

20 24

ANNUAL REPORT



FROM THE DIRECTOR

As I reflect on the achievements of Kent County Parks and Recreation in 2024, it is evident that this year has been one of revitalizing, refocusing, and reshuffling. The Kent County Parks and Recreation team has diligently worked to implement innovative and thoughtful approaches across programming, operations, safety, and aesthetic. We are committed to designing programs and experiences that foster a sense of belonging, actively engaging our diverse community by emphasizing our inherent need for play and social connection.

This year, we are proud to have created a new logo that draws on our commitment to protecting Kent County's most valuable resource: its open spaces. We also focused on continuing to improve customer experiences, upgrading to a more user-friendly website that showcases our programs and parks and is tied to registration software and facility use systems. These systems align with updated policy and procedure manuals now in use in the department. Thanks to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board for playing a key role, working with us to improve what we offer the community. The Board now has four subcommittees: Program Development, Park Development, Finance, Publicity/Marketing).

Through our partnership with Department of Public Works we invested Maryland Program Open Space funding, county local funds and private contributions in revitalization and new improvements in our parks and facilities system. We are particularly proud of the addition of sand courts at Worton Park thanks to the Donovan Foundation. With local support from the County Commissioners we were also able to give our flagship facility, the Kent County Community Center at Worton Park a fresh look with vibrant new paint colors in five of our rooms, along with upgraded fitness equipment, new furniture, new flooring, basketball rim adjusters, wrestling mat, improved signage, and a striking mural.

We look forward to continuing to provide Kent County residents with high quality programming opportunities for all and access to safe, well-cared for parks.

Sincerely,


Jillyn Coleman, Director

Kent County Commissioners

Ronald H. Fithian
President

Albert H. Nickerson

John F. Price

Shelley Heller

County Administrator

Parks & Recreation Advisory Board

James "Greg" Welch Jr.
Chair

Richard "Rick" Myers
Vice Chair

Faye Little
Member

Joyce Moody
Member

Trish McGee
Board of Ed Member

Jane Welsh
Member

Aiden Butler
Student Representative
Paige Miller

Student Representative
Albert H. Nickerson

County Commissioner
Jillyn Coleman,
Director

Parks & Recreation
Carrie Klein
Deputy Director
Public Works

PARKS & RECREATION TEAMS

VISION

To become a leading-edge provider of recreational services that create community through people, parks, and programs.

MISSION

To create balanced opportunities for our patrons to play, learn, and grow through our programs and parks.



L-R: Sandy Adams, Haili Davis, Jillyn Coleman, Marva Kumpf, Heidi Haigis, Tara Short, Jessica Plum, Michelle Morgan



L-R Carrie Klein, Denny Dalrymple, Greg Welsh, Jr., Adrian Dean, Mark Dixon, Jeremy Francis, Patrick Collihan

UPDATED DEPARTMENT GOALS

- Encourage a growth mindset by viewing setbacks as learning opportunities and identifying lessons that can be applied to future projects or initiatives.
- Encourage open dialogue with our patrons, emphasizing the importance of listening and valuing diverse perspectives.
- Increase opportunities for the community to be actively engaged with the department.
- Foster a cohesive and collaborative environment that drives organizational success and delivers exceptional recreational experiences to the community.
- Regularly revisit and adjust role definitions as needed to accommodate changes in team dynamics or project requirements.

BY THE NUMBERS



220

After School Program
Participants



32,274

Pool
Visits



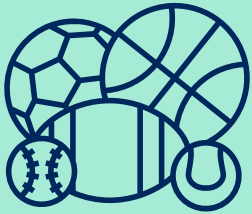
1,022

Kent County
Community Center
Memberships Offered



82

Programs Offered



793

Kent County Parks
and Recreation
Leagues Participants



38

Community
Partners



2,269

Special Event
Participants



866

Summer Camp
Participants



37

Special Events



3,505

Program Registrations



163

Rentals



28

Scholarships Offered

PROGRAM GROWTH & EXPANSION

Kent Community Center membership grew to 1,022 in 2024 from 634 in 2023. This includes 54 Kent County High School students who received free memberships in 2024. There's always something to do at the Community Center from pickleball to youth wrestling.

Leagues for all ages

KCPR is committed to enhancing its sports leagues for all ages, including youth volleyball, basketball, softball, wrestling and adult softball. We provide a fun, safe environment for athletes of all ages and skill levels. KCPR's experienced coaches and staff foster community spirit, encourage participation and friendly competition, focusing on helping each participant develop skills, learn teamwork and build confidence.



Wrestling

Jr Wrestling had tremendous program growth in 2024 with 74 participants. Youth Pre-K - 8th grade. Young wrestlers are part of Upper Chesapeake Junior Wrestling League allowing them the opportunity to compete with some of the best wrestlers in Maryland. Besides the organized program, prospective young wrestlers can participate in free open mat nights for children and youth to come out and give wrestling a try.

Start Smart Sports

The Start Smart Sports Development program introduces preschool age children and their parents to a solid foundation for future skills in a program that builds confidence and self-esteem.



Tots of Fun

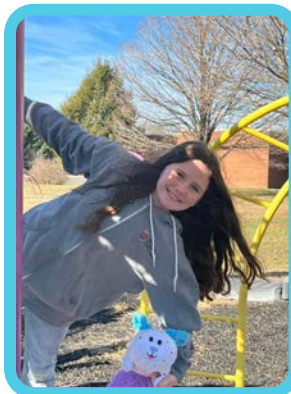
In partnership with Kent Family Center, KCPR hosted the Tots of Fun and this year's Tot's of Fun Park Hop. Combined, Tots of Fun and Tots of Fun Park Hop had 316 registrations. The program provides open gym time for pre-schoolers and their families.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Out of School Fun

Afterschool and summer camp programs improve kids' outcomes in school and beyond. In 2024 220 Kent County elementary school age children participated in afterschool at Galena, Garnet and Rock Hall Elementary Schools. In addition, there were 281 registrations in KCPR summer camp programs, including Kiddie Camp, Day Camp, Youth-in-Action, Leaders Club and Summer Recreation Club.



Youth in Action

Members of youth in Action meet year-round developing their skills through community service. This summer they planted and maintained a community garden at Turner's Creek Park. Mentored by Wayne Gilchrest, Youth in Action tended and harvested hundreds of pounds of fresh vegetables that they donated to the Kent County Food Bank to address hunger in the county

COMMUNITY EVENTS

KCPR offered 28 special events attracting over 2,200 attendees in 2024



Movies at the Pool

Movies at the Pool welcomed 278 participants to two movie nights held in July and August. These were new events in 2024 but sure to become an annual summer event series. Other popular new events included Santa's Mail, Family Nerf Night, and the Sweetheart Ball.



Annual Fall Festival

The annual Fall Festival is a favorite and attracted 223 children and adults. Other annual events also turned out crowds including National Night Out (250), Spring Festival (284) and Trunk or Treat (400).



Annual Betterton Beach Cleanup

The annual Betterton Beach Clean up gave community members an opportunity to give back. Moms, dads, grandparents and kids turned out to spruce up the Beach.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Partners

Boys & Girls Club of Harford & Cecil Counties
Chestertown Volunteer Fire Company
Friends of East Neck Island
Healthy Families Mid-Shore
Kent County Character Counts
Kent County Health Department
Kent County Health Department
Kent County Judy Center (Galena, Garnet, & Rock Hall)
Kent County Little League Baseball
Kent County Public Library
Kent County Public Schools
Kent County Sheriff's Office
Kent County Spartans Football & Cheer
Kent County Youth Soccer
Kent Family Center
Kent Goes Purple
Kent Museum
Kent Youth Lacrosse, Inc.
Lion's Club
Lockbriar Farms
Maryland Health Connection
Maryland Park Service
MD Snap-Education
Minary's Dream Alliance
Open Doors in Education
Punt Pass and Kick (PPK) USA
Queen Anne's County Parks & Recreation
Recovery in Motion
Shore Elite Wrestling
Shore Sticks Field Hockey
Tip-Top Tots
Washington College Men's & Women's Basketball Teams
Washington College Men's & Women's Soccer Teams
Washington College Softball Team
Washington College Women's Field Hockey Team
Wayne Gilcrest



Washington College



In 2024 the partnership between KCPR and the Washington College Athletic Department continued to strengthen and expand programming for county youth. Sixty-five student athletes offered basketball, soccer, softball and field hockey clinics attracting a total of 169 children and youth. Student athletes not only provided the aspiring athletes with skills development, they modelled for children how engagement in sports can be a part of the educational future and life.



Honing athletic abilities, participants learn important life skills such as teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. Parents and guardians have expressed appreciation for the programs, noting the positive impact they have on their children's development both on and off the field.

The partnership between Kent County Parks and Recreation and Washington College is a testament to the power of community collaboration and the shared commitment to nurturing the next generation of leaders. Experiencing the success of these clinics, KCPR and WC Athletics leadership plans to expand to offer clinics for different sports and age groups.



"It is an honor and a privilege to reach out to the community and share our knowledge and passion for the sports we love." Washington College is proud to connect with the community through these valuable clinics."

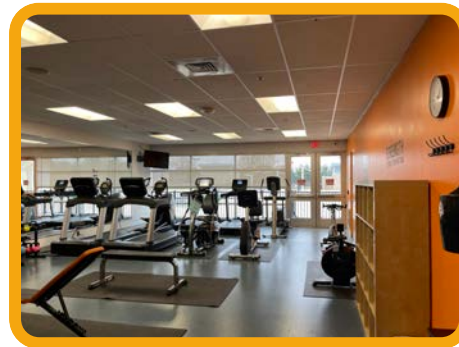
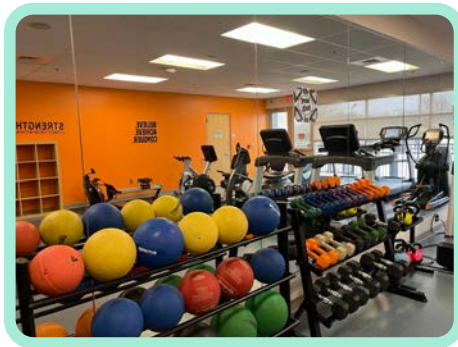
Alisha Mosley, Head Women's Basketball Coach

CAPITAL INVESTMENTS & IMPROVEMENTS

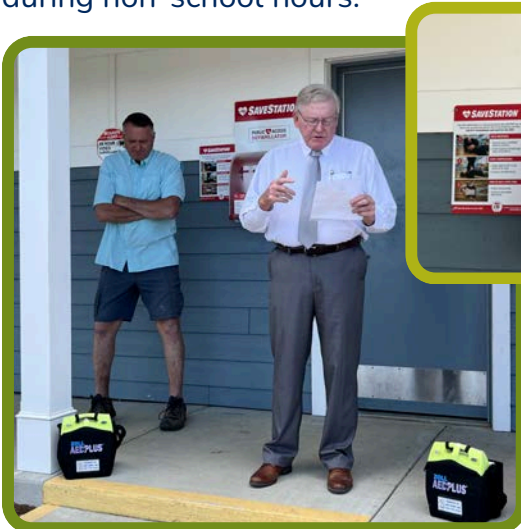
Worton Park & Community Center Improvements



Ongoing renovations supported by Maryland Program Open Space, local general funds, and private donations, enhanced Worton Park, the flagship of Kent County Parks & Recreation. Highlights include new sensory walls, court resurfacing, installation of fencing and lights and relining of courts.



Kent Community Center membership grew to 1,022 in 2024 as residents joined to enjoy many new improvements including new paint, flooring and equipment throughout the facility. This includes 54 Kent County High School students who received free memberships in 2024 and who spend time at the Center during non-school hours.

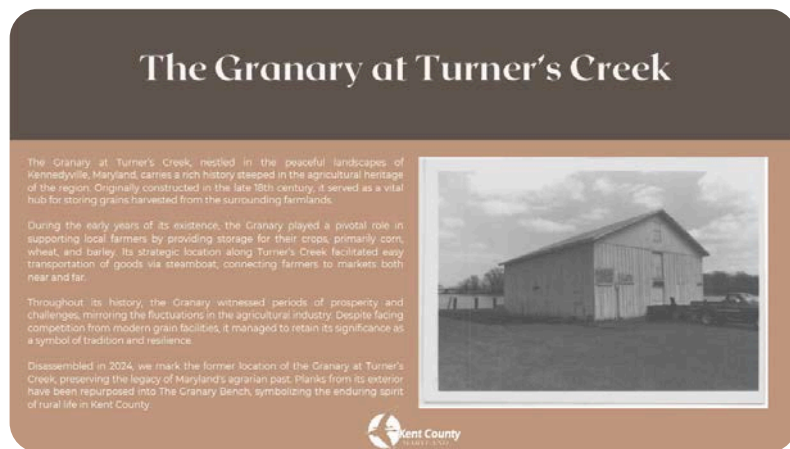


KCPR installed Save Stations at Worton Park, Millington Park & Pool, Betterton Beach and Bayside Pool.



New benches were added along the walking paths in the park, providing resting spots for the many residents who use the park for their walking exercise.

Historic Granary at Turner's Creek Honored



In 2024 the Granary at Turner's Creek was disassembled for safety reasons. The former location is now marked by interpretive signage telling the story of the Granary which stood for many years as a historical marker of the economic linkages between Kent County's agricultural fields and waterways. The granary was originally constructed in the late 18th century and served as a vital hub for storing grains harvested from surround farmlands. The location of the granary along Turner's Creek facilitated easy transportation of goods via steamboat, connecting farmers to markets both near and far. Throughout its history the Granary witness periods of prosperity and challenges, mirroring the fluctuations in the agricultural industry. Despite facing competition from modern grain storage facilities, it managed to retain its significance as a symbol of tradition and resilience.

Ballfields Dedicated to Community Heroes

In January the County Commissioners rededicated ball fields at Worton Park in honor hometown heroes. Newly named fields include Volunteer Field, Orem Field, Commissioner Field, Veterans Field, Heroes Field, and All-Star Field. Toal Field at Toal Park was rededicated in honor of the Toal family who donated property for Toal Park, located outside Galena.



PARKS & FACILITIES

Partnerships Critical for Parks Development

Kent County Parks and Recreation relies on the strong partnership with Public Works to ensure that residents have access to the parks and open spaces that meets their needs. This is supported by many more partnerships.



Development in Kent County parks is made possible by braiding financial and organizational capital to bring projects to completion. These versatile courts at Worton Park now provide space for sand sports and other activities that promote active healthy inclusive activities for all ages. The court construction was possible thanks to the Donovan Family Foundation, Beach, Tennis, MD, LLC, Kent County Department of Public Works, Kent County Roads Division and Kent County Parks & Recreation,



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@KENTCOUNTYCOMMUNITYCENTER