

Team-Times Newsletter

Bi-monthly Employee Newsletter of the Richland County Recreation Commission -- June 2012

IN THIS ISSUE:

- THE RCRC GREEN TEAM PARTICIPATED IN THE GREAT AMERICAN CLEANUP 1
- 43RD ANNUAL COTTONTAIL FESTIVAL 2
- GREEN THUMB GARDENING 2
- PLAYGROUND SAFETY 3-4
- A HOLE IN ONE WITH SOLORIDER 4
- FIREHOUSE SAFETY JAMBOREE 5
- IT'S TIME TO THINK WATER SAFETY! 6
- KICK BACK AND RELAX WITH JAZZ 6
- A TRIP TO THE LOWCOUNTRY 7
- NATIONAL PHYSICAL EDUCATION & SPORTS WEEK 7
- EMPOWERING SPECIAL POPULATIONS WITH PASSIONATE PROFESSIONALS 8

JUNE CALENDAR 8

MISSION STATEMENT

Dedicated to enriching lives and connecting communities through diverse recreational opportunities.



South Carolina's First and Only Nationally Accredited Parks & Recreation Agency

The RCRC Green Team Participated in the Great American Cleanup

Tara Dickerson, Community Relations Division Head

The RCRC Green Team participated in the *Great American Cleanup*, a localized cleanup and community improvement program, coordinated by Palmetto Pride and Keep South Carolina Beautiful on Friday, May 18th. The green team organized a litter pick up along Monticello Road from 9:00-11:00 am.



RCRC staff and members of the community took part in this springtime campaign to clean up the area surrounding the Denny Terrace Community Center. There were 16 bags of litter collected during the clean up. Please join us for the next *Great American Cleanup* on July 20th at the Ballentine Community Center. For more information please contact the RCRC Green Team at 754-6720 ext. 240.

43rd Annual Cottontail Festival

Felicia Venerable, Special Events Coordinator

On behalf of the Community Relations and Special Events departments I would like to share a heartfelt “Thank you” to everyone who helped to make our 43rd Annual Cottontail Festival a major success. Everyone brought their “A” game and gave 100% and we could not have done it without your help. The entire staff was the epitome of the acronym H.A.R.D (Humble, Accountable, Responsible and Dedicated). You pitched in where you were needed, you took ownership of your stations and you made sure each customer had a great Cottontail experience. This year the event incorporated a creative twist with the kid-hop artist Secret Agent 23 Skidoo. The free concert motivated children to make healthy decisions about life; the songs radiate positivity, promoting self-esteem and character development. I would like to also acknowledge our vendors and sponsors:



Richland County Recreation Foundation, Army Reserve Families of Fort Jackson, Verizon Wireless, Friends of Sesqui, Northeast Dentistry, Palmetto Pride, Richland County Sheriff Department, Michael’s Arts and Craft, Chick-fil-a, Rita’s Italian Ice, Subrina’s Lunch Box, Will and Kris Amusements, Richland County Emergency Services, Richland County D.A.R.E and Southern Pride Rabbits & Cavy Club.

Again, Thanks to everyone for a wonderful 43rd and we look forward to bigger and better things for the 44th.

Green Thumb Gardening

Andrew Scott, Adaptive Recreation Manager

On a mild spring morning, you might find Veronica Dargan or Diane Sligh, coordinators with the Adaptive Recreation Programs joined by a few of Denny Terrace Community neighbors engaged in some gardening. The Adaptive Recreation Department along with Palmetto Pride makes it possible for this gardening program to exist.

The raise beds are perfect for our disable and senior residence. Diane and Veronica enjoy working with the community as they visit and work in the community garden. Many of the Adaptive Recreation day and evening program participants enjoy the gardening by putting their hands in the dirt for cultivating and planting. They are thrill to watch the growth process and to see the finish product.

This year with the assistance from the Richland County Recreation Commission grounds crew, we were able to install some pavers that make it accessible to individuals in wheelchairs. The garden is located behind the Denny Terrace Gymnasium. With the addition of plants, flowers and benches the area is very serene and peaceful.

Please feel free to stop by and enjoy having your lunch are just getting away from the desk for a few minutes.



Playground Safety

Chris Santino, Safety Manager

June is National Playground Safety month. Do you know how many playgrounds are in the RCRC family, the answer is 29. Did you know each year more than 200,000 children visit hospital emergency rooms because of playground injuries in the United States. Many playground injuries can be prevented. Use this guide to examine your children's playground so that they can run, jump, swing and slide to their heart's content—safely and properly.

Soft surface

Because nearly 79 percent of playground injuries are caused by falls to the ground, improper surfacing and is the first thing parents should watch for when they inspect a playground. Wood chips, bark mulch, wood fibers, sand, pea gravel, shredded tires and rubber mats cushion falls well. Avoid concrete, grass and dirt, they're too hard. A minimum depth of 9 inches of material surrounding each piece of equipment in a 6-foot fall zone is recommended. And regular maintenance is also crucial; if not weekly, then at least monthly.

Swings

Swings are the pieces of moving equipment that are most likely to cause injuries to children. Animal swings have caused several deaths and should be removed from playgrounds. Metal or wooden seats should be replaced with soft seats. The play zone for swings must be set far enough away from other equipment so that children won't be hit by a moving swing. Only two swings should be in each supporting framework, and they should be at least 24 inches apart. Full-bucket seats are recommended for younger children age 2 – 5 years old. Half-bucket seats are dangerous because babies and toddlers can slide out of them; they are designed for ages 5-12. Lastly, understand that swings are not designed to be stood on or jumped off of.

Smooth sliding

Slides should be well-anchored, have firm handrails and good traction on the steps. There should be no gaps between the slide itself and the platform. There should also be some barrier at the top of the slide to force children to go from a standing position to a seated position before they go down.



One of the greatest dangers with slides occurs when drawstrings on children's clothes get caught at the top of the slide. Although most children's clothing manufacturers have quit making drawstrings, some children have older clothes with these drawstrings, be mindful. Slides are not designed to go up on or slide head first and tunnel slides are not designed to be climbed on top of.

Safe seesaws and merry-go-rounds

Spring-loaded seesaws are best for young children. Avoid adjustable seesaws with chains because children can crush their hands under the chains. A traditional type seesaw should have a tire or some other object under the seat to keep it from hitting the ground. Merry-go-rounds, or "whirls" or "roundabouts", are best for school-age children. They should have good hand grips, and the rotating platform should be level, free of sharp edges and have adequate clearance to prevent crushing or severing limbs.

Climb carefully

Forty percent of all playground injuries are related to climbing equipment. More children are injured falling off climbing equipment or horizontal ladders than anything else on the playground. Children under 5 shouldn't play on this equipment. However, climbers are great for encouraging upper body strength. Watch older children when they're climbing, check that steps and handrails are in good condition, and make sure a guardrail or barrier surrounds raised platforms. Any climbing ropes or chains should be secured at the top and bottom. The number of injuries caused by monkey bars is so significant that many experts recommend that they be removed from all playgrounds.

Playgrounds for all children

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that new playgrounds make appropriate accommodations for disabled children. The most important issue is how the children get into the space. The ADA requires a 60-inch pathway that is firm, stable and slip-resistant. Rubber tiles and matting are good for accessibility, while loose-fill material like sand and wood chips are not. An easy fix for a playground is to add an adaptive swing, but ideally much more can be done. It's important to provide diverse and stimulating play experiences for children of all abilities.

Improve your playground

If you find a playground that is unsafe, report the problem to the owner/operator. Understand, there are no national mandatory standards for public playground equipment, but Texas, California, New Jersey, Michigan and North Carolina have laws that require playgrounds to follow standards of the American Society for Testing and Materials (this is the standard that I apply when inspecting RCRC playgrounds). Some states require playgrounds to follow the standards set in the

National Playground Safety Institute, the Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) *Handbook for Public Playground Safety*.

Top 10 Checklist for Playground Safety

1. Surfaces around playground equipment should be filled with at least 9 inches of loose fill, such as wood chips, mulch, sand or pea gravel.
2. Most stationary equipment should have at least a 6 foot use zone in all directions.
3. Any openings that can trap children (in guardrails or between ladder rungs) should be less than 3.5 inches apart or more than 9 inches. Never allow your child to wear a bicycle helmet on a playground.
4. Guardrails should surround all elevated platforms and should be at least 29 inches high for preschool-age children and 38 inches high for school-age children.
5. Look for broken glass, exposed concrete footings, ant hills, bee's nests, tree roots or rocks that could harm or be a hazard to children.
6. Check for sharp edges and dangerous hardware, like open "S" hooks or protruding bolts.
7. Make sure your child plays on age-appropriate equipment. Public playgrounds are designed in 3 different age categories, age 6 – 24 months, 2 – 5 years old and 5 – 12 years old. RCRC playgrounds are designed for children 5 – 12.
8. Playgrounds should be maintained regularly. Report any problems.
9. Remove hoods or drawstrings that can get caught on equipment. Be certain your child has proper footwear and their shoe strings are tied. Flip flops should not be worn while playing on a playground.
10. One of the most important things parents can do when at a playground is **SUPERVISE THERE CHILDREN WHILE THEY PLAY.**

Furthermore, parents must be certain their child is utilizing the playground equipment they way it was constructed and designed to be played upon.

In concluding, as a certified playground safety inspector it is my obligation and responsibility to make our playgrounds safe for the children of Richland County. Moreover, it is my responsibility to identify and eliminate any playground hazards to reduce life threatening and debilitating injuries. Bottom line is children will be children; I cannot eliminate they risk they take on public playgrounds, but I can eliminate the hazards and that is the key to having a fun safe playground.

A Hole in One with SoloRider

Andrew Scott, Manager, Adaptive Recreation

When is one seat better than two? When it keeps golfers in the game.

Long after golfers lose the mobility and stamina they once had, they dream of continuing to play the game they love. SoloRider is turning those dreams into reality for thousands of golfers who are enjoying the stable, comfortable and fun way to get back in the game.

SoloRider Means New accessibility for golfers

Don't be left behind. Experience the smoothest ride in golf and continue to enjoy the game of a lifetime. To enable golfers to continue to enjoy the game of golf, the SoloRider difference is a golf car that you can:

- Drive onto greens and tees with no impact to turf,
- Drive over rough terrain with confidence,
- Easily enter and exit using the 350 degree swivel seat,
- Play from using the elevating seat, and
- Easily handle with the ergonomic controls.
- Attract your share of the 1.2 million mobility-impaired golf markets.

Richland County Recreation Commission now offers the opportunity to experience the joy of playing golf again

in this adaptable piece of equipment. The SoloRider Adaptive Golf Cart is house and LinRick Golf Course, 356 Campground Road, Columbia, SC 29203. Phone (803)754-6331 to reserve the cart at least 24 hours in advance.



Firehouse Safety Jamboree

James Mercado II, Tournament/Athletic Events Coordinator

If you were driving by North Springs Park on May 12 from 10:00 am-2:00 pm, you more and likely saw a fire truck with its ladder hanging over Clemson Road. Relax everyone, no need to worry...there wasn't a fire at North Springs Park; instead the RCRC Athletic Department hosted the Firehouse Subs, "Fire Safety Jamboree."



Attendees of the event received tips on fire safety by crawling through a simulated smoke house, parents were able to have their child car seats inspected by fire fighters; along with free games, prizes and food. As one satisfied patron stated, "Wow, RCRC goes about and beyond for their community!"



The end of season flag football tournament is going on its third year and as several parents and coaches say, "it keeps getting better and better each year!"



The event was supported by Texas Roadhouse, Rita's Shaved Ice, CiCi's Pizza, Richland County/Elgin Fire Department, and Firehouse Subs Foundation.

The event took place in conjunction with RCRC Athletic Spring Flag Football Youth Tournament. RCRC Youth Athletic Spring Flag Football Tournament concluded its season on the same day. The league, which consisted of 14 teams, ranging from 5-14 years old has become a popular youth sport within RCRC Youth Athletics.



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<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Columbia-SC/Richland-County-Recreation-Commission/115911922480>

Follow us on Twitter:

www.twitter.com/RichlandRec

It's Time to Think Water Safety!

Bob Hickman, Director of Safety, Security & Aquatics

Pools, lakes, ponds, and beaches mean summer fun and cool relief from hot weather. But water also can be dangerous for kids if you don't take the proper precautions. Nearly 1,000 kids die each year by drowning. The good news is there are many ways to keep your kids safe in the water and make sure that they take the right precautions when they're on their own.

Keeping Kids Safe

Kids need constant supervision around water — whether the water is in a bathtub, a wading pool, an ornamental fish pond, a swimming pool, a spa, the beach, or a lake.



Drowning is usually quick and silent. It's not like watching a movie where the person drowning screams for help and waves their arms frantically. In real life, a child just submerges, and will lose consciousness two minutes, with irreversible brain damage occurring within four to six minutes.

Making Kids Water Wise

It's important to teach your kids proper pool and spa behavior, and to make sure that you take the right precautions, too. Let kids know that they should contact the lifeguard or an adult if there's an emergency.

Kids shouldn't run or push around the pool and should never dive in areas that are not marked for diving. If the weather turns bad, (especially if there's lightning) they should get out of the water immediately.

Don't assume that just because your child took swimming lessons or is using a flotation device such as an inner tube or inflatable raft that there's no drowning risk. If you're at a party, it's especially easy to become distracted, so designate an adult who will be responsible for watching the children. If you leave your child with a babysitter, make sure he or she knows your rules for the pool.

Seconds count when it comes to water emergencies, so take a cordless phone with you when you're watching kids during water play. A quick-dial feature keyed to 911 or your local emergency center will also save additional seconds.

Learn CPR (other caregivers should learn it, too) and make sure you have safety equipment, such as emergency flotation devices, that are in good shape and are close at hand when boating or swimming.

After your kids are finished playing in the pool for the day, be sure to remove all pool toys and put them away. Children have drowned while trying to retrieve playthings left in the pool.

Research shows there is no one device or solution that can prevent all childhood drownings. Instead, a multifaceted strategy, including ***active supervision*** by a designated adult, ***safe water environments***, ***proper gear*** and last but not least ***education***, is required to ensure children's safety in and around water.

Please remember, Being Safe is No Accident!

Kick Back and Relax with Jazz

Pam Jones, Program Coordinator

Summer Kool
JAZZ IN THE PARK

June 6, July 11, August 1, September 5
7:00-10:00 pm
Adult Activity Center • 7494 Parklane Road
Ages 21+ • Free
Bring your lawn chairs and coolers. Refreshments can be purchased.
Vendor booths can be purchased.
Kick back for a night of easy listening to various local jazz talents.

For more information, call Pam Jones at 462-9995

This year is the 3rd Annual Summer Kool Jazz in the Park series. The concert features a variety of local artists in the Midlands area. Over the years, I have been given the opportunity to meet and enjoy the talent of a few of Columbia's elite performers such as Dante' Lewis, Willie Lyles, The Blythewood Orchestra, and Arischa just to name a few. The event is held on the grounds of the Adult Activity Center from 7:00-10:00 pm. Everyone is encouraged to bring their coolers, blankets, and lawn chairs or try the vendor on-site. Security is provided by the Richland County Sheriff's Department to allow everyone to have fun in a safe environment. Celebrate hump day with a night of jazz (June 6, July 11, August 1, and September 5).



A Trip to the Lowcountry

Melissa Holman, Director, Adult Activity Center



The Adult Activity Center is always trying to introduce our travel group to sites unseen. On April 18, we took a trip to Johns Island/Wadmalaw Island, SC. The first place we visited was the **Angel Oak Tree** (over 65ft. tall, 17,000sqft. of shade and 1500+ years old).



The second stop was the **Charleston Tea Garden** (home of "American Classic Tea"). This is America's Only Tea Garden. We learned the process of growing the tea leaves and how different varieties are created. The group even enjoyed a great lunch from one of the local restaurants. The last stop on our tour was **Irvin-House Vineyards** (the only domestic winery in SC). The muscadine grapes are grown, harvested, made into wine, and bottled on the property. Everyone had a great time and most of them never knew that such places existed in SC. It was a great educational experience for everyone.



Travel with us on these upcoming destinations:

Charleston Harbor Tour

July 19, 2012 – Charleston, SC
\$25/person – Due July 10th

Old Slave Mart Museum & Old Exchange

August 8, 2012 – Charleston, SC
\$20/person – Due July 23rd

SCRPA Senior Beach Retreat

October 1-4, 2012 – Myrtle Beach, SC
Call for prices – Due August 10th

Southern Christmas Show

November 14, 2012 – Charlotte, NC
\$20/person – Due November 1st

Concord Mills Mall

December 14, 2012 – Concord, NC
\$10/person – Due December 3rd

For more information, call the Adult Activity Center at (803) 462-9995.

National Physical Education & Sports Week

Jennifer Jeffcoat, Park Manager, Friarsgate Park

On May 1, Friarsgate Park hosted the National Physical Education and Sports Week program. The showcase introduced cheerleading, cardio jam, soul line dancing, zumba, gymnastics, and all of the upcoming camps at Friarsgate Park this summer. There were 75-80 spectators that came out to enjoy the festivities.



During the show, we had great participation from our audience. They joined in with the cardio jam, soul line dancing and Zumba. The speaker, Leomont Evans gave a great speech about the importance and benefits of participating in physical education and sports activities.

Overall, it was a great event. Friarsgate Park had great entertainment from our programs, and great food from Bailey's Sports Grille. The National Physical Education and Sports Week showcase was an excellent family oriented event.





Empowering Special Populations with Passionate Professionals

Michael Marshall, Recreation Programmer

The Adaptive Recreation Department provides many activities for various group homes, assisted living facilities, and adult training entities. On March 31, 2012 in observance of Patient Safety Awareness Month the staff hosted an event which connected several community resources with patrons and families members actively involved in Richland County Recreation Commission programs. The day began with an exciting basketball game held at Denny Terrace gymnasium between the visiting Babcock Team and the Richland County Recreation Team. As friends and family members of the participants encouraged, cheered, and chanted the teams on during this highly competitive game it was easy to see that everyone involved were winners.

While the clock was ticking during the game, final preparations to accommodate the approximately forty five program participants, at the Denny Terrace Community Center were concluding. As the athletes and their family members made their way into the program area they were greeted with warm smiles and high-fives by Richland County Recreation Commission staffers Veronica "Roni" Dargan, Diane Sligh, and Felicia Venable. In addition to the RCRC staff; The Therapy Place, Autism Academy of South Carolina, Babcock Center, Federation of Families of South Carolina, and Family Connection were just a few of the community organizations that sent passionate professionals to educate participants about the resources available in Richland County. One of the presenters stated her organization only sends the special presenters out on Saturdays; and they were truly a special give to the participants because of their knowledge, energy, and passion.

Our agency's main priority is to provide a safe environment for recreational opportunities. In order to achieve this on a continuous basis, the staff maintains the equipment, monitors the grounds, and enforces facility rules and regulations. The Adaptive recreation Department has gone a step farther, by educating patrons and their families about other community resources. Empowering The Special Needs Population with Passionate Professionals was a huge success; this event's main objective to educate; in order to provide greater patient safety and awareness is the essence of Richland County Recreation Commissions' commitment to community health and wellness. According to humanitarian Nelson Mandela "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." The Adaptive Recreation Department set out to enhance the quality of life for those residents with special needs by using the powerful weapon of education, and changing the world one family at a time.

June

- 1 St. Andrews Park Grand Opening, 10:00-11:00 am, St. Andrews Park
- 1 Pay Day
- 2 Pools Open
- 2 Girl Power: Loving Yourself, 10:00 am-2:00 pm, Crane Creek Community Center
- 6 Summer Kool Jazz in the Park, 7:00-10:00 pm, Adult Activity Center
- 9 National Children's Day, 5:00-9:00 pm, St. Andrews Park
- 11 Leomont Evans Football Speed Training & Conditioning Camps, 9:00 am-3:00 pm, Blythewood Park
- 11 Healthy Cooking Introductory Class, 6:00-8:00 pm, St. Andrews Park
- 11 Healthy Cooking Workshops, 11:00 am-12:00 pm, Hopkins Adult Activity Center
- 12-14 Leomont Evans Football Speed Training & Conditioning Camps, 8:00 am-12:00 pm, Blythewood Park
- 15 Pay Day
- 16 Free Container Gardening Workshop, 10:00 am-12:00 pm, North Springs Park
- 16 Yard Sale, 7:00 am-1:00 pm, Adult Activity Center
- 16 3rd Annual Summer Law Enforcement Basketball Jamfest, 9:00 am-8:00 pm, Denny Terrace Gymnasium
- 18 Commission Board Meeting, 6:00 pm, AAC
- 21-23 Leomont Evans Football Speed Training & Conditioning Camps, 5:00-8:00 pm, Friarsgate Park
- 23 Let's Dance Salsa!, 7:00-11:00 pm, Adult Activity Center

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