also give us time to continue to work on our safety protocols for the leagues. After discussions with the City's leadership team it was determined the leagues would be too risky to run even given the safety precautions we were proposing. The decision was made to cancel the leagues for the 2020 summer. Prior to us making the decision to cancel we did have 654 kids registered for the youth leagues.

Our little hitters and youth tennis camps were scheduled to begin on June 8. Due to COVID-19, all youth tennis camps were canceled. Our Recreation Programmer, Elizabeth Konrath and Jeff Brazzale, took the Safe Sport training certification offered through United States Tennis Association (USTA). By taking this training and registering through NET Generation, APRD has full access to youth and adult tennis curriculums and will receive FREE age-appropriate tennis equipment for next summer.

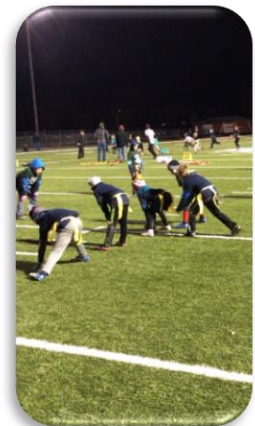
Participation in our summer youth sports camps (basketball, soccer, sports exploration) has been very good over the past couple years. With the COVID situation the registration was very slow as I'm sure people were hesitant to register until there was a plan. All summer youth sports camps were canceled in 2020 due to the COVID virus.

This year we had opted to try a new format for our youth SNAG golf lessons. Being that we were having a challenge finding qualified golf instructors we decided to team up with the Reid Golf Course family days and offer clinics on the Saturday before family days. Unfortunately, being that youth golf lessons were canceled we were unable to test out this new format.

We continue to partner with Appleton United Lacrosse for the fourth year. This camp focuses on scooping, throwing, catching the ball, shooting, basic rules of the game, as well as communication skills. Lacrosse camp was scheduled to begin on June 8. Due to COVID-19, we had to cancel this program

Our youth flag football leagues were cancelled this year due to the pandemic. Even though the program takes place outside we were not confident that participants and coaches could keep physically distanced while working on skills/drills. We are excited about offering it next year!

The partnership with Appleton United Lacrosse continues to be successful. Our 2020 camp was cancelled with COVID-19. We have already set our 2021 dates and class and look forward to offering this again this summer.





In July, our partners with Fox River Hurling Club, had a 4-week camp for kids ages 8-13 scheduled for July. Due to COVID-19, we made the decision to cancel this camp. They were also planning to offer an adult drop-in class throughout July and August; however, they never produced an updated Certificate of Insurance to proceed with this program.

2020 was to be our first year of a partnership with the Chicago Fire Soccer Club. They were scheduled to conduct camps in July and August. These camps were canceled due to COVID-19.

Our Milwaukee Bucks Youth Basketball Camps were expanded to meet the demand that we have had the last few years. This year due to COVID-19 we cancelled the spring break camp and the camps scheduled in July and August.

The 2020 youth soccer program was affected a few different ways by the pandemic. To begin the program, a clear outline of how we could proceed in a safe way was required. We designed our “Play it Safe” soccer guidelines as a collaboration with local health officials. During the process of collaborating we researched national, state and local guidelines to produce the best program possible for our participants. It was decided that we would institute a phased approach to the season. We would begin with only practices and if health conditions improved, we would move to game type situations, to scrimmages, and then to games. The overall health of the community led us to only allow practices in our smaller than usual teams of ten (10) kids.



Due to our diligence in making sure the program could be run safely, and the overall reservation that some parents and participants had about playing soccer, we moved the deadline back for soccer to accommodate late decisions. Overall participation finished at 579 players. This was well above the pace of registration at our original deadline. We picked up over 200 soccer players by extending that deadline. As school and COVID-19 numbers increased in our area, we did see several families that dropped out of the program.

The facilities that we used for our program were also different than previous years. We did not have any games at USA Sports Complex and only used that facility sparingly for practices. Most of our soccer teams practiced at our City of Appleton Parks and used those facilities throughout the week rather than mainly on Saturdays.

Jeff and Olivia worked with local high school cross country coaches to develop a youth running club for grades 4-12. The program was set to run in the fall but due to low enrollment we had to cancel the program. This will be something we explore for 2021.

Equipment is an important part of youth sports. Being able to recycle equipment is something that was accomplished during the 4th quarter. Evaluating all our equipment will help the department purchase new equipment to fit our needs while helping others in the community with needs they might have to play youth sports.

We offered a new program this year, Basketball Shot Club. For this program we got creative with the restrictions set in place for COVID-19. Basketball Shot Club was a virtual class, participants were to make 2,020 basketball shots between September 20-October 20. Once they completed these shots, they sent in their completed report. All the participants received a dri-fit t-shirt.

	<u>Participants</u>
Youth Basketball Leagues	658
Youth Baseball, SB, T-Ball	0
Soccer League	579
Flag Football League	0
Youth Tennis Camp	0
Lacrosse Camp	0
Intro Hurling Camp	0
Little Hitters Tennis Camp	0
Youth Basketball Camp	0
Youth Soccer Camp	0
Sports Exploration Camp	0
SNAG Golf Camp	0
Milwaukee Bucks Camp	0
Challenger Soccer Camp	0
Basketball Shot Club	51
Total	1,288

Teens

Teen Core is a program that we are still working to evolve. Once again, we offered the coed basketball league in which 17 individuals participated. One thing we were surprised by in this league was the intensity at which the kids played. While they like the recreational format of the program, when the clock starts, they play hard! We are still trying to find a right format for the Teen Core program. This will be one the programs that the Recreation Division spends time evaluating for opportunities in 2021.



The Teen Core soccer program looked different this year than previous program. This year we ran practices rather than games for our entire soccer program. Since the entire program was practices, we used volunteer coaches to develop skills rather than allowing the Teens make the choices for scrimmages and games. The numbers for Teen Core are reflected in our league numbers.

	<u>Participants</u>
Teen Core Leagues	45
Junior Leader Program	0
Total	45

Adult Activities



Our adult dance classes have continued to be successful with reaching our maximum capacity for each class. We continue to partner with Navah Mirage to provide Belly Dance class. Our Unity Dance Academy staff taught adult Tap classes in the fall.

The Spanish classes are a great option for adults wanting to learn another language. We offer 3 levels (beginner, intermediate and advanced) of Spanish. These classes were held at the Appleton library in the beginning of the year. We then moved them to the Scheig Center once the library closed due to COVID-19. We were able to continue offering these classes throughout 2020; however, our enrollment numbers decreased significantly due to capacity restrictions.

Adult Tennis Lesson participation in 2020 has experienced a 50% decrease in enrollment with 24 adults participating this summer. This significant decrease is due to COVID-19. This program was scheduled to begin June 9; however, we postponed it to July to ensure the safety of all participants.



Over the past couple of years, we have seen our adult pickleball league numbers grow. With the uncertainty of COVID-19 we ended up sending out a survey to the participants to gauge their comfort level. Many of them were still uncertain so we opted to cancel the league for the summer.



We continue to partner with Debbie Daanen Photography offering adult photography classes. This class teaches the participants how to use all the buttons and add-on features of a camera. Then they get a chance to practice what they learn taking pictures of the Scheig gardens. Due to COVID-19 we had to reduce the capacity for this class, but we still were able to offer this class in the summer of 2020.

Our partnership with the New Horizons Music Fox Valley was set to continue in September. After talking to their organization, they were not at the point where they were meeting yet due to the mask mandate making it difficult to play certain instruments. We did work with them to utilize space at the Pierce Park pavilion where they could be spaced out enough to practice.

Our Seed Guild offering went well this year and we were able to host a few Fall classes. We hosted a total of four classes this year. Seed Guild taught a houseplant Workshop, Herbal and Tea Walk, Flowers as Medicine class and a Botanical Wreath class. All classes are focused on teaching participants herbal remedies or healthy classes that can help boost immune systems.

Our presentations with naturalist Rob Zimmer were cancelled this year with COVID-19. We have already lined up the dates and classes for next year and look forward to offering these programs again.

	<u>Participants</u>
Belly Dance	18
Tap Dance	6
Spanish	105
Seed Guild	25
Rob Zimmer	0
Tennis Lessons	24 (moved to July)
Photography	14
New Horizons Music	0
Total	192

Adult Sports Leagues

In 2020, we had to make the hard decision to cancel the adult Flag Football league due to the pandemic and keeping our players safe.

Our adult Pickleball league was not able to run this year due to COVID-19. This league is held at Summit Park on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We are looking forward to continuing the league in 2021.



	<u>Participants</u>
Adult Flag Football	0
Adult Pickleball League	0
Total	0

Aquatics

There was a lot of planning and preparation when it came to the pools/aquatics programs for the summer of 2020. Staff spent a considerable amount of time researching best practices, safety of staff and patrons, and contingency plans that would allow us to offer swim lessons and lap swim starting the week of July 6. The decision was made to not operate the pools in 2020 due to COVID-19. The staff felt this was the right decision especially when the department of health services came out with their recommendation to not open any public pools.

With the pools not opening and Kabel no longer being with us I brought in Teona King, who has been a manager at Erb, but has been with us for seven years to work on aquatics tasks. This was extremely helpful to have someone clean up files and create some efficiencies for when the new Programmer came in.

Swim Lessons

The winter/spring swim lesson session began February 3 and would have concluded the week of April 20th at East and West Pools. West Pool swim lesson participation was down 17 participants from 2019 with 218 participants. West Pool swim lessons were popular once again with 83% of classes being filled. East swim lessons remain popular and had a 16 person increase from 2019. Classes were 89% full at East in 2020.



Unfortunately due to COVID-19 we were unable to offer swim lessons in the summer or fall of 2020.

	<u>Participants</u>
East Swim Lessons	158
Erb Pool Lessons	0
Mead Lessons	0
West Pool Lessons	218
Total	376

Open Swim

The open/lap swim numbers at West Pool for the first quarter were down from 2019 with a total of 571 participants. A big reason why attendance was down was that Spring Break and the Spring Fling event landed in the first quarter in 2019 but not in 2020. We had one birthday party booked during the first quarter at West Pool.

Due to COVID-19 we were unable to provide open swim at Mead or Erb in the summer and then again at West Pool for the fall/winter of 2020.

	<u>Participants</u>
Erb Pool Open/Lap Swim	0
Mead Pool Open/Lap Swim	0
West Pool Open/Lap Swim	571
Total	571

Aquatics Programs

Appleton Parks and Recreation also offers some non-traditional aquatic programming for youth, adults, and even dogs at our aquatic facilities. We did not run any of these non-traditional programs this year, but plan to resume them in 2021.

Our second consecutive lifeguard training class started at West Pool in February but was cut short due to the closure of all AASD activities. We had a total of 5 participants in the lifeguard class. We were able also host a first aid and CPR class on January 14 which had 5 participants enrolled in the class.



	<u>Participants</u>
Kayak Skills Class	0
Recreational Rowing	0
Snorkeling	0
Discover Scuba	0
Lifeguard Certification	5
CPR/First Aid	5
Total	10

Pool Rentals

We had to cancel all the rentals that we had reserved with our pools not being open this year with the exception of one we were able to host in the first quarter at West Pool.

	<u>Rentals</u>
Erb 50-Meter Pool	0
Erb Pool – Leisure	0
Mead Pool	0
Erb Pool Cabana	0
Erb Pool Oasis	0
Mead Pool Shade	0
West Pool Birthday	1
Total Rentals	1

Aquatic Special Events

2020 provided us time to prepare for next season on our programs and offerings. We may not have opened our facilities or hosted events as we do in typical years, but we are looking forward to offering them again next year.

Our annual Doggie Day at the Pool was canceled, but we have our new date for next year!

	<u>Participants</u>
Winter Water Carnival	0
Spring Fling	0
Splash Bash	0
Doggie Day at the Pool	0
Log Rolling	0
Toy Story Day	0
Music @ Mead	0
Family Game Night	0
Total	0



Swim Passes

Annual pool passes are available to City of Appleton residents for a discounted rate beginning in December and ending in early May. After the discount deadline, they may be purchased at the regular pass price. We plan to offer this sale and price point for the 2021 season. For all of our 2020 pool pass holders we made the decision to provide refunds to them for their passes.

Pool Concessions

Pool concessions were not open this year due to COVID-19.

Fitness and Wellness

Fitness this year proved to be a great outlet for the participants in light of COVID-19. We were able to continue offering our fitness classes throughout the year with limited capacity. All classes were required to wear a mask during the class. When weather permitted, we offered our classes outdoors. We also offered a virtual yoga option using the Aquos board at the Scheig Center. This provided many participants an opportunity to continue their yoga practice from the comfort of their own home. We worked with Pfeifferle Management to move our Zumba class to the 3rd floor of the City Center open mezzanine area to allow for more space and ventilation for this high intensity class. Overall, we experienced a 30% drop in enrollment due to COVID and limited capacity per class.

Due to COVID-19, we were unable to offer our yoga in the park program with our partners at Empower Yoga. This program is extremely successful attracting approximately 200-300 participants per week. Unfortunately, Empower Yoga has closed their doors permanently in Appleton as of the summer. We will continue to work with the previous owner in providing a Yoga in the Park one day event in 2021.

Due to COVID-19, we made the decision to cancel our S.W.A.T team workout. We look forward to partnering with them in 2021.

Our Mindfulness series with Joy Jordan was a great outlet for participants especially for those emotionally impacted by COVID-19. The Mindfulness classes include formal instruction on meditation, current mindfulness practices and working through how to control difficult emotions. We were able to offer some classes throughout 2020 with limited capacity to include free mindfulness practices that were offered as part of our summer Re-Imagined programming.

We partnered with Lorrie Formella from Seasons of Life this year to offer a series of Tai Chi classes ranging from Tai Chi Easy, Qigong practice and a Tai Chi workshop for families. These classes focus on relaxation practices, breathing exercises, and stress management techniques. Unfortunately, we experienced low interest in these classes, which may be contributed to COVID-19. We made the decision to cancel all classes due to low or no enrollment.

We continued to partner with Alo Health for various wellness presentations covering different topics on food sensitivities, emotional eating, and healthy goal setting. These classes were offered as a pre-recorded option this fall. We marketed these classes both to our community and internally with the City of Appleton employees.

	Participants
Zumba	80
Pure Strength	75
Yoga	245
Yoga in the Park	0
Police/SWAT	0
Chair Yoga	6
Forever Fit	66
Strong Bodies	48
Mindfulness	36
Tai Chi	0
Alo Health Presentations	32
Total	588



Unity Dance Academy

The annual Unity Dance Academy recital was to be held at North High School in March 2020 where the theme was Emotions. We had around 530 participants in our recital program this year which comprised of 52 classes of ballet, jazz, acrobatics, hip hop, lyrical, tap, and a senior number. This event was canceled due to the pandemic. We were able to run one last virtual class for our seniors to perform their senior dance. We then made a video honoring the seniors and their dedication to UDA all these years. We sent it to the seniors commemorating their hard work. The dance staff did an amazing job handling the abrupt end to our season and were instrumental in finding solutions for the future of UDA. Over summer we were able to pre-record jazz and ballet dance videos and put them on Facebook so our students could learn a dance with their favorite instructors for free. In the fall we held an outdoor dance workshop at Pierce Pavilion to get our dancers ready for the season. We have added a new genre of dance - musical theater. Our biggest accomplishment has been the successful launch of our virtual



dance platform for our youth dance program. The season kicked off November 2nd and has been going strong! We have had limited classes running, with limited class participation. Due to the safety measures needed for acrobatics, this program did not run virtually. We are excited to add more talent to our staff this year hiring two new dance teachers, and two new dance assistants. Given the pandemic we have been able to offer classes for 213 participants that started in the fall of 2020.

Special Events/Trips

Our Hoops with the Herd event took place on Sunday, February 23 and was quite successful. We had approximately 150 tickets sold, and approximately 70 kids who participated in the pre-game skills clinics. Clinics were very professionally run this year. Staff was very

impressed by the organization and readiness of the Herd coaching staff who volunteered to lead the clinic. Feedback for the event was positive.



When the governor extended the Stay At Home Order through the end of May, we decided to host a virtual 50K in May called Going the “Social” Distance as an attempt to keep the community engaged. Participants could bike, walk, run, roller blade to get their 31 miles in. Once they completed the 50K their medal was sent to them in the mail. With the help of an outside company the medals were designed as a keepsake to remember these times in our history. We had an excellent response with 412 people participating and earning medals.

Our Movie on the Hill series is a family favorite each summer. We had four movie events scheduled for the summer. Unfortunately, even though the events were scheduled to take place outside, we were still concerned with the large gatherings and therefore made the decision to cancel the events for 2020.

Our Children’s Week committee was tasked with determining how we would operate the event in a reimagined/fun way for the community. I am so proud of this group of local community partners and how everyone stepped up to the challenge.

The week kicked off with our Drive-In movie event at the Timber Rattlers stadium featuring Frozen 2. We had 67 vehicles we were able to accommodate with the social distancing rules. We reimagined our popular Kids’ Fun Runs into a virtual Kid’s Fitness Challenge. We had 97 kids participate. A portion of our proceeds, approximately \$1,100, was donated to the Snow Drop Foundation. We partnered with Appleton Fire, Police and Public Health departments to offer a fun and educational Extraterrestrial Scavenger Hunt in 3 city parks. The City Mayor, Police Chief, Fire Chief and Emergency Manager created a fun News Breaking Press Release that we launched on Facebook to market this emergency preparedness themed scavenger hunt. We had over 300 families enjoy this event throughout Children’s week. Reid Golf Course offered a free small bucket of range balls. Our annual dance-o-rama was put on virtually by our Unity Dance Academy staff and was another successful example of rethinking the way we do things. I was also asked to be a judge for the parade of yards event that the Building For Kids was hosting. This was an awesome event that showed true community spirit towards the youth in Appleton.



Summer 2020 Reimagined

With almost all our programs canceled for the summer we came up with the “Summer 2020 Reimagined”. This program ran the entire summer. Each week had a theme, a fun challenge, trivia, engaging activities, etc. Again, our goal during all this was to continue to provide recreational opportunities/experience for the community.

Food Week: We offered a Baking Challenge where people emailed in their Summer Cake creations and we voted based



on appearance. We partnered with Whisk and Arrow who provided a \$20 gift card to the winner. We also provided recipes and fun food themed activities for families to try throughout the week.

Nature/Park Week: During this week we planned several nature and park activities. We partnered with the Appleton Public Library to introduce our first Story Walk with monthly rotating books on display. We partnered with The Plant Place to offer the community a free succulent plant and class on how to take care of these plants. We also provided various nature related activities for families to enjoy while visiting parks or trails.

All About Appleton Week: Promoting Appleton's history, local trails and parks was the goal of All about Appleton Week. A successful photo contest of pictures in Appleton, promoting the Fox Trot trail, giving day trip ideas, and a history of the Appleton Parks quiz were all part of a great week of interaction on social media.

STEM Week: We provided many science, technology, engineering and math related experiments and activities on our website for families to try including building a free-standing spaghetti tower that can support the weight of a marshmallow.

Children's Week: See details listed above regarding Children's Week events.

Arts and Culture Week: This week we held an art challenge and were able to give three winners in three different age categories a \$15 gift card to Avenue Art & Co. One of UDA staff read Giraffes Can't Dance and then had a dance video for little ones to follow along with. We also had a family movie night where the family watched "Singing in the Rain" and then learned a tap routine to the music. Lastly, we connected with the PAC to encourage representation for their virtual "The Show Must Go On" live discussions.



Pet Week: We kicked off our Tails on Trails 10K event during this week where dog owners could sign up to run/walk a 10k with their dogs and earn a medal. We engaged with our followers on social media by asking people to share a picture of their furry friends! We encouraged the community to make their own "pet rock" and to send us any pet tricks their animals may have mastered.

Sports Week: This was a week of fun sports activities that were done virtually and by individuals at our parks. The highlight of the week was "The Great Tennis Ball Pursuit" where we took tennis balls that needed to be disposed of, numbered them, and spread them at 19 parks throughout the city. We then choose 2 random numbers and each winner received a gift card from Play it Again Sports. We received a lot of engagement as the first 300 balls were collected within the first few hours. We put out 200 more on the second day. Fox 11 News interviewed Jeff regarding the program. The winners received a Play it Again Sports gift card.

Posting Trick shots on Instagram, a "Throw Back Thursday" thread and decorating the tennis balls that were found were all part of the fun during Sports week.

Active Appleton Week: We used this week to highlight some of our more unique park amenities including Disc Golf, Skateboard Park, Canoe/Kayak Launch, Ping Pong and Cornhole.

Summer Finale Week: We encouraged families to do a family campout in the backyards to wrap up the summer. We gave resources on campfire songs, stories, food and games. We put together a slideshow of all the activities we were able to offer this summer. It was definitely

different, but it was amazing to see the smiling faces and participation we were still able to make happen during this difficult summer.

This year we planned to run four bus trips to Chicago, Madison and Door County. Due to COVID-19, we canceled all bus trips. In 2021, we are looking forward to adding Madison's Art Fair on the Square and the Farmer's Market.

We canceled the Parent's Night Out event in the spring and fall of 2020. We hope to run this program in early summer if COVID-19 numbers are stable.

Santa calling numbers experienced a significant decrease over the past couple of years. We decided to change this program to Letters to Santa. The Rec Department worked with the Facilities Management team to make a Santa mailbox and had it installed near the facilities building. We provided a template Santa wish list for kids to fill out and drop off during the holiday season. The Recreation team enjoyed reading each letter and wrote back to 221 children. This is well over 100 more kids from last year's Santa Calling program. Due to the increased interest in this program, we have decided to proceed with Letters to Santa for next year.



Due to COVID-19, we made the decision to cancel our popular bike rodeos. During 2020, APRD teamed up with the Bike Fed, ECWRPC and the DOT to create a virtual bike rodeo that we hope will be used for years to come. This project is estimated to be complete in the spring of 2021.

Appleton Parks and Recreation team reimaged our summer programming during the 2020 pandemic to offer safe, educational and fun scavenger hunts for the community. The scavenger hunts involved collaboration and pooling of resources with other agencies, volunteers, and local business donations to demonstrate a joint effort in providing outstanding services amidst the pandemic. Each scavenger hunt was created to reach different populations and ages throughout the community including translations in Hmong and Spanish to support our goal of inclusivity within our community. We offered six unique scavenger hunts including an Extraterrestrial Emergency Preparedness Scavenger Hunt, Appleton Historical Scavenger Hunt, Alphabet Scavenger Hunt, The Great Ball Pursuit, The Great Holiday Dash, and The Magical Bells Scavenger Hunt. In total we had over 1,000 participants enjoy our scavenger hunt series.

This year we introduced our first Story Walk[®] with monthly rotating books on display located on the trails behind the Scheig Center. This program was a collaboration with the Appleton Public Library. The Story Walk[®] was incorporated in many of our scavenger hunts and holiday events. It is impossible to calculate how many families enjoyed the Story Walk[®], but we can estimate that approximately 500 families walked through the Story Walk[®] throughout the year.

This year we were able to offer a few new special events. One of these special events was called Glow in the Park. We offered a drive thru Caravan to Candyland as well as a luminated story walk at the Scheig Center. This event went well, we had a great turn out and lot of people in the community enjoyed the event! We had several businesses volunteer to have a booth in our parking lot to hand out candy and/or other items for kids to enjoy. The story walk was lit by glow balloons and milk jugs that had a candlelight to help with the visibility on the walk.



Leading up to Thanksgiving we did a social media campaign called Planksgiving where we encouraged individuals to do planks each day to develop core strength and improve their balance. Duration of their planks increased throughout the month. The Rec Staff got involved by posting pictures of ourselves doing planks as well!



One of the new scavenger hunt programs we offered was The Great Holiday Dash. Because of COVID, we knew that many previously held family holiday events/parties would not be taking place so we wanted to find something that could be safe and fun for families or small groups. We utilized the GooseChase app in which we uploaded 100 clues pertaining to our Christmas theme and Appleton Area businesses and landmarks. Teams “dashed” around town to shoot short videos, take pictures, mark GPS spots and answer trivia questions during the 3-hour competition. The top 5 teams took home cash prizes donated by Fox Communities Credit Union. We had 50 teams of 2-6 people participate. We received excellent feedback on the event and hope to continue more of these types of events in the future.

For Christmas we offered a new special event called All Things Christmas. We utilized the Scheig Center story walk again for this event. We had a great turn out with scheduled times for each patron to enjoy the story walk. We had one of our staff members dancing in the window acting as sugar plum fairy. We had such great feedback from everyone on our dancing fairy! We passed out hot chocolate for the story walk with surprises related to the book along the way. At the end of the path, we kept our biggest surprise here for the patrons. We had Santa waiting for all the children at the end of the story walk. Santa had a backdrop behind him which offered parents and children an opportunity to take a socially distanced photo. At the very end of the path we gave each family a gingerbread house to make at home.



Staff worked together to develop the Toy Ride-Along program. Discussions were held with Appleton Police Department and we are excited to be offering this program in January of 2021.

	<u>Participants</u>
Hoops with the Herd	150
Social Distance 50K Challenge	412
Kids Fitness Challenge	93
Scavenger Hunts	1161
Tails on Trails	35
Parent’s Night Out	0
Letters to Santa	221
Bike Rodeos	0
Kids Rummage Sale	0
Movie on the Hill/Canoe	0
Appleton Children’s Week	2,000
Door County Trip	0
Chicago Trips	0
Story Walk	500
Glow in the Park	190
All Things Christmas	225
Total:	4,987

Facilities

Scheig Center

44 rentals took place at the Scheig Center in 2020 which is approximately a 50% decrease from last year. Unfortunately, with COVID-19, we had to cancel several reservations to keep our community and staff safe. Liz Konrath

worked with Debbie Daanen Photography to create a virtual tour video of the Scheig Center and Gardens which is now available on our website. The Recreation Division has also continued their use of the Scheig Center by offering programs on-site such as fitness classes like Yoga, Strength Training, Tai Chi, Mindfulness, Appletots and photography classes. Internal groups have been consistently using the Scheig Center as well. The Friends of the Gardens group meets to have their volunteer meeting throughout the year.



Winter Recreation Facilities –

Opened January 17, 2019 and closed February 29, 2020

The winter season was met with much anticipation as we finally were able to open the all new Jones Park complete with warming area, concession stand, as well as hockey and recreational skating rink. The season got off to a slow start as we weren’t able to open until January 17 but once we opened, the weather was conducive for hosting outdoor activities. Erb



and Reid were open only on the weekends while Jones was open seven days per week.

Once again, we flooded a hockey rink and recreational rink at Pierce Park to accommodate skaters and did some regrading of the park green space to make it easier to flood the hockey rink. Ice conditions were decent this winter as the weather did remain relatively cold, and we did have a few days where kids were able to get out and sled. Numbers continue to disappoint at Erb Park as it is not being utilized as much as was anticipated.

None of the locations were ready for the season due to weather by our original December 21 open date and missed a huge opportunity for families to enjoy the outdoors during holiday break. Reid Winter Recreation Center was only open for 12 days but did have 788 recorded participants at the sled hill. Erb Park was only open during the weekends for a total of 12 days



this winter and we only recorded about 132 sledders and 33 skaters during open hours. The big story of the winter was the popularity of Jones Park, specifically the hockey rink. We recorded over 445 hockey players at the rink this winter and was very well received by the public. Some minor tweaks need to occur to make it even more skater-friendly, but overall the rink was a success. The concession stands recorded \$598.25 in concession sales this winter.

2020 Program Participants:

Program Category	Participants
Pre-School/Early Childhood	156
Youth Activities	1,130
Youth Sports Leagues/Camps	1,288
Teens	45
Adult Activities	192
Adult Sports Leagues	0
Swim Lessons	376
Open Swim	571
Aquatics programs/events	10
Fitness/Wellness	588
Unity Dance Academy	743
Special Events/Trips	4,987
Winter Recreation Facilities <small>*only Reid, Erb, Jones get recorded</small>	1,398
Total:	11,484

Volunteer Numbers

Youth Basketball	99	Coaches for leagues
Youth Baseball	0	Coaches for leagues
Youth Flag Football	0	Coaches for leagues
Youth Soccer	58	Coaches for leagues
Unity Dance Recital	0	Ushers, backstage volunteers
Playground Fair	0	Volunteers to help with games/inflatables
Junior Leader Program	0	Volunteer at Playground sites during summer program
Total	157	

Sponsorships/Donations

Donations:

- A donation of \$500 was received from the Red Smith banquet.
- \$8,000 was our portion of the proceeds given by local businesses and organizations toward Children’s Week events. This was down from \$9,000 in 2019.
- Once again, the Community First Fox Cities Marathon awarded us a grant in the amount of \$1,000 for use towards Appleton Kid’s Fun Runs to continue to promote healthy options of fun and fitness to families in our community. Because these events were canceled, we used this money to purchase t-shirts for the Kid’s Fitness Challenge.
- Building for Kids donated 6 craft kits for the winners of both the Alphabet and Magical Bells Scavenger Hunts.
- Fox Communities Credit Union donated \$250 towards Children’s Week which was used to purchase kids’ masks to be included in the Emergency Preparedness Scavenger Hunt bags.
- The city received a \$3,000 grant which was used to provide GO BAGS full of emergency supplies for the first 250 families that registered for the Extraterrestrial Scavenger Hunt.
- The Kids Fitness Challenge raised over \$1,140 for the Snow Drop WI foundation.
- The Plant Place offered free succulents to kids in the community that participated in our Summer Reimagined Nature week.
- Lamers Dairy donated 96 milk jugs for us to illuminate for our Glow in the Park event.
- Fox Communities Credit Union provided us with a \$1,000 sponsorship for our Great Holiday Dash event in December. The money was used for cash prizes in exchange we used their logo in our marketing and also used their Appleton location for clue placement where we were able to provide videos and pictures of our participants for their future marketing purposes.

Community Partnerships / Community Outreach

Community Partnerships:

- We continue to partner with Fleet Feet Sports and Community First Fox Cities Marathon on the Appleton Kids Fun Runs. These events were canceled this summer due to COVID-19; however,

we reimagined this event to a Kids Fitness Challenge that helped raise money for the Snow Drop Foundation of Wisconsin.

- Partnered with the Public Health Department, Fire Department, Police Department and City Leadership to offer an Emergency Preparedness Scavenger Hunt.
- Partnered with the Building for Kids to offer 6 craft kits for our scavenger hunt winners.
- Partnered with the Building for Kids, the Appleton YMCA and other community businesses/organizations to host the 11th annual Children's Week.
- Partnered with the Appleton Public Library to install a StoryWalk at Memorial Park with rotating books each month.
- Partnered with the Plant Place to offer free succulents to kids in the community that participated in our Summer Reimagined Nature week.
- Partnered with Jennifer Kornowski's (Navage Mirage Belly Dance) to provide adult belly dance classes in the studios for APRD participants.
- Continue work with Neenah and Menasha Parks and Recreation Departments and the YMCA of Fox Cities for the annual Day in the Park which was held at Jefferson Park in Menasha this year. This group meets monthly in preparation for this event. There were 78 participants in attendance at this year's event.
- Worked in coordination with Fox Valley Athletics to ensure the continued success of the adult softball leagues at Appleton Memorial Park. We worked to develop safe guidelines for his teams in lieu of COVID-19. For the summer he was up 6 teams putting him at 128 total teams and he was also up in the number of teams for the fall from 22 to 32.
- Partnered with Debbie Daanen Photography to provide a Fundamentals of Photography class for the fourth year in a row.
- We continue to partner with Karate America and The Academy for our Karate Fun classes. We entered a marketing partnership with both locations in 2020.
- Partnered with Joy Born to offer Mindfulness classes.
- Partnered with Alo Health to offer free health and wellness presentations to the community
- Partnered with Kidstage to offer fun theatre-based classes for ages 4-12.
- Partnered with Budding Chefs offering unique hands-on cooking classes for ages 3-8.
- We partnered with Lorrie Formella to offer Tai Chi classes.
- New partnership was developed with Tanya Rosenthal to teach babysitting training classes.
- Partnered with Seed Guild to provide Nature programs for adults.
- We had Jean Balke from Sports Stacking come do a presentation for the Recreation staff on Feb 20. We are considering adding Sports stacking into our camp program and possibly into future APRD programming.



Traditional partnerships canceled in 2020 due to COVID-19:

- Milwaukee Bucks youth basketball camps
- Chicago Fire youth soccer camps
- Fox River Hurling Club youth hurling program
- Police Explorers for recital and playground fair
- NEW Horizons Fox Valley adult band and orchestra program
- Appleton United Lacrosse Club youth lacrosse camps
- Mountain Bay Scuba snorkeling program

- Discover Scuba scuba lessons
- Fox Valley Rowing Club adult rowing classes
- NEST and Surfin Bird Skate Shop youth skateboarding lessons
- Backyard Hackers youth STEM based/coding classes
- S.W.A.T. fitness program

Community Outreach:



- On February 8, the Appletots teachers attended the Appleton Farmer’s market located at the Expo Center and provided fun craft ideas to help market our Appletots Learning Center and other APRD programs.
- Niki gave a presentation at B.A.B.E.S. which is an organization committed to the prevention of child abuse. They have a group of young mothers they are working with to provide support and encourage them through schooling. I spoke mostly about our free programs/events we offer as well as the fee waiver program.
- Niki created a community collaboration group including the YMCA, Building for Kids, Boys and Girls Club and Appleton Public Library leaders. A video was put out with representatives from each of these organizations including a message in support of our families in the community who are navigating through virtual learning and difficult economic times.

Marketing Highlights

- We came to the end of the trial period of website analytics with Stellar Blue at the end of June. We decided that we will not go forward with the paid subscription to the program. Margaret was able to set up Google Analytics for our site and will be starting to run reports to track the activity on our website in 2021.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the recreation division worked to develop an “Activity of the Day” on our Facebook and Instagram pages. It ran from March 20 – May 13. This was our way of still being able to engage with the community during this challenging time. We had a spreadsheet where the staff listed ideas for the posts. Margaret created the graphics for the posts and scheduled them each day.
- We launched a Virtual Recreation Center on our website on April 17. This is a one stop shop for the community to go for resources on fitness, crafts, educational activities for those that are at home during the pandemic.
- The Recreation Division staff created a video message put out via constant contact and social media talking about how we are still working hard to serve the community and how we will be here for them when we are out of this.
- On April 30 Niki was on the Hayley Tenpas show on WHBY to talk about the 50K virtual event, our virtual recreation center and the status of parks/amenities.



- The Recreation Division attended a social media training. This is our yearly marketing training and it was put on by BConnected Marketing. They review our social media accounts and website and then come in with recommendations for us on how to improve and to talk about trends. We were looking to specifically target our Instagram account and increase our followers.
- Jeff was featured on Fox 11 News during our Summer Reimagined Sports Week for “The Great Tennis Ball Pursuit”. This was great exposure on how we were still trying to provide safe activities for families in the community.
- Margaret started using the new Facebook Business Suite which allows her to schedule and produce Instagram posts from her computer instead of just her phone. This has made it much more efficient to post to Instagram. She began using the tool at the start of September.
- Our 2020 social media stats show although we were limited in the programs that we offered, we were still able to attract 1,382 new Facebook followers which bring us over 10,200 likes with a total of 397 Facebook posts created this year. As we expected a surge in people using Instagram was evident by the 705 new Instagram followers which brings us to 1867. We did a total of 169 Instagram posts in 2020.
- The Rec staff continues to work to engage the community with social media campaigns that are fun as well as informational. For example we did a P-Rex video on how our friendly dinosaur stayed busy during quarantine, we did a promotional video with the Mayor, Police Chief, Fire Chief and Emergency Manager to kick off our Family Scavenger Hunt, we did a “tournament” to determine the most beloved yard game, a Halloween costume contest, and Planksgiving fitness challenge.
- July was Parks and Recreation Month. We changed our Facebook cover photo to celebrate the month.
- When the pandemic hit, we discontinued our bi-weekly newsletter, but created a refreshed format in October. The title of the newsletter is now called “News You Can Use”. By not titling it with a day (formerly called APRD’s Friday Five), it provides us with more flexibility.
- Sheng Reichers, the City Communications Specialist, created a Communication Team for all employees that work with social media platforms throughout different city departments. Margaret and Niki attended the first of the monthly meetings in December.
- Teona was able to get out to all of the parks this summer to take updated pictures of each of them including pavilions and playgrounds so we can update the website. Margaret met with Heath Anderson from GIS to learn about the drones we have available in the city for photography and how to fly them. During the lesson they were able to get some footage of the new Lawe St. Trestle Bridge.
- With all the changes to existing programs and creating new programs, Margaret spent a lot of time updating webpages, creating new webpages, creating new graphics, and social media posts to keep the community up to date on these programs. Because we did not have a guide with this updated information, all marketing was done digitally.
- Once again, we developed and distributed two activity guides in 2020. The fall/winter one we chose not to print. Instead a postcard was mailed to all residents stating the guide would be available digitally only on our website. This allowed us flexibility as programs changed.



- We had a lot of promotion/marketing for Children’s Week this year with US Venture hiring Element Marketing. I was involved with the creation of promotional videos, many in-studio radio appearances, live TV segments, etc.

Other Notable Accomplishments/Areas of Interest

- In early March we wrapped up our Project Play pilot. Our goal was to work through the online teamwork toolkit they created and provide feedback. A written report was submitted outlining our findings and how to make the program easier to use by others when they officially roll it out.
- The Recreation Program Fee Policy was updated. Changes included some guidelines for the household credits and refunds, the addition of the cost recovery framework/pyramid, and updated language regarding non-resident fees regarding contracted programs.
- Staff worked in close coordination with the Risk Manager and the Attorney’s office regarding virtual programming, workman’s compensations, waivers, etc. as we found ourselves in unfamiliar territory with the new way we were functioning.
- A COVID-19 response plan spreadsheet was created to help track programs and the contingency plans for those programs based on different timelines.
- A risk assessment tool was created as a resource for staff to use when determining whether it is safe to run a program during COVID-19.
- A survey was developed to gauge what family’s needs are for physical activity. With AASD being virtual and our limits to offering in-person classes we felt it was important to listen to the needs of the community before determining our direction. The survey results showed families no longer want virtual programming but are craving in-person events/programs.
- Niki worked with Mel Lewis to discuss seasonal staff onboarding and how that process would potentially look in Neogov. They are moving all the HR seasonal training to this portal and the seasonal staff will have to watch it on their own time.

