



East Goshen Township

2017 Department of Parks and Recreation

End of Year Report

The East Goshen Township Department of Parks and Recreation (EGPR)

Vision Statement: *In the Business of Making Memories*

The department Vision Statement is two-fold. We see our role as providing the parks, facilities, programs and events that create opportunities for the community to make worthwhile memories close to home. Whether its learning to ride a bike, visiting a healthy cooking demo at the Farmers Market, or making new friends in our Senior's Card Club, our role is memory facilitation. Staff also recognizes that resources can be finite, and employs an entrepreneurial spirit to foster community engagement, partnership development and funding cultivation.

Mission Statement: *The EGPR's mission is to provide enriching recreational activities, maintain beautiful parks and preserve the environment for the well-being of our community.*

EGPR provides a fully developed park and recreation experience for its residents and the greater West Chester area. Department staff utilizes the National Recreation and Parks Association's (NRPA) three pillars of Conservation, Social Equity and Health & Wellness to guide programming development.

Number of Parks: Four; East Goshen, Applebrook, Milltown, Mill Creek

Developed Park Acreage: 175.0

Township owned open space: 322.0

Annual Program Hours: 673.0 (an increase of 551% since 2014)

Upcoming capital projects (2018-2022):

- EGT Park Destination Playground (completion)
- Paoli Pike Trail Construction
- Milltown Dam Park Development
- Hershey's Mill Dam Park Development
- East Goshen Township Park Improvements



Department Accomplishments

The Liv Live Concert and 22 in 22: Pushups with a Purpose event was recognized with an **Excellence in Programming Award** at the PA Recreation & Parks Society annual conference (March). This event advocated for mental health awareness and was presented in partnership with the Chester County Suicide Prevention Task Force.

The department was recognized with the first **PRPS/DCNR GOOD Award**, for its work as Regional Advisor on the statewide GOOD parks and recreation marketing campaign (March).

The Fit and Fun in the Park initiative was recognized by PA Governor Tom Wolf with a **Local Government Excellence Award** as the best municipal health and wellness program in the state in 2016 (April 2017).

Awarded NRPA Walk with Ease Training Grant. Over 50 seniors have benefitted from the program.

East Goshen Township Park named the **2017 Best Park** by Main Line Today (June).

The Bicentennial Celebration was recognized by the National Recreation and Parks Association as a **Park Champion Finalist**, one of four across the country. NRPA Park Champion events highlight and advocate for park and recreation initiatives at the federal level (September).

The Department Director became a Certified Park and Recreation Executive (CPRE), one of four across Pennsylvania and one-hundred across the country.

Secured \$565,000 in grants from PA DCNR and DCED to develop Milltown Dam Park. Passive park improvements include two ADA accessible fishing piers, internal trails, ecological improvements and dedicated parking areas. This brings the department's two year total to **\$4.1M in grant funding** for the Paoli Pike Trail, EGT Park destination playground and Milltown Dam Park capital projects.

Out and About: People in the Park

- 174,000** Daily park users (using SOPARC data*)
- 23,000** Park users during facility rental events
- 9,000** Came out to the “Big Four” department sponsored events
- 4,200** Visited the Farmers Market this season
- 1,200** Kids had an awesome time during youth activities
- 4,000** Enjoyed amphitheater events
- 1,500** Attended senior programming, trips and other events
- 300** Realized health and wellness goals utilizing Township fitness programs

The EGPR park system helped park users save an estimated \$7.26M in associated health care costs this year!*

217,200 people were in the park in 2017!

*SOPARC Park Analysis

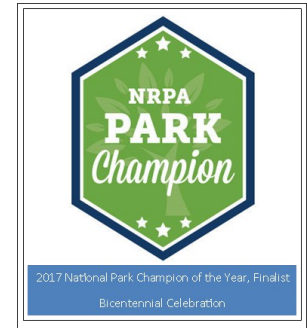
Staff utilized the SOPARC platform to assess park usage along the East Goshen Park/Applebrook Park trail system and at the playground. Department staff and volunteers counted park users from April through December, assessing for gender and intensity of exercise (sedentary, walking or vigorous). Data collected offered the ability for staff to better understand how the community interacts with the Township park system and its impact on community health and wellness. Using collected SOPARC data, along with metabolic equivalent (MET) figures and peer reviewed research, EGPR staff is able to quantify how our parks positively affect the health and wellness of our community. Based on 174,000 captured park visits, park users saved themselves an estimated \$7.26M in associated health care costs in 2017. For an in depth look at this analysis, please visit the Township website for the full Park Usage Report.

Future SOPARC applications include:

- Use in capital project grant applications
- Support for/against future park development projects
- Evidence that park projects are increasing park usage/residential quality of life (for example when the new playground and Paoli Pike Trail open)
- Potential synthesis with future updates to Township planning documents
- Increase Township's ability to quantify and communicate its role in health and wellness to the public, elected officials and other governing bodies

EGPR would like to thank Justin Smiley and Emma Mahard for volunteering to be data collectors.





Bicentennial Celebration (1817-2017) - June 3rd, 2017

East Goshen Township partnered with West Goshen Township in celebration of its two hundred year anniversary in 2017. The crowd of 3500 was treated to a three scene play based on historical documents, a parade, multiple musical performances, food, inflatables and an amazing fireworks display. The event was later recognized as an **NRPA Park Champion Finalist** (top four nationally) for its advocacy of park and recreation to federally elected officials.

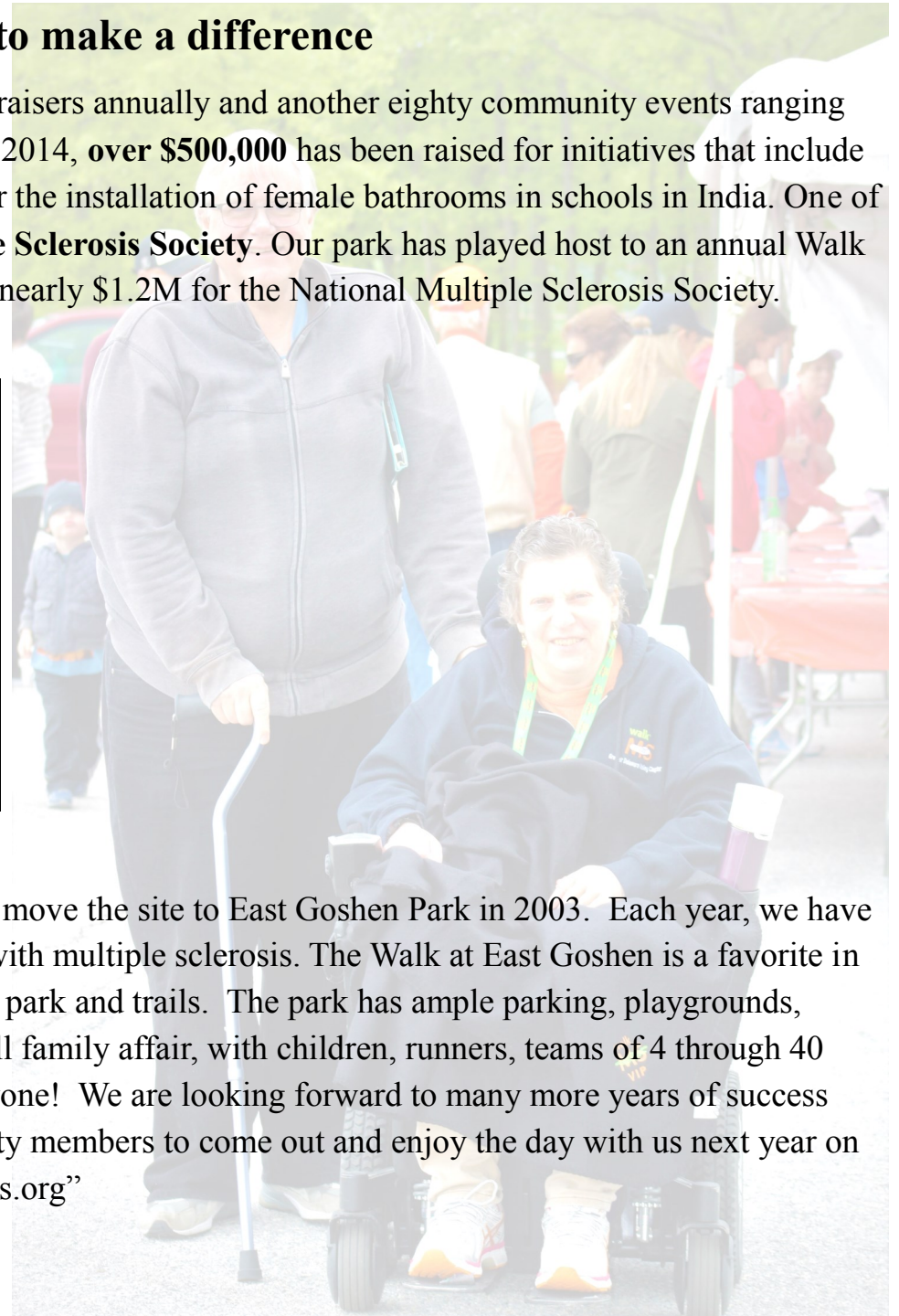
East Goshen Township Park: The place to go to make a difference

East Goshen Township Park hosts over fifteen third party fundraisers annually and another eighty community events ranging from birthday parties, to weddings, to corporate picnics. Since 2014, **over \$500,000** has been raised for initiatives that include youth mentoring, pediatric care in hospitals, even providing for the installation of female bathrooms in schools in India. One of our most successful partnerships is with the **National Multiple Sclerosis Society**. Our park has played host to an annual Walk MS event since 2003. Over 5,000 people have walked, raising nearly \$1.2M for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.



“With increasing participation each year, **Walk MS** decided to move the site to East Goshen Park in 2003. Each year, we have 300+ participants who come out to support individuals living with multiple sclerosis. The Walk at East Goshen is a favorite in the area because of the beautiful layout and accessibility of the park and trails. The park has ample parking, playgrounds, indoor restrooms and a stage area for our DJ. Walk MS is a full family affair, with children, runners, teams of 4 through 40 and a ton of dogs that help to create this amazing day for everyone! We are looking forward to many more years of success with Walk MS at East Goshen Park and we invite all community members to come out and enjoy the day with us next year on May 6th, 2018! Join Walk MS at West Chester at www.walkms.org”

- Stephanie Shaul, Development Specialist, NMMS



Partnerships: Working towards a common goal

EGPR understands that its success is bolstered by reaching across the table and shaking hands with other community organizations. In the end, there are many stakeholders in the greater West Chester area all striving to create a better quality of life. Our department is proud to partner with over twenty like-minded organizations. These range from the youth-based organizations like the WCASD, YMCA of greater West Chester and West Chester University. We also partner with small business and corporate partners, most notably during the annual High School Entrepreneurial Academy, where program participants learn entrepreneurial principles then engage in a product competition. Local tours of corporate headquarters, distribution centers and manufacturing plants lend a real world applicability to the program and are only possible through program partners like Immaculata University, CTDI, Inc., Krapf Coach, Advanced Staging and Tecniplast.

Partnership Spotlight: The Friends of East Goshen

EGPR is most proud of its partnership with the Friends of East Goshen (501c3). Since 2013, the two organizations have collaborated to host twenty community-wide events, that collectively put smiles on over **45,000 faces**. These events are always open to the general public and free of charge. This has cultivated the community mindset that East Goshen Township Park is THE place to be, and has had a tremendously positive effect on EGPR programming in general. FOEG has done a masterful job of reaching out to the local community, communicating the impact of EGPR, and finding funding partners both large and small. Since 2013, over **100 donors** have helped make EGPR special events a success! FOEG is hard at work in 2018 as well, cultivating new funding partnerships for the 2018 special events. It is also pleased to announcement an exciting new opportunity—the **Buy a Brick Program for the destination playground walkway**. Individuals, families and businesses can see their name at the new playground complete with zip line, dinosaur buried in the sandbox, and the kid-designed backyard fort theme. The Buy a Brick program is open for donations from December 2017 through spring 2018. Net proceeds will help fund future park improvement projects. For more information, please visit <https://friendsofeastgoshen.org/> or <https://eastgoshen.org/>



FOEG Members

L-R: Mike Herron, Greg Gaul, Hal Zuber, John Jam

Program Spotlight - The East Goshen Food Truck & Music Festival

We ended the summer with a bang this year! An anticipated crowd of 500 swelled to over 2,500 invigorated by arguably the best night of weather all season! Spectators were treated to four hours of non-stop music, as the entertainment moved from Dueling Pianos, to local favorites Not Quitting Our Day Jobs, before ending with the superb sounds of the Billy Bauer Band! Post event surveys pointed only to one recommendation...more, more, more! Next year, we'll add to our food truck lineup and look for an equally diverse and eclectic musical lineup!



The East Goshen Township Farmers Market

Home to thirty vendors every Thursday (3pm-7pm) May—October. The market continues to draw in folks for fresh local produce and is a **hub for community fun**—like the monthly classic car cruises, Imagination Playground set up, and weekly special events like the “Dunk Jason” market.



Let's have fun!!!


EGPR is all about careful planning and management of park resources, but it's also about playing!! The department cultivates community silliness in many ways:

Hide the Gnome Program: A **summer long scavenger hunt** across our parks in search of the EGT Gnome

"Why is Play Important?" Essay Contest: East Goshen Elementary students submitted essays during the fall 2017 semester. In the end, Hannah won the contest, because she knows **playing in a park "makes you feel amazing."** Hannah will join Township officials during the playground dedication and help cut the grand opening ribbon.

The **Halloween and Christmas House Decorating Competitions** give residents a chance to show off their creative handy work! This year, a 12 year old won the Halloween Decorating Contest, besting his father's decorations of his US Air Force living quarters, while deployed in Djibouti, Africa, among others!



Hannah Start
It is important for kids to play outside because kids make friends. It is important cause kids do not want to be alone. Next it is good exercise. It is running, walking, skipping and jumping. Also there is fresh air. It makes you feel amazing. Then it is a way to be creative. Kids make up games all of the time, when they are bored. Last but not least it is FUN!


You can play and do a game with a friend. So that is why it is important for kids to play outside!!



The Parks and Recreation Volunteer Brigade: Giving back and having fun

As a small department, all of our activities, programs, events and initiatives depend on volunteerism to a certain degree. We are blessed to have such a wonderful community of volunteers who value parks and recreation, and don't mind getting dirty!

Debbie Snyder is the 2017 Awesome Award recipient, for her role in stewarding the Senior Card Club. What started as a twice monthly card game of four has turned into packs of twenty players multiple days per week, truly a wonderful new community social club. Whether a high school student, retiree or father of three, the Township always has opportunities to volunteer. In 2018, we are most excited to present the Park Ambassador volunteer role, leading the Imagination Playground play experience.

Other 2017 volunteer highlights include:

Neighbor to Neighbor Day—Helping seniors with mobility impairments clean their yards

Building Bridges—Pairing high school students with seniors to enhance their knowledge of technology

Over 75 volunteers ensured the Bicentennial Celebration was a success



In the Community:

Department staff believes strongly in youth development and leadership engagement. Staff meets this goal by:

Its role in the recently created Cheyney University Recreation & Leisure Management Advisory Board. The Advisory Board's mission is to **cultivate real-world opportunities** for students at the nation's oldest HBCU.

Partnering with West Chester University's ENG 368 class. Teams worked with department staff to create a marketing plan for the Play Ambassador volunteer experience and destination playground.

The Department Director serving as a Guest Judge in the regional and statewide DECA High School Competitions.

The Director also became a part of the **NRPA Peer to Peer Program**, a six month park and recreation professional mentoring program. This year, the Director mentored Johnathan Smith, Program Specialist at the Arlington (TX) Department of Parks and Recreation. The Director also serves on a number of Pennsylvania Parks and Recreation Society (PRPS) committees and speaks at various conferences.



An Eye towards the Future...

East Goshen Park's destination playground will open in 2018. The new play space incorporates design themes and play pieces selected by over 623 East Goshen Township children. Dedicated shade structures, better line of sight and division of play reflect the desires of parents/care takers. We are currently taking volunteer applications for Play Ambassadors, a perfect opportunity for those interested in teaching, child care or those that just like to have fun!

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"In the Business of Making Memories"

www.eastgoshen.org

Engineering is underway on all seven segments of the Paoli Pike Trail. Construction on segments C-G (Reservoir Road to Line Road) will begin in 2019.

The Milltown Dam has been progressively lowered and will be ready for renovation during the summer of 2018.

The 2015 East Goshen Township Park Master Plan calls for a series of improvements over the course of the next five years. In 2018, the basketball courts will get new backboards and dedicated seating, the football/soccer fields will get transportation and landscaping upgrades and security cameras will be installed throughout the park.

Two new park facilities, the pickle ball courts and the Stones course, will both receive lock boxes with general public access. We look forward to developing these two unique and fun sports further in 2018.

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resource USA
recreation-resource.com

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