

FY 2007 Annual Report (July 1, 2006—June 30, 2007)

# Wyoming Parks & Recreation



**Creating community through people, parks, and programs!**

## 2007 Annual Report

## Wyoming City Council

Carol S. Sheets, Mayor

Sam Bolt

Richard Pastoor

Jack Poll

Kent Vanderwood

William VerHulst

Joanne Voorhees

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*The job of providing high quality, safe after-school, recreation, leisure programs and park facilities is a challenge we work hard to fulfill with a goal to exceed expectations.*

*Through continued support and participation, the City of Wyoming Parks and Recreation Department is able to make a difference in citizen quality of life and work toward building a sustainable community.*

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## Wyoming Parks & Recreation Commission

Dr. Daniel Lavengood, Chairperson

Robert Cook

Lisa Blowers

Megan Harley

Eric Hartfield

William Phillips

Rod Van Oeveren

Rhonda Wing

Doug Wustman

Richard Pastoor, Council Liaison

## Wyoming Parks & Recreation Staff

Curtis Holt, City Manager

Rebecca Rynbrandt, Director

Dave Coates, Parks Supervisor

Eric Tomkins, Recreation Supervisor

Nancy Parent, Administrative Secretary

Nikki Batcke, Office Clerk II

William Clous, Maintenance II

Roger Colvin, Crew Leader

Trever Davies, Recreation Programmer II

Terry DeVries, Crew Leader

Paul Gibbs, Maintenance II

Tracy Essenburg, CTRS

Gary Groeneveld, Crew Leader

Kristine Kading, CTRS

Jon Kriewall, Maintenance II

Gloria Pelton, Secretary

Ron Pike, Maintenance Technician

Harold Post, Maintenance II

Molly Remenap, Recreation Programmer II

Christine Roelofs, Office Clerk II

Dale Rynbrandt, Maintenance II

Melissa Specht, Receptionist

Vic Szczesny, Maintenance II

Brian Tait, Building Maintenance II

Chad VanHaitsma, Maintenance Technician

Kenny Westrate, Recreation Programmer

## Our mission & vision...

The mission of the City of Wyoming Parks and Recreation Department is to provide services that positively impact the social, economic, health and environmental quality of our community. Our vision is to offer services that allow community members to experience physical, mental, and social benefits through their leisure time participation, providing opportunities for young people, adults, and senior citizens to live, grow, and develop into healthy, contributing members of our community. We are committed to providing leisure and recreation opportunities by developing and maintaining green spaces, facilities, and programs to enrich the quality of life for the citizens of the City of Wyoming.

## Just a few of the benefits of parks & recreation...

- Increased property values
- Improved community health and wellness
- Reductions in juvenile crime
- Nature preservation
- Economic development

## Our millage story...

In 1994 the City made the difficult decision of closing its parks and recreation department in order to offset deficits in its General Fund. At that time a citizens group led by Richard Myers successfully obtained over 8,000 signatures in a petition drive

to ask voters to approve a dedicated millage to continue operations of the parks and recreation department. In 1995, a five year, 1.5 mil levy was approved by voters in a 2 to 1 margin. In 2000 voters were asked to extend the millage on a permanent

basis. In a 3 to 1 margin, voters overwhelmingly approved the millage which today, and for future generations, allows for the operation of the parks and recreation department.

## Inside this report...

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2007 Daddy & Daughter Dance, creating memories, building family connections.

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*“Loved everything and I think we are lucky to have these free activities for our kids. I am a low income home owner and it’s great.” – Pumpkin Path participant evaluation comment*

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Fishing at Battjes Park.

## FY 2007 Financial Highlights



*Grants are the largest area of revenue growth for the Wyoming Parks and Recreation Department in 2007.*

### Revenue

Dedicated Millage	77%	\$3,252,784.41
Grants	14%	\$589,027.27
Fees	6%	\$259,725.74
Donations	.5%	\$22,975.41
Miscellaneous	2.5%	\$118,041.06
<b>Sub-total</b>		<b>\$4,242,553.89</b>

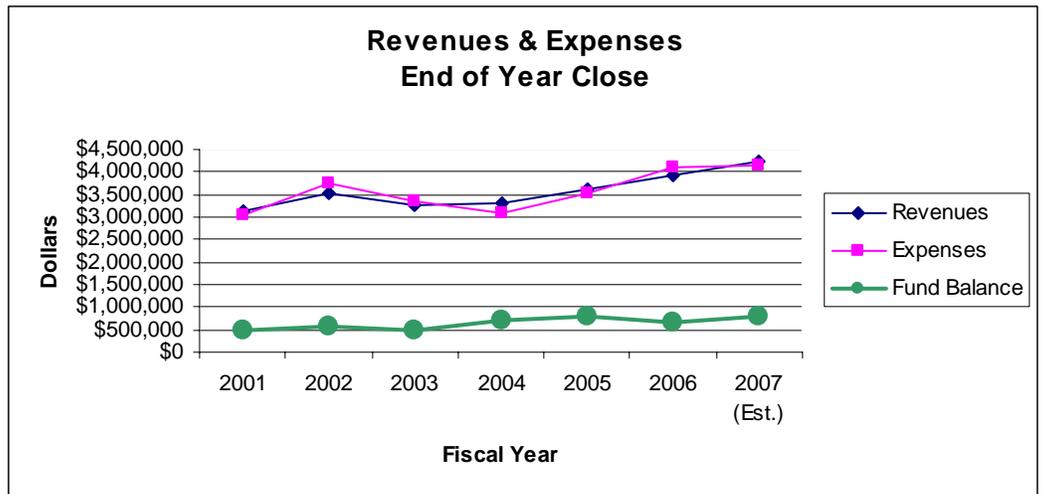
### Expenses

Administration	18%	\$751,853.86
Park Facilities	52%	\$2,130,083.78
Wyoming Senior Center	10%	\$400,471.55
Recreation (Youth, Family, Adult)	9%	\$385,315.49
Stepping Stones (Therapeutic Recreation)	3%	\$113,123.10
T.E.A.M. 21 (After-school Program)	8%	\$348,944.58
<b>Sub-total</b>		<b>\$4,129,792.36</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$112,761.53</b>

*Positive balance reverted to reserve fund balance for grant matching and future capital needs.*



Santa joins in the fun at the annual Great Candy Cane Hunt held at Pinery Park and the Wyoming Senior Center.



## Building Upon Accessible Facilities, Programs

2007 once again found the Wyoming Parks and Recreation Department working to expand recreation opportunities for people with disabilities. Much of the year was spent planning and constructing the **community's first universally accessible splashpad**, a unique water playground. Open in July, the splashpad used creative design elements to ensure the maximum amount of participation by able-bodied children, and children challenged by permanent and temporary disabilities. Flush surfacing and textured concrete provide tactile experiences for the visually impaired and improved gait performance and traction for children and adults presented with physical disabilities. Vibrant colors, varying heights, and selections of water sprays provide stimulation for able-bodied children as well as creating an environment to engage children with autism. The department also purchased two aquatic wheelchairs for public use.

This past year also saw the **expansion of the Stepping Stones program**, our nationally recognized therapeutic recreation program serving at-risk, homebound older adults. With generous support from the Kent County Senior Millage, this grant funded program was able to expand services through increased staffing of two full-time Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists.

Finally, the community's universally accessible playground, **Frog Hollow hosted our first adaptive Play and Learn Program**. By expanding Play and Learn to Frog Hollow children with various abilities were able to engage in play, arts and crafts, and other recreation in a supervised park setting.

## Strategic Planning Engages Community Youth, Adults

Once every five years the City of Wyoming undertakes a detailed process in soliciting citizen input in defining needs and priorities for the provision of recreation programs and development of the Wyoming park system. Required by the State of Michigan, creating a community recreation master plan includes years of research. The plan scheduled to be adopted in January of 2008 will be built upon this year's discussions with the community which included:

- \* Interviews with four adult citizen focus groups with meetings held at the Wyoming Public Library and Wyoming Senior Center
- \* Interviews with pre-teens and teenagers from Godfrey-Lee Public Schools, Godwin Heights Public Schools, Grandville Public Schools, and Wyoming Public Schools
- \* Staff, Parks and Recreation Commission, and consultant review of all 21 park properties
- \* Two public design forums and City Council adoption of a revised Oriole Park Master Plan
- \* Two public design forums and City Council adoption of a renovation plan for the Wyoming Senior Center (as developed out of the public input process known as the Senior Visioning Initiative)



Not since the closure of Jackson Park Pool has the community enjoyed public outdoor water recreation. With its universal design everyone can enjoy Wyoming's first splashpad located at Lamar Park.

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*“All the programs offered that we have participated in have been excellent.” – participant evaluation comment*

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Community engagement is the foundation of strategic planning within the Parks and Recreation Department.

## 2007 Leisure, Health & Wellness Program Distribution

During this past year **31,576** people took part in recreation programs, from art classes to soccer leagues to belly dancing. Almost 240 programs were offered throughout the year, not including grant funded programs such as T.E.A.M. 21, our after-school program, Stepping Stones, our therapeutic recreation program for homebound older adults, and Transportation Assistance for disabled older adults.

Number of Programs Funded By:		2007 Program Distribution by Age Category	
Millage	201	Youth	21%
Fellowship Club	38	Adult	25%
Grants	3	Older Adult	51%
Total	242	Family	3%



Encouraging children to exercise, meet new friends, and have fun is the foundation of our special Day of Play held annually at Lamar Park.

## Making a difference, impacting lives...

Various programs are highlighted below. Annual participation is based on individual program registration, and/or daily registration for drop-in programs. For a complete listing of our almost 240 programs and their results please contact the Wyoming Parks and Recreation Department.

<u>Service Area</u>	<u>Program</u>	<u>Annual Participation</u>
Youth	Play & Learn	5,857
	Soccer	683
	Gymnastics	308
	Dance Classes	100
Adult	Softball	1,746
	Fitness Classes	1,136
Older Adult	Dance Classes	596
	Health Screenings/Service Assistance	504
	Art, Crafts, Ceramics Programs	233
Family	Pumpkin Path	1,850
	Parent/Child Programs	153

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*“I enjoyed spending time with my son while he learned the skills that help him feel better about himself.”*  
 – participant evaluation comment

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Fitness classes improve a person's health, body image, and sense of wellbeing.

## School District Partnerships Enhance Programming



Above—Godfrey Lee students cook up a great breakfast at the senior center.

Across— Wyoming Public students lead the way at the annual senior citizen prom.

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*Wyoming Parks and Recreation Department utilizes business model thinking in its approach to providing recreation programs and services.*

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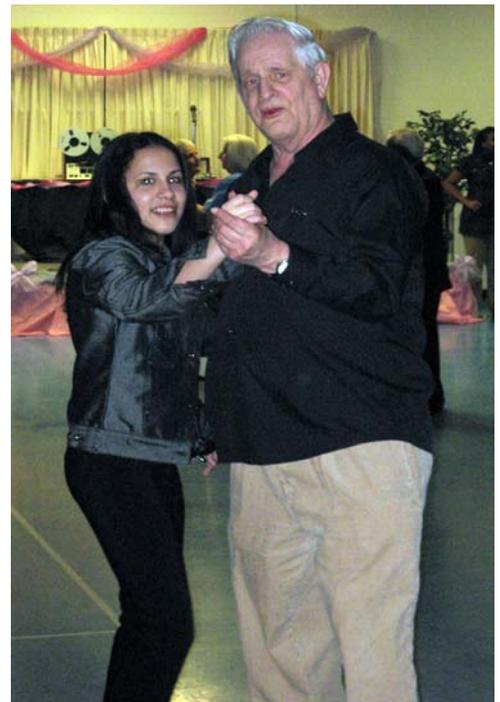
Partnerships with public school districts in the City of Wyoming have allowed the Wyoming Parks and Recreation Department to broaden its offerings of programs at the Wyoming Senior Center. This year, the annual Senior Prom, All-U-Can-Eat Pancake Breakfast and Senior Biographies are programs that were made possible due to middle and high school involvement.

The **Wyoming Park High School** student council continues to lead the planning and implementation of the Senior Prom. Student council members plan the prom theme, handle decorations and during the night of the event, they serve refreshments and fill in on the dance floor as needed.

Once a year, **Godfrey Lee Middle School** students use the kitchen facilities at the Wyoming Senior Center to whip up an All-U-Can-Eat Pancake Breakfast for older adults. All proceeds from the event are donated to the Godfrey Lee Middle School Field Trip Scholarship Fund.

**Rogers High School** students venture to the Wyoming Senior Center to interview

older adults for Senior Biographies, a class project where the student is charged with writing a “mini-biography” regarding the older adult’s life history. Once completed, the students then return to the Center to present their biographies to the older adults that they interviewed.



## Expanding Service Through Marketing



The 2007 annual Christmas Bazaar held at the Wyoming Senior Center saw over 1,300 attendees.

As a dedicated millage supported operation, it is deemed extremely important that the Parks and Recreation Department inform the citizens about its operations and program offerings. By doing so, we assure accountability to the greater public and maximize citizen investment through increased participation.

In 2007, recreation staff developed cross marketing strategies to increase program promotions. This included collaborations with Old Country Buffet allowing for flyer displays at area restaurants, and event flyer

distribution through Mars Hill Bible Church’s special activities held at Lamar Park. Our goal is to use creative, cost conscious approaches to promote recreation programming as a means to effectively maximize tax dollar support.

Finally, the department, recognizing marketing as a primary focus of 2007, engaged a public relations/marketing intern from Central Michigan University. A 15 week internship resulted in the department having marketing plans for Youth Soccer, Teen programming, and Outdoor/Environmental programs.



Mentoring, education, and fitness join together in making a difference in children through after-school programming.

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*FY 2008 will be the fourth year for the elementary school grant and the first year for the middle school grant. As each grant is allowable for a maximum of five years, sustainability planning will be an important component for T.E.A.M. 21 in FY 2008.*

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## After-school Programming Vital to Wyoming's Future

Statistical information from the Michigan Department of Education indicates that almost 24 million U.S. school-age children have working parents and many of these children receive no adult supervision during their out-of-school time. When left unsupervised, children are most at risk between 3:00 pm and 6:00 pm according to the United States Department of Justice as children are more likely to commit or be victimized by crime; to smoke, drink or use drugs; to engage in premature sexual activity; or to get involved in gang-related activity. As children grow up in this type of environment, research indicates that they are likely to struggle in school and suffer poor health, according to the Delta Strategy Community Report Card 2002-03. Given this alarming news, the importance of after-school programming cannot be underestimated.

Over the past three years, the T.E.A.M. 21 After-School Program, a collaborative venture between the Wyoming Public School District and the Wyoming Parks and Recreation Department, has been providing students at Parkview Elementary, Taft Elementary and Rogers Lane Elementary a safe and structured, learning and caring environment during out-of-school time. Funded through grant monies from the Michigan Department of Education as a part of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, T.E.A.M. 21 offers academic, health/wellness and recreation/leisure components to assist children in becoming not only better students but also better citizens.

During FY 2007, 438 unique children participated in T.E.A.M. 21, which was a 22% increase from FY 2006. Over \$500,000.00 of grant and in-kind monies are utilized annually to operate all three sites requiring no matching school district or city funds for the five-year period of each grant.



## Joint Efforts Needed to Ensure Success

Partnership and collaboration play significant roles in the success of the T.E.A.M. 21 After-School Program. FY 2007 saw the involvement of Life Guidance Services implement character education curriculum, known as Project Charlie, into T.E.A.M. 21 programming.

T.E.A.M. 21 staff are involved in the implementation of Project Charlie, and were required to attend training before utilizing the 14 week curriculum which covered such topics as uniqueness, put-downs, strengths, feelings, anger, sadness, family, friendship, bullying, decision making, tobacco and drug use.

The sustainability of T.E.A.M. 21 is greatly impacted when other local organizations give of their resources, like Life Guidance Services, to strengthen and diversify programming. Other T.E.A.M. 21 partners include the City of Wyoming Police and Fire Departments, Taft Adopt-A-Block and Mixed Greens (a local non-profit organization that focuses on nutrition and food system education).



T.E.A.M 21 engages families in school and community special events.

## Wyoming's Day of Play

On Thursday, July 27, 2006, over 450 children gathered at Lamar Park to enjoy a day of fun and fitness. When Mayor Carol Sheets ended her opening address by kicking a soccer ball, the children were off to activities such as a mile run, dodge ball, kickball, soccer, disc golf and even a couple of off-beat options like "Knockout" volleyball and "Soccer" bowling.

The intent of Day of Play is to encourage children to be active through play. All of the activities were things that children could do on their own or with kids in their neighborhood. The activities were designed to be more about fun and less about structure, another common deterrent to children being active.



Parents build relationships with children, and improve their own fitness through Start Smart programs.

*"The instructor was very nice and did a great job engaging the kids."*

*Start Smart participation evaluation*

## "Start Smart" Sports Added for 3-6 Year Olds

According to the National Alliance of Youth Sports (NAYS), "Start Smart programs...help kids get ready for sports...and succeed in life. It is a step-by-step approach that builds confidence and self-esteem and makes sports fun."

By partnering with NAYS, the Wyoming Parks and Recreation Department has started offering

Start Smart youth sport programs to introduce children, and their parents, to sports in a non-competitive environment.

Start Smart youth sports programs allow the children and parents to learn the physical fitness aspect, basic skills and simple games of the sport, allowing children and parents to enjoy play while combining fitness and

skill development along with fun.

Start Smart Basketball and Start Smart Soccer were offered during this past fiscal year and Start Smart Golf will be added to the offerings in FY 08.



Skill development part of Start Smart program.

## Programs Keep Kids Active All Year

**Play and Learn**, a summer weekday drop-in activity based program for elementary age children held at various elementary schools and parks in the City of Wyoming, continues to draw strong participation. In the summer of 2006, the daily average participation was 50 children per site with 500 unique children attending the six-week long program. The program meets from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm each day, providing arts and crafts, games, sports and field trip opportunities for children, keeping children active and engaged during non-school time.



Expanding children's learning experiences and friendship circles are all part of the Play & Learn program.

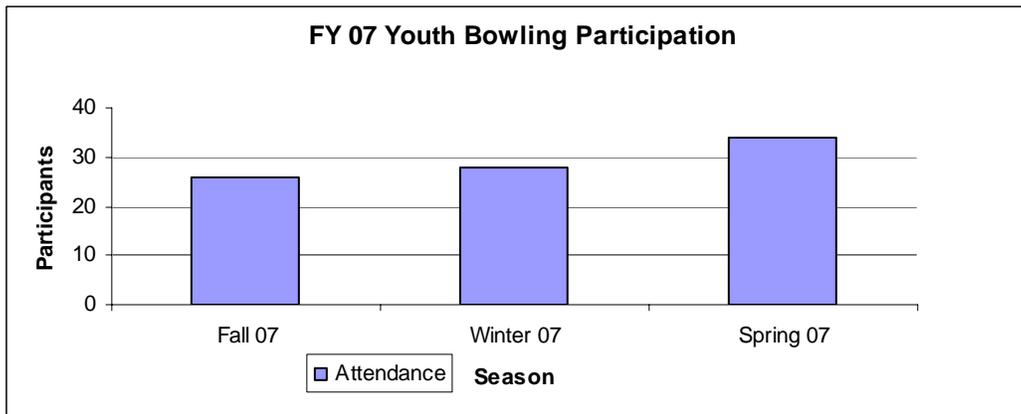


In an era when video games and travel team sports usually dominate leisure time pursuits for elementary and middle school students, one activity that continues to be of interest is bowling. Participation in the Wyoming Parks and Recreation Department's **youth bowling** program continues to be strong. The 2007 spring session saw a 34% increase in participation compared to the same session in 2006. While there has always been a social component to bowling, it is important to note that physical and mental benefits are obtained by participants, as well. That is especially important today as we continue to battle the issue of youth obesity and inactivity.

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*“Excellent and fun activity. Made you more aware of who was in our neighborhood.” - participant evaluation comment*

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Bowling builds math skills, coordination, and general fitness.

## Dinosaurs & Pirates Build Business Connections

Dinosaurs, Pirates and Super Heroes, along with a few Princesses and Care Bears got an early start on the Trick or Treat season at Lamar Park on Saturday, October 14, 2006 as a part of the Wyoming Parks and Recreation Department's 3rd Annual Pumpkin Path.

Over 2,000 children and 1,500 adults descended on Lamar Park to visit over 80 local businesses and organizations who hosted tables along the Pumpkin Path. These table "hosts" handed out treats and promotional items regarding their products and/or services.

Businesses benefit greatly from the exposure to prospective customers, all the while giving in community service.

This year's lead event sponsor was Metro Health Hospital.



Children prepare to enter the fun at the annual Pumpkin Path.

## Geocaching Newest Outdoor Offering

How do you get people interested in the great outdoors in a primarily urban setting? You engage them in a high-tech scavenger hunt in City of Wyoming parks. Geocaching, as it is known, uses GPS (global positioning system) units to identify coordinates attributed to caches ("the hidden treasure") that are located in area parks.

In seven months over 600

visits to Wyoming Parks and Recreation Department sponsored caches were logged on [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com)! Many comments were received from people who never knew some parks existed, encountered wildlife (deer, turkey, great blue herons, etc.) and greatly appreciated the City becoming actively involved in Geocaching.

Currently, Wyoming maintains nine caches while permits for individual and private cache placements for public use can be obtained by contacting the department. While there is no cost for a permit, an application is required, and approval is necessary, for an individual to place a cache in a City of Wyoming park.

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*"....Great way for (us) to become familiar with some of the local businesses and have family fun."  
– Pumpkin Path participant evaluation comment*

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## Summer Party Added to Special Event Schedule

Over 300 people of all ages experienced a great start to the 2007 summer at the first annual Summer Kickoff Party held at Pinery Park. With sponsorship from the Wyoming Senior Center Fellowship Club, the Wyoming Parks and Recreation Department provided a midway of

carnival games, an inflatable moonwalk, food and beverages and other great activities, including a magic show, to officially "kickoff" the summer season.

With the addition of the Summer Kickoff Party, the department has strengthened its special event offerings in-

cluding the Pumpkin Path and Candy Cane Hunt and Lunch with Santa. These special events offer the citizens of Wyoming great family entertainment at little or no cost thanks to the sponsorship and volunteer support received throughout the year.



Clowns and carnival games were featured at the inaugural Summer Kick-off Party.



A Wyoming Community Foundation Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) grant secured needed equipment for tennis program.

## Foundation Grant Brings Tennis To Youth

The Wyoming Parks and Recreation Department received a \$900 grant from the Wyoming Community Foundation's Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) to assist with the purchasing of equipment for Youth Tennis Camps. Fifteen (15) adult and 15 youth size racquets and a racquet stand for storage and tennis balls were purchased in the summer of 2006 to enhance the program and provide equipment for those individuals who may not have their own.

Goals for the grant include introducing the sport of tennis to more area youths. This was accomplished by partnering with T.E.A.M. 21, our collaborative after-school program provided with Wyoming Public Schools. Through T.E.A.M. 21, over 120 students received tennis lessons, many of whom had never played tennis before.

## Grant Kicks-off Health Improvement Of Older Adults

A \$5,000.00 grant received from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan to enhance fitness programming for older adults is still reaping benefits for the Wyoming Parks and Recreation Department. Held at the Wyoming Senior Center, during each session of the "Sweet and Low" and "Forever Fit" older adult fitness program, participant vitals (blood pressure and endurance capacity) are checked at the beginning and end of the session. 2007 spring session reported results were:

74% of participants demonstrated a sustained blood pressure reading

18% of participants demonstrated a decreased blood pressure reading

77% of participants demonstrated a sustained endurance capacity

11% of participants demonstrated an increased endurance capacity

## Stepping Stones Supports At-risk Older Adults

The demand continues to grow for this innovative in-home recreation therapy program provided for adults aged 60 and better. Completing its eighth year of service, Stepping Stones has provided 7,199 hours of treatment to over 600 individuals in Kent County. This year, the program has expanded its service to include aquatic therapy. The most current data affirms:

40% of participants have benefited by aquatic therapy.

86% of program participants report increased quality of life.

61% report increased leisure participation levels one month after discharge.

53% of participants were successfully reintegrated back into the community or met their personal/program goals.

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*Between 1990 and 2000, persons aged 65+ residing in Wyoming, Michigan increased 12.5%*

*According to the US Census, Michigan can anticipate residents aged 65+ to grow 71% by 2030.*

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Stepping Stones uses a variety of therapy techniques including Aquatic therapy .

## Wyoming Senior Center—A Center For Active Living



In addition to golf and bowling leagues, card clubs are very popular at the Wyoming Senior Center.

From low-impact aerobics to tap & jazz, from ceramic classes to wood carving, a variety of programs can be found at the Wyoming Senior Center. Constructed in 1977, the center is located at 2380 DeHoop SW, between 28th and Burton Streets. While the majority of funding for the center's operations comes from the dedicated parks and recreation millage, the Wyoming Senior Fellowship Club, a non-profit member driven organization, provides \$50,000 - \$60,000 annually in support of social programs (bingo, volunteer recognition dinners, etc) and facility needs. All center programs are open to older adults aged 55+ from throughout the Grand Rapids metropolitan area, however non-resident, resident, and member, non-member fees apply. There are no fees to enjoy the center for drop-in programs such as cards, billiards, hearing screenings, tax assistance, etc.

### Annual Wyoming Senior Center Participation Rates

<u>FY 2003</u>	<u>FY 2004</u>	<u>FY 2005</u>	<u>FY 2006</u>	<u>FY 2007</u>
68,945	61,553	54,416	59,588	63,874

(Based on Monthly Report Statistics)

*“The instructor is great! She really knows what she is talking about and does a good job of explaining things.”*

*Comments from an older adult art program participant*

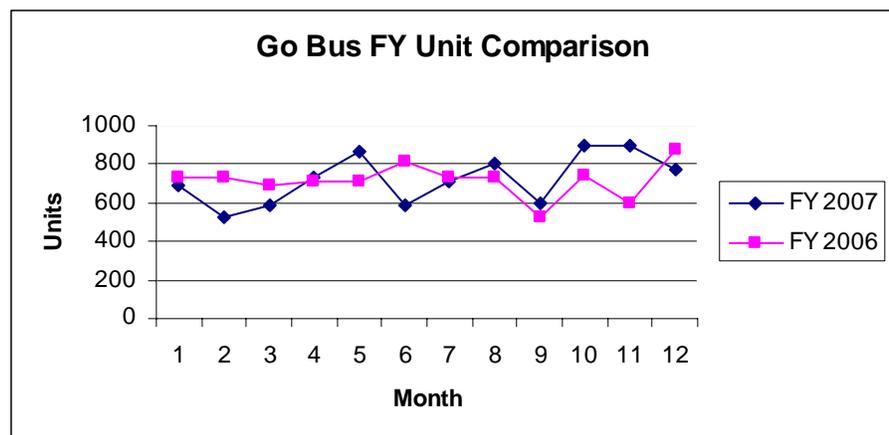
## Transportation—A Lifeline for Older Adults

A 2.6% increase in participants resulted in **8,682** Go! Bus tickets provided in 2007 for door-to-door transportation assistance for older adults who would otherwise be homebound. Program participants use tickets to:

- access medical appointments
- access leisure & social activities, including attending the Wyoming Senior Center
- obtain food
- attend work, volunteering, and misc. errands



Often the waiting area for Go! Bus riders is filled to capacity.



## Athletic and Community Event Requests Increase



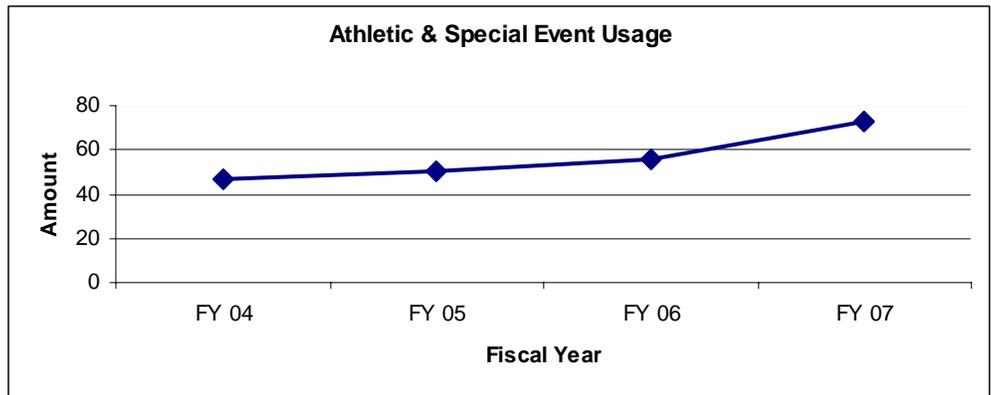
Wyoming's ball fields are known throughout the West Michigan area for their quality.

Many school districts, churches and private companies annually seek use of Wyoming's many park facilities to host athletic and special events. Use for organizations and individuals increased 30% in FY 2007. This was the third straight year of growth for these permits. Some of the organizations that made athletic and special event requests this fiscal year included:

- |                                   |                                   |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Wyoming Public Schools            | Michigan Special Olympics Area 11 |
| Kelloggsville Public Schools      | ViChem Corporation                |
| Godwin Heights Public Schools     | Classic Chevrolet                 |
| Godfrey Lee Public Schools        | Gordon Food Service               |
| Tri-unity Christian Schools       | Amerikam                          |
| Potter's House Christian Schools  | American Cancer Society           |
| Aquinas College                   | Mars Hill Bible Church            |
| Pinery Park Little League         | Cherry Street Health Services     |
| Wyoming Jaycees                   | Hispanic Baseball League          |
| South Kent Recreation Association |                                   |

*"Very helpful. We needed extra tables without seats and the young men set them up right away."*

*- facility survey comment*



Maintaining quality turf reduces participant injury and enhances community aesthetics.

*"This thank you note is extended to all of the wonderful people who work so diligently to take care of the beautiful parks and trails here in Wyoming MI. I moved here recently and am blessed to have such lovely areas to walk in and enjoy in the midst of an urban area. To everyone from those who plan their maintenance to those who perform it—thank you!"*

*Michelle (via an unsolicited letter)*

## Park Facilities Grow In Numbers

The City of Wyoming is blessed with **665** acres of park land. Our facilities include **2** lodges, **12** picnic shelters, **23** softball and baseball diamonds, **12** basketball courts, **29** tennis courts, **6** sand volleyball courts, **20** playgrounds, **1** skateboard park, **1** in-line hockey court, and, new this year, **1** splashpad. Annually we operate and maintain **16** restroom facilities, including a new restroom constructed at Frog Hollow this year.



Family time is fun time at Pinery Park.

## Rate Of Use, Surveys Affirm Quality

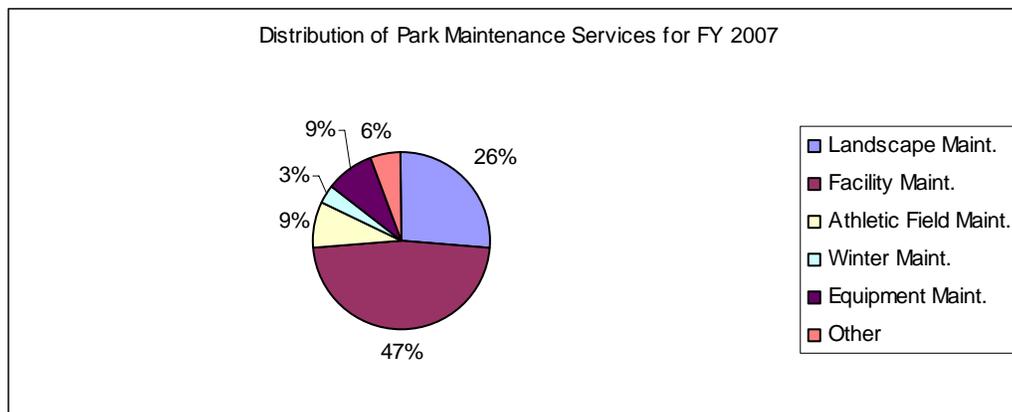
During this past year **920** reservations were accepted for lodge, shelter, and section rentals at Pinery, Lamar, and Ideal parks. As self-reported by user groups, **33,947** people enjoyed the park system through these reservations. Annual reservation surveys affirm:

- \* 99% of patrons were satisfied/very satisfied with the conditions of our facilities
- \* 85% of patrons were satisfied/very satisfied with our restrooms
- \* 91% of patrons were satisfied/very satisfied with park safety
- \* 95% of patrons were satisfied/very satisfied with office personal, with 100% being satisfied/very satisfied with the reservation registration process
- \* 98% of patrons were satisfied/very satisfied with service by park maintenance personnel when encountered

*“This was a great place for a family reunion, for adults and children. We are definitely having it there again next year! Great!”*

*- reservation survey response*

## Maintenance Staff Work To Ensure Safe, High Quality Facilities



Staff adjusts lighting at Lemery Park.

## Cost Report by Park

The following table reflects basic equipment and wage costs attributed to each park's operation for FY 2007. Employee benefits and consumable supplies (e.g. stone dust, toilet paper) are not included.

<u>Park</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Battjes	\$19,602
Buck Creek Nature Preserve	\$16,075
Ferrand	\$4,460
40th Street	\$2,862
Frog Hollow	\$11,121
Gezon	\$42,392
Hillcroft	\$8,625
Ideal	\$65,417
Jackson	\$13,219
Kimble Field	\$21,761
Kelloggsville	\$23,151
Lamar	\$102,119
Lemery	\$43,505
Lions	\$685
Marquette	\$22,638
Oriole	\$16,665
Palmer Field	\$10,381
Pinery	\$117,204
Prairie	\$10,524
Southlawn	\$9,948

## Lamar Park Splashpad



Much of the year was spent designing and constructing Wyoming's first universally accessible splashpad. With support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Access to Recreation Grant and the dedicated Parks and Recreation Operation Millage, the water playground opened to the public in July 2007. Located at Lamar Park, cost of the project was **\$253,875**.

*The Wyoming Parks and Recreation Department would like to acknowledge the contributions of Wyoming's Engineering, Inspections, and Planning and Development Departments in ensuring the success of our 2007 capital projects.*

## Frog Hollow Restroom



Following two years of opening, Frog Hollow Park—every child's playground, saw the addition of a restroom. The new, fully accessible facility opened in time to host the park's inaugural year of Play and Learn programming in early July 2007. With funding provided by the Parks and Recreation Operational Millage and donation support by the Teamsters Local 406, the total construction cost was **\$102,145**.

## Our 2007 Partners, Sponsors

AARP  
Altrusa  
Aquinas College  
Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan  
Bayberry Farms Village  
Blandford Nature Center/Mixed Greens  
Calvin Christian Schools  
Delta Strategies  
Disability Advocates of Kent County  
District 7 Umpire Association  
Edward Jones  
First Assembly Church  
Godfrey Lee Public Schools  
Godwin Heights Public Schools  
Grand Rapids Community College  
Grand Valley State University  
Heartland Health  
Holland Home  
Laurels of Hudsonville  
Macatawa Bank  
Mars Hill Bible Church  
Mercantile Bank  
Metro Health Hospital  
Michigan Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired  
Michigan Amateur Softball Association  
Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns  
Michigan Recreation and Park Association  
Mixed Greens  
Old Country Buffet  
P.M. Blough Inc.  
Papa Murphy's  
Park Center Lanes  
Parkview Elementary PTA/PTO  
Pinery Park Little League  
Pines Golf Course  
Pizza Cab Company  
Premier School of Dance  
Rogers Heights Christian Reformed Church  
Rogers Lane Elementary PTA/PTO  
Rogers Lane Neighborhood Association  
Senior Meals Program Inc.  
South Kent Recreation Association  
St. John Vianney Catholic Church  
Taft Adopt-a-Block  
Taft Elementary PTA/PTO  
Teamsters Local 406  
The Giving Gardens  
Theresa Wolf Hearing Consultants  
Visually Impaired Persons Association  
W.K. Kellogg Foundation  
Walgreen's  
Wesley Park United Methodist Church  
West Michigan Physicians  
West Michigan Recreation and Park Association  
Wyoming Planning and Development Department  
Wyoming Clean Water Plant  
Wyoming Community Foundation  
Wyoming Engineering Department  
Wyoming Fellowship Club  
Wyoming Fire Department  
Wyoming Inspections Department  
Wyoming Lions Club  
Wyoming Park United Methodist Church  
Wyoming Police Department  
Wyoming Public Schools

**Our supporters work directly with the Parks and Recreation Department to bring quality recreation programs and park facilities to the citizens of Wyoming. We sincerely apologize if we have inadvertently left an organization, or business from this listing.**

# Making a difference, making headlines...

## Seniors program supports autonomy

Stepping Stones program supported through a recently renewed county senior millage

BY AARON OGG  
THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

**GRAND RAPIDS** — When talking about the eight strokes she's suffered, Delores Butts used to burst into tears. "When I first had the stroke, I fell out of bed and I didn't know what was going on," she said. "Having strokes isn't painful — only when you fall."

But when she is in the water as part of the Stepping Stones rehabilitation program, the Wyoming woman gets a taste of her former independence. She cannot move around for more than an hour on land but finds greater stamina in the pool.

"I don't have to use the cane in the pool," Butts said. "It's fun."

Since 1994, Stepping Stones has assisted more than 500 seniors in Kent County. The program has helped seniors with heart attacks and heart failure.

Butts said she has a new lease on life. She has learned to leave the cane behind and walk without it.

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**Newfound independence:** Delores Butts, 61, of Wyoming does some recreational therapy in the pool Monday at the David D. Hunting YMCA in Grand Rapids.

## Big party thwarted at Lamar

Park closed as precaution; police say gathering of hundreds was planned

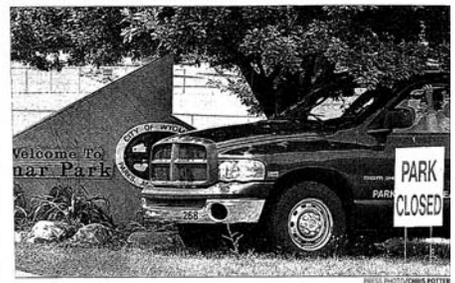
BY JULIA BAUER AND THERESA MCCLELLAN  
THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

**WYOMING** — The specter of thousands of people showing up for a reunion fraudulently reserved for 100 led city parks officials to close their biggest site, Lamar Park, to head off trouble.

It also meant rerouting two birthday parties and a graduation celebration for people holding legitimate reservations at Lamar on Saturday. Up to 1,000 others who typically walk the trails and hit the tennis courts found all entrances to the park blocked and guarded against all comers from 11 p.m. Friday until 8 a.m. today.

Rebecca Rynbrandt, director of Wyoming's parks and recreation, said she had no qualms about the decision to close the 92-acre site for

## OFFICERS STATIONED AT PARK ENTRANCES



**Police officers** are stationed at one of the entrances Saturday to Lamar Park. Police were trying to prevent a large, unauthorized gathering at the park.

id the groups go by four names. "I haven't been real with you there are 's what led to their ' Frye said.

ing parks revoked umma permit. "I've been out to every park, talking to people about the decision to close Lamar. Ev-

ery person was so appreciative that we're being proactive." "As for those three parties slated for Lamar? "We contacted the individuals who made the reservations directly, and moved them to other sites," she said.

E-mail: localnews@gpress.com

## Plan helps set agenda for Parks and Recreation

Grand Haven-based PM Blough will oversee the master plan-update process. Owner Pam Blough has worked with the city on past projects, including the last master plan, and is regarded as a specialist who has worked with many area communities.

"I do a lot of planning for parks and recreation facilities," Blough said. "In this case, we're trying to take a look at the current status and get a window into the future. It is always changing."

Rynbrandt said she has talked with directors, managers, and staff of local parks and recreation departments. "We use it every year for budgeting and grant applications," said Parks and Recreation Director Rebecca Rynbrandt. "It is used, at a minimum, on a monthly basis. It involved not only our parks, but our recreational programs."

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## News in Brief

### Concerts kick off in Lamar Park June 19

Concerts in the Park returns this summer at Lamar Park in Wyoming, kicking off with The Williams Family performing on June 19.

All concerts will start at 7 p.m. and will continue with Does of Cleveland on June 26; David Hall: Marimbas Around the World on July 10; The Calder City Band on July 17; Boogie Woogie Babies on July 24; and 126th Army Band on July 31.

Concerts will move to Prairie Park on August 14.

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**Extra pep:** Brian Kahn, 29, of Wyoming, skateboarding Tuesday afternoon in Prairie Park, says he is energized by the sun.

## Scout cleans nature preserve

Scout leaders and members spent the day cleaning up the nature preserve at Eagle Scout Park. The group collected trash and removed invasive plants.

The group collected trash and removed invasive plants. The project was a success and the park is now cleaner than ever.

The project was a success and the park is now cleaner than ever. The group will be back soon to continue the work.

The group will be back soon to continue the work. The park is a beautiful place and it's great to see everyone taking care of it.

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**Hispanic baseball league selects Wyoming as new home**

The Hispanic baseball league has selected Wyoming as its new home. The league will play its games in various parks across the state.

## Wyoming promotes fitness with summer festival

Clown big hit at first Summer Kickoff Party

The Grand Rapids Press reported that the first Summer Kickoff Party was a success. A line of kids and parents waited for the clown to perform his magic.

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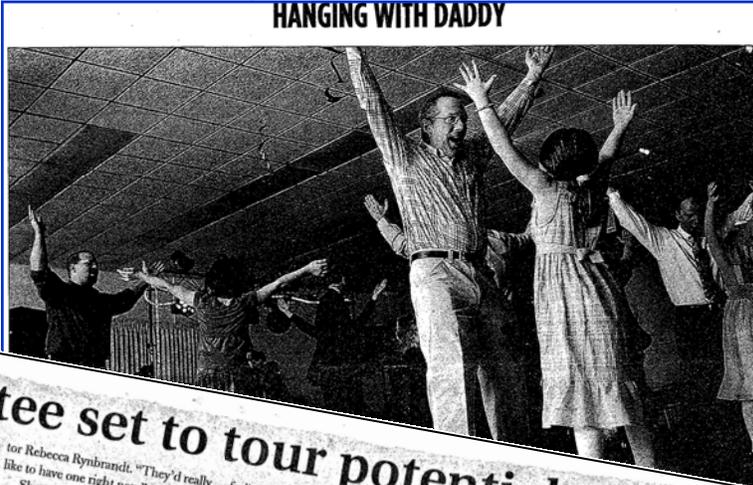
The group is proud of what they accomplished. The park is a beautiful place and it's great to see everyone taking care of it.

## News in Brief

### Frog Hollow to get restroom facilities

Restrooms are coming to Frog Hollow, thanks to the completion of a three-year fundraising campaign. The city's newest park, known as "the frog park," will have many local kids—located near the new Metro Health Hospital—get bathroom facilities in the spring.

The City Council is expected to approve the project at last night's meeting.



HANGING WITH DADDY

## Committee set to tour potential dog park site

By TIM DISSELKOEN

As springs hits its stride, a dog park in Wyoming could be just a year away from breaking ground. The Citizens for Dog Park Committee is expected to make a recommendation for a site and a plan to the City Council early this fall, leaving the window open for spring construction in 2008.

"An aggressive timeline would be to start construction next spring," said Wyoming Parks and Recreation Director Rebecca Rynbrandt. "They'd really like to have one right now."

She said the group has learned more about dog parks than they ever thought when the process began earlier this year, but there is much to consider before building a park. "They have had to study possible areas for an off-leash park where dogs may roam, and examine possible sets of rules they may want to adopt for users. Dogs tend to roam in packs in these areas and can knock over adults."

They also tend to play in the dirt, a.k.a. the dog's toilet. Dog treats in the area can cause fights among the dogs as they seek the goodies. Choke collars can catch on dog as well as the one wearing the collar. Some breeds are more prone to digging and play, so children under 12 may not be best suited for the site.

They had to look at rules like filling in holes a dog digs, limiting the number of dogs per owner, cleaning up after the dogs defecate. They have had to consider what elements they would like to see in a park, and also consider the cost. Much of the park costs will come from donations and grant monies. Currently, they are preparing to look at locations.

"We're now going to start assessing each individual park property," Rynbrandt said. "They've been doing a lot of research. It's really quite challenging." Another consideration will be to offer a temporary dog park while the actual park is constructed. They have adopted criteria for a site, and want to ensure that all steps are taken before they make their recommendation to the City Council.

Please see DOG PARK, page 2

## Wyoming makes dog waste cleanup easier

City uses grant to create stations that offer brochures and plastic bags

By MATT WANDIE BUNTE THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

"Hey! Scoop my poop!" That's how a page of the Wyoming Parks & Recreation brochure reminds dog walkers to clean up after their pet. Pet waste stations will communicate a gentler message when installed this spring. Green signs bearing the "please clean up after your pet" message will be posted, along with plastic bags, at seven locations as part of a grant-funded project.

to reduce E. coli in area waterways. "We are trying to give pet owners the materials to be good stewards," said Rebecca Rynbrandt, parks and recreation director. "We're meeting them halfway. Who likes walking on a trail and finding dog poop in the middle of it? That's disgusting." It also could be hazardous. With \$263,000 in federal funds, the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council is working with area municipalities to clean up E. coli levels in watersheds such as the Snake River, Plaster Creek and Snake River—all of which are used for recreation. The project's goal is to reduce E. coli in area waterways.



THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

## DOG PARK

continued from page 1

They are seeking a one-acre minimum, underutilized site that minimizes conflicts with other uses, available shade and water, parking, and away from

wildlife areas, among the considerations. As they tour each city park property, they will compare and contrast the sites based upon their criteria. Ultimately, the plan is to present two or three suitable sites to the City Council.

## Artists carve their mark in wood

Woodcarvers Club introduces hobby to others

By TIM ESSENBERG THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS



PRESS PHOTOS/JULIE HANRAHAN

Labor of love: Ken Benson, left, displays works he has carved at Saturday's Woodcarvers' Expo. Bernard Gervais, right, carves a wooden spoon.

couldn't carve his own. "I turned good enough," he said. "I'm active in my group, helping others learn. I'm retired from Caledonia and have about three dozen woodcarvers from Wyoming at the center's Woodcarvers' Expo displaying their wares Saturday at the center. The exhibition was the seventh year for the displays, said Jason Horan, Wyoming Parks and Recreation Department recreation programmer. The free event provided demonstrations, brought in hobbyists and offered unique wood-carved items. The carvings "are not something you're going to see at a department store or a franchise," Horan said. The sunny weather Saturday did not stop folks from stopping in to check out vendors with carved bird, fish, decoys and other characters. Kevin Hanrahan, of Grand Rapids, brought about a dozen of his bird and character carvings. He got into the hobby about a dozen years ago at the encouragement of his next-door neighbor. The Steelcase Inc. retiree had drawn and painted, but once he picked up a knife and piece of wood, carving became his niche. "I like carving the best," Hanrahan said while working a sea captain carving. Hanrahan is not interested in making money from his hobby. It's strictly enjoyment. "If somebody wanted to buy one, I wouldn't know what to charge for it," he chuckled. "I do it for fun and to give

carvings to my kids." The hobby is simple to start in, too. Besides a piece of wood, "all you need is a knife and sandpaper," Hanrahan said. E-mail: localnews@grpress.com

### FACT SHEET

#### Learn the craft

The Woodcarvers Club meets 12:30 to 3 p.m. Wednesdays at the Wyoming Senior Center, 2380 DeHoop Ave. SW. For details, call 530-3190.



Park party



The City of Wyoming is a Promoting Active Communities Bronze Level award winner from the State of Michigan Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports. This award recognizes the community's commitment to creating and maintaining policies, facilities, and programs that encourage residents to integrate physical activity into their daily routines. Wyoming is a network member of more than 70 Michigan communities who have earned a Promoting Active Communities Award.

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## Wyoming Parks & Recreation

### *Creating Community Through People, Parks, and Programs!*

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