

the


Grapevine



JUNE

2022

Edition



LIFE ENRICHMENT THROUGH RECREATION AND PARKS

**WESTCHESTER RECREATION
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P.O. Box 152 • Valhalla, New York 10595

Gaining Ground on Projects for Play In North Castle!

-Matt Trainor, Superintendent

I started work with the Town of North Castle Recreation and Parks Department back in May of 2012 as a Recreation Supervisor. At that time, my responsibilities were relegated mostly to Day Camp, Fields, Adult Softball and various other varied programs – but nothing in the realm of larger scale facility projects. Since the time I had started in the Parks and Recreation Municipal sector with the Town of Mamaroneck in 2002, I had observed and learned valuable lessons from my Former Superintendents Jill Fisher and Sally Rogol. The thing that had always fascinated me the most was the question - “How do they navigate large scale projects with so many variables involved? How do you balance the need for financing, public engagement, and ultimately Board approval? HELP!”

Well, fast forward to the year 2022; I’m now 20 years into my career, with 10 years as a Superintendent under my belt. I’ve been able to learn how to present ideas to my Board, the resources necessary to execute, and ultimately to plan and be able to turn those ideas into a reality. Sometimes, it’s just a matter of luck; but for certain in others it’s a matter of right place, right time and right people.

In February of 2021 after a two year stint in the Village of Pleasantville, I had the opportunity to come back to North Castle. Fresh off the heels of COVID, quarantines and major changes in the way everyday life was lived one thing had become VERY clear as a Recreation Professional was that Parks had proven themselves to be absolutely ESSENTIAL. When gyms and movie theaters were closed, parks were OPEN. Sports arenas, restaurants, and theaters – CLOSED; Parks? OPEN. The value our facilities had to our communities was immeasurable, and if the one good thing to come out of COVID was the illustration of that principle, then I’m certainly fine with that. Shortly after returning, one thing had become apparent to me – and that was my playgrounds were not in great shape. They were old (25 – 30 years), worn out and in some instances not the safest. I knew my community deserved better, but I also knew that playgrounds were expensive, required community engagement, and perhaps more importantly – would require approvals from my Town Board in a time where keeping taxes low and fixing roads are the larger scale focus.



But I like to go big. Like, replace 4 out of 5 playgrounds at the same time kind of big.

Continues on next page...

Gaining Ground on Projects for Play in North Castle! *...continued*

Then it hit me – I know how to do this! The knowledge of the Masters before me had rushed into my Dinosaur Brain! The plan was rather simple – first, determine a reasonable budget and define the funding source. Second, find and engage a vendor to determine if my budget is realistic considering the identified source. Third, gain support for the idea from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board; and lastly, sell the idea to the Town Board.

Initially, my goal was to complete this project for around \$500K; knowing the Town had Recreation Subdivision fees that had not been touched since the time I first came to North Castle – I looked to that as my funding source. Once I verified that was viable, my plan could take the next step; I contacted my Gametime / MRC rep, Mike Stankina, who met me one day out at each site, did measurements, and eventually presented plans that fit within my budget and needs. Once I had those plans, I presented them to my Advisory Board – who jumped on the boat right away! So much so that in one location, we decided to go FULLY INCLUSIVE with poured-in-place surfacing and play elements. The big issue with that, of course, is that it expands the budget – which had me a bit nervous while presenting to the Town Board. **THEY LOVED THE IDEA!** And now, my budget is about \$610K...

Fast forward to June of 2022; after almost a year of planning, community engagement, design modifications and anticipation, **EQUIPMENT HAS STARTED TO ARRIVE!!!** In a few weeks, our own Parks Department and Highway personnel will begin with the removal of the old playgrounds in preparation for the installation of the new ones in early September. It's been a long process so far (with a good amount to go...), but by the early Fall, the Town of North Castle will have mostly **ALL NEW** playgrounds. This is a big impact project that will touch countless youth in this community, and I'm so proud of it so far!

The moral of this story? Don't hold back your ideas. Dream big. As Recreation Professionals, our resources are sometimes limited, but just by having a few conversations those ideas and dreams can become a reality. We make it happen; we drive the bus. If you don't know how to approach something, chances are someone in WRAPS who is willing to share does. Bring those ideas to life! Your community will appreciate it. Parks are important!

WRAPS representing in Saratoga at the NYSRPS Conference



“Take me out to the Compost”

-Angela Thornton, Recreation Supervisor

One sponsor of the Irvington Recreation Youth Baseball team took their partnership with the program to a whole new level this season. In addition to generously providing financial support for T-ball in Irvington, Hudson Compost Services offered to share a complimentary bag of rich organic soil with the team they sponsored this spring – the Cardinals.

At the conclusion of the last game of the season, Hudson Compost joined the team’s pizza party, handed out individual bags of compost, and gave a fun and educational composting lesson to the players and their families.

“It really started a whole discussion about composting and gardening and healthy eating,” explained Cardinals coach Neil Maher. One of the player’s parents added, “I never thought I’d see my daughter so excited about a bag of dirt.”

A special thanks to the coaches, parents, players, and the Hudson Compost Service for this special community collaboration, and for

remembering what kids’ sports are really all about.



Bits ~ N ~ Pieces

-Congratulation to Mark Duncan on their promotion to Superintendent of Recreation at Croton Recreation!

-Congratulations to Dana Durso on their new position as Superintendent of Recreation at Briarcliff Recreation!

-Congratulations to Nicole Caviola on their new position as Recreation Supervisor at Lewisboro Recreation!

-Congratulations to Kyle Peterson on their new position as Recreation Supervisor at Bedford Recreation!

-Congratulations to Susan Mouris on their new position as Recreation Supervisor at Mount Kisco Recreation!

-Peekskill Recreation is pleased to announce the appointment of Dantae Harris as Recreation Leader to our team. Dantae has worked as a Peekskill Recreation Assistant overseeing the Kiley Youth Center for the past 5 years. He will now oversee and work on Teen Escape Summer Camp, Peekskill Marina, Hassan Bolton Basketball League, Lepore Park Summer Programs, Youth Flag Football, Youth Winter Basketball, and more. Congratulations to Dantae! He started as a consumer of our programs as a Peekskill youth and has moved up through the ranks over the years. It is wonderful to have him as a full time staff member.

-Congratulations to Allie Herskovitz on their new position as Recreation Leader at Mount Kisco Recreation!

-The Town of Mamaroneck Recreation Department is pleased to announce that Matt Angst has been hired as the new General Manager for the Hommocks Park Ice Rink. Matt comes to the Town of Mamaroneck after working for the City of Long Beach Parks and Recreation Department for over 15 years including holding the position of Facilities Manager of their Ice Arena. Welcome Matt!



Above: Retirement Celebration in honor of William V. Zimmermann, Thursday March 31, 2022 at Glen Island Harbor Club, New Rochelle. More photos on Facebook.



Above: Joe Arduino being recognized by the Tarrytown/Sleepy Hollow Rotary Club on his recent retirement from Tarrytown Recreation Department. More photos from Joe's retirement party at Pierson Park on Facebook.



Above: Liz Dieter listening to a proclamation from the 2nd District Legislator Erica Pierce thanking her for over 17 years running the Mount Kisco Seniors at her retirement party.

Bits ~ N ~ Pieces continued

North East Special Recreation has a number of great items to share!

North East's Joe Bellini Makes the News! Pete Ruf from Channel 12 News came to a team practice at Leonard Park to interview Joe and two of their athletes. Full story can be found: <https://westchester.news12.com/mount-kisco-s-joe-bellini-wins-state-coach-of-the-year>

North East Westchester Special Recreation Well Represented at Special Olympics USA Games

Congratulations to North East Special Olympians; Becky Smith and Mike Bub. Both athletes earned a placement on Team New York in the Special Olympics USA games in Orlando, Florida. Becky Smith earned a Bronze medal in the bowling singles tournament. Mike Bub, won Gold in the 4 x 50 and Silver in the 100 yard competitions in swimming. We are incredibly proud of our athletes and their outstanding sportsmanship and commitment to excellence.

Our athletes were joined by Program Director, Nancy Bellini who was selected as a coach for Team New York in recognition of her positive mind-set and confidence building coaching style.



Above: Mount Pleasant Recreation Leader Chris Madera enjoying some quality Recreation time in Saratoga Springs."

Congratulations!

WRAPS would like to congratulate the following members who were newly elected to the WRAPS Board:

Sally Veltidi	President
Erin Mantz	Vice President
Vicky Laoutaris	Treasurer
Kim O'Brien	Secretary
Bill Camarra	Member at Large
Brittney Neider	Member at Large

Some familiar WRAPS faces up in Saratoga for the NYSRPS Conference. April 2022



May Healthy Initiative at the Grit Ninja



Awards & Scholarship Luncheon Winners

Sal Prezioso Fellowship

*Beth Bricker
Lesley Popkin
Sally Veltidi*

Henry B. Funking Youth Award

Taylor Burnett

E. Mario Cribari Scholarship

Samantha Arone- SUNY Cortland

Public Service Award- Individual

Lou Vetrone-Village of Scarsdale

Public Service Award Organization

TRA

Voluntary Service Award- Organization

*Friends of Pound Ridge, Town of
Pound Ridge*

&

*New Castle Baseball & Softball
Association, Town of New
Castle*

E. Mario Cribari Voluntary Service Award-Individual

Pat Yost, Village of Ossining

Staff Associate Award

Lu Caldara, Westchester County

PRC

&

*Jeff Nurnberg, Town of Pound
Ridge*

Ruth M. & Bill Lederer Fellowship

*The Golf Club, South East Consortium
&
Afternoon Games/Art Class, North East
Westchester Special Rec.*

Matt Dolan Innovative Program & Award Grant

*Sleepy Hollow International Film
Festival, Sleepy Hollow
&*

*Forest Pre-School Program, Village of
Scarsdale*

Joe Curtis Award

Robert Kaczmarek

The Austin Welch PIERRE Award

Westchester County Health Dept

Peter J. Mayers Award for Merit

Fran Croughan

Future Mentoring Fellowship

*Richard DiRago (Vicky Laoutaris)
Christopher Madera (Kyle Peterson)*

Lifetime Membership Awards

*Joe Arduino, Fran Croughan, Liz
Dieter, Henry Jamin, Janice Kunicki
Richard Massaroni, Chris Morabito, Nick
Scazafave, William Zimmerman*

Presidents Awards

*Ike Kuzio—Fund Raising with Poker Run
Matt Arone—Fund Raising with NCAA & SB Boxes
Kyle Thornton—Grapevine and Website work
Ricky DiRago—For his work with the Multimedia
award that WRAPS received at the state conference*

Awards & Scholarship Photos

Additional Photos can be found on Facebook



Awards & Scholarship Photos

Additional Photos can be found on Facebook



WRAPS VENDOR & ENTERTAINER MEMBERS

More listed at wrapsny.com

Thank You, John Iorio

Don't Worry Be Very Happy

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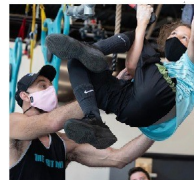
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WRAPS WEBSITE

Since you are reading the Grapevine on the WRAPS website, why not explore the entire site! Check out our Vendor and Entertainer Members, our social/events page and our NEW Employment page! Have any idea for the website?

Email Kyle Thornton at kthornton@mountkisco.ny.gov



Find us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/WRAPSNY/?fref=ts>

Copy and paste the above address for our WRAPS Facebook Page! Be sure to like the page to keep up to date on what's happening within WRAPS.

CALL FOR GRAPEVINE ARTICLES!

The next issue of the Grapevine is scheduled to be posted online in November 2022!

Anyone interested in submitting materials must do so by **Wednesday, November 2, 2022**

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