

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION

2016 ANNUAL REPORT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- A. Community Events
 - 1. Summer Concert Series
 - 2. Movies in the Park
 - 3. Independence Day Activities
 - 4. Children's Events
 - 5. Senior Group

- B. Recreation Activities
 - 1. Summer Park Program
 - 2. Sports Programs

- C. LRC/Naturalist Programs

- D. Fairlawn Kiwanis Community Center

- E. Staff Training

A. Community Special Events

1. Summer Concert Series

The Park and Recreation Board chose the concerts for the Friday Night Summer Concert Series again this year. Concerts were held on each Friday from June 17 – July 29 with various types of musical entertainers performed in Bicentennial Park. Each group performed from 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Diverse styles of music were heard including, oldies, country, acoustic guitar, polka and cover music.

2. Movies in the Park

This year we added movies to our park events. Once a month from June through October, we showed a movie on a large inflatable movie screen in the park. We had movies for both children and families and had a great turnout. The favorite was the October movie (*Hocus Pocus*) that we combined with a campfire at Fort Island Park. The movies were: June *Cool Runnings*, July *Elf*, August *Inside Out*, September *Cars* and October *Hocus Pocus*.

3. Independence Day Activities

The parade was again sponsored by a generous donation from the **Fairlawn Area Chamber of Commerce**. On Monday, July 4, the Independence Day Parade marched down West Market Street from the St. Hilary parking lot to. We once again had volunteers from the Copley-Fairlawn Kiwanis serve as our line organizers. Once the parade passed them, the people could make their way to Bicentennial Park for the Fireworks Event, event, which is underwritten by the **Fairlawn Community Foundation**. Mick & Rick played in the gazebo for two hours while food trucks served the people attending the event. The Brass Band of the Western Reserve played next and kicked off the fireworks display. The Fairlawn City Women's Club also sold refreshments during the concerts and the Peterman Bus Lines once again provided free shuttles for people from Summit Mall to the park.

4. Children's Events

Our children's parties continue to be successful, hosting both Fairlawn residents and those from our neighboring communities.

Bubble Day, Pirate Day and Water Day were held during the summer park program and proved to be fun additions for our summer camp kids. The summer park staff ran the events and the children and parents would like to see many of these become annual events.

Santa is Calling was continued this year after a successful return last year. The Copley Fairlawn Kiwanis men volunteered to assume the role of Santa and call the children to tell them that he would be arriving soon and remind them to be good! The children were in awe as they spoke with Santa, and the parents expressed their thanks for the call.

Gingerbread House Making was another 2nd year event which was a resounding success. Families made gingerbread houses from graham crackers held together with icing and a choice of toppings to decorate their houses. While the children were working on their creations, Santa and Mrs. Claus arrived to visit with each child and give them a present.

5. Senior Group

This December marked the three year anniversary of the first event of the Fairlawn Senior Group. The group has grown and is a welcome addition to the Fairlawn Kiwanis Community Center offerings. They enjoy a variety of programs and events, both in our Community Center and at outside locations. The group has an event planned for the first Monday of each month, while the Planning Committee meets on the third Monday of each month at City Hall.

B. Recreation Activities

1. Summer Park Program

We again had great attendance at our daily park activities which include borrowing equipment (tennis racquets, balls, hula hoops, games, etc.), daily sports and games at the parks and participating in craft time with the staff. The special event days outlined in the Children's Events section were a success and will continue in the years to come.

2. Sports Programs

T-Ball: Jump Start Sports provided children aged 3 and 4 the opportunity to learn the basics of T-ball on Tuesday evenings at Croghan Park. Each child has practices and games and comes away with an MLB hat, team shirt, and award.

Hummingbird Soccer: Jump Start Sports came to the parks to provide basic soccer instruction to children ages 3, 4 and 5. The camp meets on Saturday mornings for an eight week session. Each child comes away from the camp with knowledge of dribbling, passing, trapping, shooting and positioning as well as a t-shirt and trophy.

NEW* Lacrosse: Jump Start Sports lacrosse is an eight week camp designed to give elementary school age children a positive introduction to the sport of lacrosse. They met at Croghan Park on Tuesday evenings

Challenger Soccer Camp: For the second year, the #1 soccer camp in America and Canada offered two half day and one full day program at Croghan Park this year. We had a good turn out and plan to offer this camp again in the future.

Tennis: Towpath Tennis Center again provided two tennis sessions at both Croghan and Griffiths Parks. They offer classes to both children and adults.

C. LRC/Naturalist Programs

Naturalist Programs

The Naturalist strives toward creating and executing nature, wildlife, and environmental education programs for children and adults of all ages and to promote community science. This goal was attained through offering a wide range of programs and creating new and lasting

partnerships. The Naturalist traveled to many local institutions to present nature education programs as well as hosting many groups, schools, scout troops, and visitors by offering various programs, clubs, and events at Fort Island Park. Of the variety of programs were offered some required pre-paid registration while others only required the participants to show up for free programs such as hikes and free talks and workshops. Some programs were held on an ongoing basis such as weekly Yoga, story time, and monthly bird watching days. Others were offered only once as a special event. Larger events were planned and held in collaboration with other organizations such as River Day in spring in conjunction with Friends of the Crooked River.

Programs completed: 104 (Yoga and Story Time counted as 1 each)

Program participants: approximately 971

The Naturalist implemented a renewed commitment to interpretation of nature, wildlife, and environmental issues through educational programs, hikes, Learning Resource Center displays, workshops, talks, and seminars. Interpretation also included a better emphasis on historical and cultural interests of the park and the greater Akron area. The Naturalist encouraged citizen science by engaging the public in conservation efforts, participating in local bird counts for submission to bird conservation organizations, and other environmental issues of concern to the general public. The Naturalist also oversaw the building and placement of new bluebird boxes and bat boxes to replace the old ones falling apart throughout Fort Island Park. The Naturalist continues to research and implement an Invasive Species Management Plan for Fort Island/Griffiths Park in an effort to control unwanted plants from taking over all available growing space (such as Garlic Mustard, Japanese Knotweed and Phragmites). Nesting of bluebirds continues to be monitored. In 2016 it was noted that the eastern bluebirds have returned to Fort Island Park after not being seen for several years. This is a testament to the success of building and placing new bluebird boxes throughout the park. The girl scout troop that built three insect collection display cases for the LRC continues to be involved in adding to the insect collection by collecting on-site at the park throughout warm months when insects are active as well as assisting with proper identification efforts. The Naturalist has also been preparing an archive of the native flora and fauna of Fort Island Park with photo and written description. This is an ongoing project that will take several seasons to compile, so it is a work in progress with the intent of making it available to the public.

The Naturalist at Fort Island Park continues to explore and dialogue with the Parks Director about the possibility of submitting an application for a new permit that would allow for a Category I Wildlife Rehabilitation permit. This permit would allow the Naturalist to rehabilitate small non-rabies vector mammals for eventual release such as various squirrel species, eastern cottontail rabbits, chipmunks, and woodchucks.

The USDA Animal Welfare permit and the Educational Animals Collection permits are in good standing. In addition, a new permit request is being submitted to the U S Fish and Wildlife Service to be able to house migratory birds and/or their parts for educational and program purposes at the Learning Resource Center.

An indoor park bench was donated by the Fairlawn City Garden Club and placed in the lobby of the Learning Resource Center.

For the purposes of professional development and to keep current with what is happening in the science field both the Naturalist attended the following professional development seminars:

Ohio Woodland Steward's Woodland, Water and Wildlife Conference

Wildlife Diversity Conference

NASP Archery Instructor Training

Ohio Wildlife Rehabilitator's Association Conference

Rabies Vector Species Training (OWRA Conference)
Project Wild, Aquatic Wild, Growing Up Wild Training
Passport to Fishing Instructor Training
Moth Identification Workshop
Tree Disease Diagnostic Workshop
Introduction to QGIS Software Workshop
Project Wild and Wet Combined Facilitator Training

The Naturalist increased efforts to advertise and cross-market programs by posting events on Beacon Journal.com, Patch.com, SummitCountyCalendar.org, Akron-Summit Visitors Bureau, sending press releases to the West Side Leader, hosting open houses, implementing new classes, programs, and clubs, and being part of the following events: Kid's Career Day at the University of Akron, Earth Day at the Akron Zoo (Party for the Planet and Senior Safari Day), and the Kindercare Parking Lot Party to increase public knowledge of the Parks and Recreation programs. The Naturalist and Assistant Naturalist also successfully utilized social media to reach out to the public in advertising impromptu events, science education, and to solicit material donations for the LRC. We have posted more regularly on the city's park Facebook page highlighting different upcoming events, park events that took place, and posting nature pictures with identifications or explanations for educational purposes. We have also made efforts to respond to survey feedback and requests for programs that the residents would like to see us do. The Naturalist also began including weekly "Naturalist Notes" to be included in the weekly Newsletter sent out.

Partnerships were maintained with Copley-Fairlawn Schools, especially Ft. Island Elementary, local Girls Scouts and Boy Scout troops, and Copley-Fairlawn School's Science Olympiad team. Outreach efforts continue to increase partnerships with local colleges, universities, professors, undergraduate and graduate students, and community scientists by promoting and making available the LRC and Ft. Island Park as a regional field station to be utilized for current and on-going scientific research (i.e. College Ecology class visits, invasive beetle monitoring, and a current on-going Entomology collection for the LRC). Our visitor counts have remained high with a high volume of traffic through the LRC. We continue to promote various collaborative events for the aim of getting groups of persons from the community to gather at or on the grounds of the LRC and Ft. Island Park in the interest of learning and promoting science within the local and surrounding communities. We have offered additional and more varied programs for all age groups and interests and we have provided more public talks such as talk given to groups such as the Women's Club, the Garden Club, the senior citizens group as well as other free public talks offered at the LRC. We continued our regular contacts and made some new ones with the following schools: The University of Akron, Fairlawn Lutheran School, Waite Elementary School, Arrowhead Elementary School, Shaw JCC, St. Hilary Elementary School, Virtual Academy, The Elms, Copley-Fairlawn Middle School, KinderCare, Tallmade Summer Camp, Nordonia Hills Summer Camp, local Daisy scouts, Brownies and Girl Scout troops, one Boy Scout Troop, Tree City USA, and the Stark County Community Action Agency. A new collaboration and partnership was made with the University of Akron Field Station at Bath Nature Preserve. Field station manager Dr. Lara Roketenetz reached out to us with an interest in collaboration on some programs at both sites (ours and theirs) with ideas of cross advertising and presenting programs together. This new partnership is still in the very beginning stages.

Volunteer numbers are at 24 on the books, but only about 11 actually followed through with volunteering regularly.

Total Volunteer hours in 2016: 300 hours

The Learning Resource Center continues to be visited frequently by the community. Hours were extended to include some evening hours and partial Saturdays during the year.

Total visitors for the 2016 year: 7,726. (as of Dec 31)

The program animals housed at the LRC in 2016 included: Rock Pigeon, Albino Pigeon, Eastern Box Turtles (4), Ferrets (3), Russian tortoise, Common Musk turtle, Painted Turtle, Louisiana Milk Snake, Red Rat Snake, Great Plains Rat Snake, Northern Water Snake (juvenile), California King Snake, Mexican Milk Snake (juvenile), Red-eared Slider turtles (5), Koi pond fish, Gray Tree Frog, Fire-bellied Toad (2), Northern Green Frog, Guinea Pigs (2), Chinchilla, Cockatiel, Parakeet (2), Peach-faced Love Bird, Jenday Conure, Holland Lop-Eared Rabbit (2), Chilean Rose-Haired Tarantula, Veiled Chameleon, Bearded Dragon, Geckos (2), Hermit Crabs (2), and Goldfish and Tropical Aquarium Fish.

We lost 4 animals by death of natural causes in 2016: 1 guinea pig, 1 parakeet, 1 albino pigeon, and 1 veiled chameleon.

We gained 4 animals by donation in 2016: 1 Mexican milk snake, 1 Holland lop-eared rabbit, 1 chinchilla, and 1 Chilean rose-haired tarantula

D. Fairlawn-Kiwanis Community Center

Ongoing rentals and Civic Group meetings:

- Every Monday, the lower level is rented for a Tai Chi class.
- Fairlawn City Women's Club holds their general meeting on the first Friday of each month and their Board meetings on the third Friday of each month
- Fairlawn City Garden Club holds their meetings on the second Friday of each month
- VFW post #349 holds their meetings on the third Thursday of each month
- World War II/Korean and Vietnam Wars Roundtable holds their meetings on the fourth Wednesday of each month
- Fairlawn Toastmasters holds their meetings on the first, third and fifth Tuesdays of each month
- WWII/Korean War Roundtable hosts their speakers on the fourth Thursday of each month.
- Fairlawn Seniors hold their events on the first Monday of each month.
- Epilepsy Support Group meets on the third Wednesday of each month.

E. Staff Training

Computer training

Sportsman Recreation Software (in house)

The Parks and Recreation Department took this training together to learn in depth our registration and scheduling software. The Finance Department also came in for a portion of the training that pertained to them

Adobe Photoshop (Fairlawn Hilton)

This training helped us learn shortcuts and tips to utilize Photoshop in the marketing and advertising of our programs and events.

Naturalists

Ohio Woodland, Water, and Wildlife Conference – Mansfield

During these workshops I learned about Mute Swan management in Ohio, learned to identify Raptor behavior, habitat, and ID, got an overview of the common fungi found in the state during the year, was updated by state professionals about invasive insects that are killing particular trees in the state, and got an overview of freshwater stream fishes of Ohio and their identifying features as well as the rules and regulations for fishing licenses, legal fishing areas, and allowable fish to be taken according to species and size. This was also an opportunity to gain updated information on the above topics to keep current in my field and to network with other professionals from the Division of Wildlife, Natural Resource experts, and environmental resource experts.

NASP Archery Instructor Training – Girard High School, Girard

This training was specifically geared toward becoming certified as an official archery instructor. Since we offer archery classes here at Fairlawn Parks during the summer I thought it important to be a certified instructor and to be a part of the network of archery instructors across the state.

Project Wild, Aquatic Wild, Growing Up Wild – Portage Lakes Wildlife District 3, Akron

This day long workshop was geared toward those who are involved in nature education in various venues. Resources (i.e. books, lesson plans, ideas, etc) were provided to the educators to take back to their facilities and to implement into our own programs. This was an opportunity to not only network with other nature and wildlife educators to share ideas, successes and failures, but it was also a good way to learn how to utilize the new resources in our own facilities. We learned how to adjust nature and wildlife lessons to ages 3-7, ages 8-12, and ages 13-18 according to the resources provided.

Wildlife Diversity Conference – Columbus

During this conference for nature, wildlife, natural resource and educational professionals I attended a series of professional talks throughout the day. I learned more detail about the Monarch butterfly conservation efforts, updated information about pollinators in the state, the structure and function of woodpeckers, the natural history of flying squirrels, the state of quail in Ohio, migration habits and patterns of various large birds such as geese, merlins, etc., current research on the invasive Asian Carp, and legal efforts and current law on the crackdown toward poachers and other wildlife violators. This was also an excellent opportunity to meet, network and share ideas with other nature and wildlife professionals from around the state.

Passport to Fishing – Portage Lakes District Wildlife 3, Akron

This was a certification training to be an official instructor for the Passport to Fishing program for youth. I learned how to instruct the 4 key areas of the program (fish habitat and handling, fishing knots and rigging, casting, and local information and laws). This is

a good program that we can include in our programming here at Fairlawn Parks and Rec. As youth register for this program the Division of Wildlife offers grant money and a voucher to provide the youth with their own fishing poles to be given out at the successful conclusion of the program by the registered youth.

Moth Program – Bath Nature Preserve, Bath

This training program was provided by professionals from the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. I learned how to attract and identify several species of moth that are common to Ohio. I also learned how to implement this type of program and activity into our own programming offered here at Fairlawn Parks and Rec.

Tree Disease Diagnostic Workshop – OSU extension in Mansfield

This workshop enabled me to identify many more trees common to the state of Ohio and the particular diseases that afflict each species. This information from this workshop will be instrumental in my own tree programs here at Fairlawn Parks. I will be more knowledgeable about tree identification and be able to speak to the diseases that inflict them that may also impact trees at the park as well as trees in the neighborhoods and yard of our citizens and other visitors. This workshop also enabled me to meet and network with arborists and other tree professionals from around the state.

Introduction to QGIS – OSU extension in Mansfield

In this workshop participants received an introduction to the QGIS software and received instruction in its basic use. The workshop also provided free data resources for Ohio, integrating GPS with QGIS, digitizing, basic GIS function in the QGIS software, and most importantly, how to generate maps in QGIS that accurately represent your own natural areas, trails, etc. The purpose of attending this workshop was to gain knowledge in the use of the software as well as to gain practical experience in generating maps that we can use here at our own Fairlawn parks.

Project Wild and Wet Combined Facilitator Training – Perrysville

This two day training was provided by the Division of Wildlife to certify the participants as instructors for the Project Wild and Project Wet programs attended as listed above. The general training (listed above) was geared to implement and utilize the resources in our own programs. This training has certified me as an instructor of those programs so that I may offer the program as an instructor to other educators of science, nature, wildlife, home-schoolers, parents, visitors, or any other persons who may have interest in learning more about Project Wild and Project Wet.

Ohio Wildlife Rehabilitator's Conference Rabies Vector Species Workshop – Newark, OH

During this one day workshop I received detailed training in the definition of rabies vector species in Ohio, epidemiology and pathology of rabies and more prevalent disease, clinical information related to each species, hospital and safety protocols for handling and restraint, transmission prevention and human safety and prophylaxis, carcass or tissue preparation for testing, pre-release vaccination of wildlife and vaccination and handling of permanent collection mammals, public education and a status report on regulations and related state information from Division of Wildlife permit administrators. With this workshop I have gained an understanding of the rabies virus and important diseases of rabies vector species, their zoonosis and the husbandry, quarantine and hospital procedures to safely rehabilitate RVS species and/or maintain RVS species in permanent education collections.

Ohio Wildlife Rehabilitator's Conference (General Conference Workshops) – Newark, OH

During the remaining two days of the three day conference (the first day of which is listed above – Rabies Vector Species), I had the choice of which workshops to attend as several

were running simultaneously. I chose to attend those most pertinent to what I do as a Naturalist for Fairlawn Parks and Rec. I attended and learned in more detail, as part of professional development, about nuisance regulations, Division of Wildlife permits, songbird behavior, habitat, and ID, turtle shell repair, waterfowl rehabilitation, a roundtable discussion about innovations in wildlife rehabilitation, current research and conservation efforts of snowy owls, and the return and state of the Peregrine Falcon in the state of Ohio. This is all information that will allow me to be a better, more informed Naturalist, and to share this information with the public provided by our own programs and educational displays in the Learning Resource Center and at Fort Island Park. This conference also allotted time for meeting, sharing, and networking with other wildlife and wildlife rehabilitation professionals. It included a banquet, prize give-a-ways, and a keynote address by the owl expert, Denver Holt, from the Owl Research Institute in Montana.

Recreation/Administration

OPRA Conference (Sandusky, Ohio)

There are over 70 education sessions to choose from, and we attend different sessions during the three days we are there. We share ideas, collaborate and have an opportunity to see what's new in our field in the Exhibit Hall, and we network and catch up with colleagues from around the state during the evening hours. This is also a great time to present our ideas for programs, events, training, staff issues and general day to day operations to colleagues. Presenting ideas make us more confident about the work that we do, and gives us new perspective. Our colleagues ask questions that make us think about our ideas differently. At conference, we have the opportunity to get feedback from people who have never seen it before and provide new insight.

Classes attended in 2016:

CLASS NAME	CEU's
The Changing World of Aquatics -discussions on spray grounds vs pools and what all communities should have to keep their residents happy and engaged.	0.10
Keynote: True Freedom-A Gift to be Received	0.10
Summer Romances: Hot or Not? -how to deal with summer park staff: not just romantic relationships, but their general day to day dynamics together. What is our role, what legal cases should we be aware of that shaped what we can and cannot do as a manager.	0.10
Assertively Managing Conflict - seven basic responses to conflict, with six of them being ineffective. Learned how to recognize style, adopt healthier strategies and respond to others who	0.10

refuse to choose a healthy approach

The Death of Meaningless Meetings -we learned the 10 steps to have more productive meetings and we utilized these steps immediately upon returning at our bi-monthly staff meetings.	0.10
Fostering Personal Security as a Foundation of Trust - “we can’t make people feel secure but we can create cultures that foster reasonable security. If team members are convinced that they are on the team for a reason, and that their leader recognizes value in them, then they can both operate from a greater sense of security which allows them to trust one another and to have healthy depersonalized conflict.” Best quote from the session.	0.10
P.O.W. Inc. - A Health and Wellness Initiative -Personalizing Our Wellness incorporates the idea of physical activity and recreation from a non-traditional perspective by presenting research supported strategies around happiness and dimensions of wellness in order to promote healthy lifestyles, combat obesity and reduce any anxiety around competitive style physical activity.	0.10
Keynote: The R Factor - Maximize the One Thing you can Control	0.10
Pencil, Toilet, Taco - Creating your Environment -a fresh look for people who have been in the business for a long time. Looked at leadership styles needed to foster productive and happy employees.	0.10
The Value of Varying Views Fostering team success by increasing listening and flexibility in ourselves and others, disagreeing without being disagreeable, reducing fear of new thinking and motivating more of it, how to promote change and improvement without raising defensiveness, getting people to <i>expect</i> different opinions and to better understand the value of our differences and identifying and communicating assumptions to improve group problem-solving and planning	0.10

Ceu's are required to maintain my CRPR (Certified Park and Recreational Professional certification. *The Certified Park and Recreation Professional certification is the national standard for all parks and recreation professionals who want to be at the forefront of their profession. Attaining the CPRP designation shows that you have met education and experience qualifications, and illustrates your commitment to the profession as well as your knowledge and understanding of key concepts within parks and recreation.* *NRPA definition

Eastside Roundtables (4-5 times a year, location rotates at member facilities)

Parks & Recreation / Community Education Professionals from the Eastside of the greater Akron/Cleveland area collaborating together to better their departments and communities.

NRPA Conference (St. Louis, MO)

The NRPA Annual Conference provides more than 200 education and learning opportunities through 11 education tracks. I had the opportunity to learn from some of the best speakers from around the country. This Conference offers the same options as the local, except there are colleagues, speakers, educators and vendors from across the country. The wealth of knowledge available to present ideas to, gather feedback from and gain perspective in areas completely new to us is invaluable. The confidence gained here from interacting with so many kinds of Park and Recreation Professionals is unmatched in any other training. I met directors who run departments very similar to ours and being able to discuss ideas, programs and problem issues was one of the highlights of the Conference. There is no better way to interact with these people and gain the knowledge, insight and confidence that we are doing the best we can for our community.

Classes attended in 2016:

CLASS NAME	CEU's
How to Get People to Do Their Flat Out Best -helped with training, motivating and working with people, not only staff, but during programs and events. How to treat people and what to expect from them.	0.10
How to Stay COOL When Things Heat UP! -tools to alter our actions and reactions, to influence the responses we get from others. Learned specific techniques to apply to help reduce stress level by learning to coexist with life's difficult people. Discover skills that will help you become less of a target for negative behaviors, take care of yourself.	0.10
Active Adults: Best of the Best - North, South, East, West - presented a variety of the best active adult programs from across the United States: best trips, special events, classes, health and fitness, and art and cultural activities for adults 50 years and older. I presented some of these ideas to our Senior Group	0.10

Pickle On! Managing Municipal Pickleball -Just in case we get more requests, I want to know the ins and outs of pickle ball. What the people want and how to give it to them.	0.10
Recreation Program Hacks: 60+ Innovative Ideas in 60 Minutes - After the presenters gave 60 great ideas for new programs (specifically ones they are using that are successful) participants contributed their best and most inventive program ideas to the rest of the group, providing an opportunity for networking and sharing of best practices.	0.10
Special Events: The Do's, the Don'ts, the Maybe's - helped develop approaches to manage events and for other's wishing to use parks and public properties in the areas of permitting, logistics, risk management, marketing and evaluation. learned how to have an event without sacrificing our park and department.	0.10
WOOHOO! Fifty Fast & Furious Games in Fifty-Five "Fun"utes! -hand on session where we not only learned new games to pull out at a moment's notice at the park or events, but participated in each one.	0.10
Drones in the Park: Threat or Opportunity? - The Academy of Model Aeronautics (recognized by the FAA as the authority and subject matter expert on model aviation) presented this class to answer all the questions we have about drones in the parks.	0.10

OPRA Workshops:

Social Media and its Place in a Marketing Communications Strategy (Columbus,OH)

We learned how to utilize social media better and market not only our programs and events, but our department. We took away tools to better track how people are learning about our programs and events, how to deal with negative comments on social media, tips to increase traffic to our pages and what social media programs are best for our department.

Staff Development: How to Develop Positive, Proud and Productive People (Seville, OH)

This training focused on how to get and retain staff that promote the focus of our department. How to develop successful people (who in turn help our organization become successful) with three key factors, that when combined, have maximum impact. We learned the "3P Advantage" in which people are positive, proud and productive.