

Parks and Recreation FY13 Annual Report

By The Numbers

Customer Satisfaction Rate
93.5%

Direct Financial Recovery Rate
56%

#Households Receiving
Discount Assistance
260

Volunteers/Hours
3,150 Volunteers
52,690 Hours

Official Partners
26

Parks & Recreation
Attendance
3,046,509

Programs: 371,000
Parks: 2,163,533
Centers: 511,976

Programs Offered
2,936

Parks
22

Miles of Trails
41

#Acres/Parks & Facilities
1,622

Civic Engagement
32 events attended
(neighborhood meetings,
public presentations &
community outreach)



This past year brought James City County and the Department of Parks and Recreation national recognition for its success in meeting the needs of our citizens through partnerships and responsive programs and facilities. The County was awarded the 2012 Gold Medal Award, which recognized our stewardship of parks and recreation resources as one of the best efforts in the nation. However, we have not made such progress alone. Thank you to the James City County community and our organizational and business partners who improve the quality and add value to our every program, park and facility initiative.



It is meaningful to our staff to have the opportunity to use their professional experience and passion to serve our quality community. For their unyielding leadership and guidance, thank you to the James City County Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission.

Please spend a few moments reading this annual progress report, which details our work between July 1, 2012 and June 31, 2013. Our challenges, successes and accomplishments are defined by James City County's Vision for our citizens. As a community, we can be proud of all that we've achieved together.

*John Carnifax, Director
James City County Parks and Recreation*

We Are An Historic Place

- Two James City County projects received top honors from the Virginia Recreation and Park Society during its annual conference in September 2012. The **Freedom Park Interpretive Center** was named the State's Best New Facility/Bricks and Mortar and the **Jamestown Beach Shoreline Restoration Initiative** received the State's Best New Renovation/Addition for parks, playgrounds, blueways or trails. The projects won in their respective categories for populations of 50,000-100,000.
- To expand environmental and preservation educational program offerings for youth, the County was awarded a \$7,500 **Chesapeake Bay Restoration Grant**, a funding increase of more than 52% over FY12.

We Value Healthy Minds And Bodies

- Served 1,374 youth in the **REC Connect** before-and-after school and summer camp programs, offering families quality, affordable, dependable and safe year-round child care services.
- Created eight new **partnerships** and contractual agreements to offer citizens more diverse recreational, sport and community programming.
- Enhanced overall **therapeutic programming** for teens and adults with disabilities, including the new Adventure Swim program, which alone attracted more than 120 participants who sought to improve their swimming techniques.
- Completed 32 new **ADA participant assessments**, providing for a total of 210 inclusion participants accommodated in programs such as Buddy Art, field trips and socials.
- Conducted **Neighborhood Learn to Swim Programs** for over 30 youth with limited swimming ability and access to pools, resulting in 196 participants learning how to swim.
- Expanded **outdoor programming** at two County parks through coordinated cycling, gardening, fishing and ecological programs, all stressing the importance of preserving the outdoor world. Program participation totaled more than 2,400, a 68% increase over FY12.

- Expanded and modified the service delivery of **health and wellness programs** which included the addition of evening classes, new aerobic and fitness class offerings and equipment upgrades, resulting in increased patron participation by 20% over FY12.
- Implemented the second year of the Williamsburg-James City County Schools **Physical Education Program (PEP)** grant, with over 500 youth in the REC Connect program participating in the fit and fun curriculum.
- Over 300 teens played in the **Neighborhood Basketball League (NBL)**, a partnership program which provides structured sports activity with mentorship in developing self-esteem, self-discipline, leadership and sportsmanship.
- Expanded programming at the **James River Community Center** to include Zumba classes, nutrition talks, teen tournaments, family nights and senior bingo, resulting in 7,669 participant visits, a 41% increase over FY12.
- With the addition of the **Playground Guardian playground management program**, staff evaluated, inventoried and added to the monthly playground inspection program all 26 County playgrounds located within our nine elementary schools. A total of 36 County playgrounds now receive monthly safety inspections, enhancing the safety of our children.

We Have Special Character

- To increase visitation to New Town as well as offer families and Williamsburg area visitors another fun recreational opportunity during the holiday season, a public/private partnership was created to develop, install and operate a seasonal, **synthetic ice rink** in Sullivan Square. The rink operated from November to January, with over 5,000 visitors in its first season of highly successful operation.
- To begin Phase IV improvement projects at Freedom Park, the Department of Conservation and Recreation awarded the County a \$200,000 **Recreation Trails Grant** to connect the park through multiuse trails to surrounding neighborhoods, school sites and our historical community. Completed initiatives include paving of the section of trail from Colby Swamp to the school site.
- To protect, preserve and improve one of the few public beaches in the County, James City received a \$152,000 **Land and Water Conservation Grant** to complete construction at Jamestown Beach Park, which included the second restoration of shoreline, planting of 4,000 beach grasses to stabilize the shoreline, parking improvements and the addition of restrooms and an accessible walkway.

We Are A Community of Choice

- Over 7,900 citizens participated in parks and recreation **special events**. New ventures included Halloween Tales, a Pickleball Tournament and the 5K Maniac Race.
- Over 3,150 **volunteers** donated more than 52,690 hours of time and expertise to parks and recreation to maintain trails, coach youth sports, teach environmental programs and help those with special needs participate in department programs, a gift valued at \$1.3 million.
- To gauge community interest in building a **bike park**, a survey was conducted with over 500 responses. Staff continues to determine financial feasibility and to solicit design information and ideas for a potential park and additional mountain bike trails.

We Have First Class Government

- Awarded the **2012 Gold Medal Award** by the National Recreation & Park Association and the American Academy for Parks & Recreation Administration, recognizing the County as the best managed park and recreation system in the nation in its population category of 50,000–100,000. The award honors excellence in long-range planning, resource management, volunteerism, environmental stewardship and program development.
- Solicited patron needs and enhanced customer services:
 - **Expanded child watch hours** at the James City County Recreation Center to assist patrons participating in the new evening classes.
 - Created the bi-monthly **Rec Center Times newsletter** to keep parks and recreation patrons involved and informed as well as to solicit feedback and suggestions on Center services. Created a monthly bulletin board to highlight Center patron health and wellness accomplishments.
 - Implemented a **Parks trail inspection program** to ensure user safety and to minimize trail degradation.
 - Installed a **new sports lighting system** for the basketball courts at Warhill Sports Complex, allowing patrons extended evening play hours.
 - Revised the department **Refund Policy** and processes to ensure consistency for citizens and improved response time to customer requests.
 - 45 REC Connect staff members each received an average of 45 hours of **training** in a variety of topics including program licensure, exceeding compliance with state licensure standards.

We work in partnership with citizens to ensure responsive programs, facilities and open space which promote personal growth, social development and healthy lifestyles.