



East Goshen Township, Department of Parks and Recreation

End of Year Report

2020

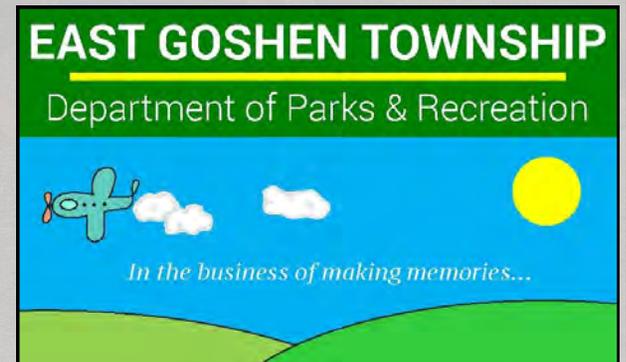
# The East Goshen Township Department of Parks and Recreation (EGPR)

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. 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 parks 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.



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

## By the Numbers:

Developed parks: five; East Goshen, Applebrook, Milltown, Mill Creek, Hershey's Mill

Developed Park Acreage: 175.0

Township owned open space: 322.0

Baseball fields (4)                      EGT Park, internal trails (1.25 miles)

Football field                              Applebrook Park, internal trails (2.4 miles)

Soccer fields (2)                          Paoli Pike Trail (1.95 miles)

Pavilions (2)                                Sand Volleyball Court

Destination Playground                  Program Room (inside Township Building)

Pickle Ball Courts (8)                      Summer camp/fitness classes utilize East Goshen Elementary

Tennis Courts (3)                          Amphitheatre

Stones Course                                Basketball Courts (2)

The department also manages park permitting, with 108 permits approved in 2020 for family gatherings, civic group meetings and 5K events.+

## Organized programming by the numbers (hours):

Baseball (1300) Soccer/other (150) Football (200) Summer Camps (200) Basketball (100) (Tennis (20) Fitness (50) Senior Activities (50)+

+EGPR open for organized activities from June 15—Dec 15 due to COVID-19

# Parks are pandemic proof

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged individuals, families and communities struggling to safely navigate every day life during uncertain times. All EGPR park amenities and facilities were closed from March 15 through June 15 except for our trails, open space and park restroom. The department understood that Township residents would still need opportunities to recreate to remain healthy, improve their mental health and mood, stay connected with family members and the green, natural world they are accustomed to. Department staff quickly pivoted and created “EGT Parks and REC at Home”, a series of individual driven activities that could safely be done at home or spaced at in a park.

What conclusions did EGPR staff draw from residential park use during the pandemic?

- We love our parks! With most other external activities cancelled, our parks saw a dramatic increase in usage. Statewide, park usage was up 30% and our parks saw similar increases.
- We are creative! The definition of how to use EGT Park grew exponentially this year. It became the public’s coffee shop, the “watch a movie by smartphone” locale and the meet up on the boulders with your friends hang out spot.
- We love our dogs! Everyone was in the park walking a dog this year, noted by a 400% increase in Township purchased doggie bags.
- We recognize the special place parks hold in our lives. Past year’s EGT Park attendance numbered over 225,000, and so this year one can imagine the pressure on the park infrastructure. Residents realize the park’s value and keep it clean, safe and are respectful of a myriad of intermingled uses.

EGPR staff is proud of the role the parks played during the COVID-19 pandemic, they are pandemic proof. Parks are open dawn to dusk, free to use and accessible to all. Parks are blank canvases to be used by residents and the public spaces that can make us feel connected though we are six feet apart.

# EGPR Parks and REC at Home

The EGT Parks and REC at Home program provided opportunities for families to find something fun, creative and memorable to do while at home and expanded to include virtual programming.



The “Stay at Home” Teacher of the Year was awarded to Township mom Diana Dickson in May. She was nominated by her husband Greg because she is *“part teacher, part tech support, part cheerleader, as our three kids try and navigate through digital assignments and zoom calls. The attention spans of little people are similar to a fly at times. She works to keep them focused and motivated. All this this takes place while she continues to manage all the other aspects of family life, feeding the kids, and housework. And this is now magnified as there are 5 people at home all day every day. These monumental tasks get juggled while she works a 40hr week for her job.”* Congrats Diana!

Some of the highlights included: virtual field trips, Tuesday Joke Days, Earth Day art shows, House Decorating Contests, Teddy Bear Scavenger Hunts and more!



As social distancing continued into Fall 2020, the department created “EGTV”, a series of Zoom-based game shows posted online so Township residents could tune in and play along at home similar to traditional nationally broadcast game shows. We kicked off EGTV with a Jeopardy: Star Wars edition. The Plummer’s and Staffelbach’s entered the Final Question round tied, with the Plummer’s ultimately winning! Upcoming EGTV game shows include Harry Potter, Philly sports and baseball.



# Summer Camp: an essential service during the coronavirus pandemic

EGTPR was the only municipal camp program in West Chester offered in 2020. Area families were overwhelmingly in support of holding camp, sighting the need for child care as they went back to work and a positive outlet for the children to continue to grow. After reviewing applicable COVID-19 guidelines, staff moved forward with a half day program with various measures in place including:

Touchless drop off/pick up

Socially distanced activities and defined age group locations

Face masking and gloves

Hand washing and hand sanitizing

Sanitizing of pavilion before/after program hours

The program operated with a significant wait list and we are proud to report no COVID-19 cases during summer camp.



Individual camper bags



Included: t-shirt, hand sanitizer, crayons and fun stuff!

Public Works installed three additional sinks to handle the additional load.

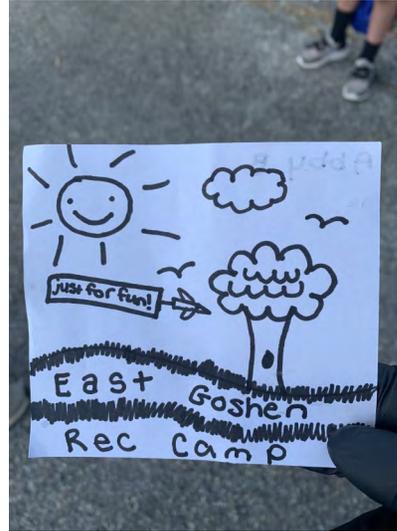


# Summer Camp: adjusted for COVID-19, but not for fun!!!

The kids were amazing! Staff was nervous, but the campers had no problem being flexible and adapting to the new camp environment! They masked, stayed spaced (mostly) and had tons of fun!



Matching hair & popsicles!



The first camp “Masked Singer” was a smash success!



Every five years we hold a camp logo contest! The winning logo is added to future camp t-shirt orders!

“Shave Jason’s head” canned good donation drive—the kids did a great job!

Camp is a family—CIT Abby B presented Camp Director Tim Kershaw with two birthday cakes...a “real one” and an exploding balloon cake!



Campers made thank you signs for staff at home and brought them in on the final day.

Camp is also about developing young leaders. Pictured is Angelina Bottaro, Counselor in Training of the Year.



# Paoli Pike Trail—YOUR trail is now open!

The Paoli Pike Trail opened on Tuesday, November 24 with a wonderful virtual grand ribbon cutting attending by the project's many stakeholders! The trail is now open for public use, year round, from Reservoir Road east to its termination at Line Road and Willistown Township. Township staff looks forward to securing construction grant funding for segment B in the near future and completely the trail in its entirety. The Township would like to thank the following grant funding partners:

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (\$3.2M)

PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (\$268,000)

The Chester County Municipal Grant Program (\$150,000)

Trail maps and usage guidelines can be found at [eastgoshen.org](http://eastgoshen.org)



# The show must go on! 2020 SE PA Teen Filmmakers Showcase

Started in 2019 alongside event partner Movie Tavern Exton (MTE), the Showcase is an opportunity for area teenagers interested in TV/film careers to experience their first film festival. A free experience, it includes a limo ride, red carpet walk, professional photography and rubbing elbows with university film professors and industry professionals! In 2020, it pivoted to include COVID-19 and “stay at home” categories and submissions exploded! We ended up receiving 1092 submissions from hundreds of countries around the world! The Showcase was held virtually in August and expanded to include a COVID—19/global edition and is available for viewing on the Township’s YouTube channel. The concept will be presented at the 2021 NRPA Conference in Nashville.



MTE ready for the big night!



Township Supervisor Michele Truitt pictured with MTE General Manager Andrew Camuso



Local teen Skyler Sulby took home “Best Cinematography”. She is a USC Film student in CA.

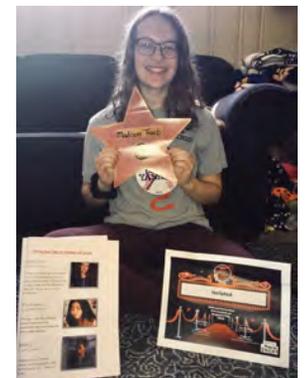


Virtual, but still up on the big screen!

Henderson HS grad Cole Ciarllo took home “Best Pic” and is a freshman film student at Full Sail Univ. in FL.



Official selections received their stars, certificates and play bill in anticipation of the Showcase.



Publicity: Comcast Newsmakers segment, Daily Local article, NRPA’s Open Space blog (2)

# EGT Park—A new home for new groups in 2020

The park became a preferred meeting place for many new groups in 2021, those typically using indoor locations. Among these were scouting groups, the West Chester Memory Café, grief recovery groups and WC Communities that Care.



The Chester County Concert Band used the amphitheater for safely distanced practice.



Time to Leap Dance hosted numerous recitals on stage in the park. TLD is a long-time department partner who dances at our Tree Lighting ceremony.



Multiple scout groups called Veteran's Pavilion home in 2020.



The park welcomed the Philadelphia Pastel Society's annual end of season Art Gallery event in September.

# Corporate partnerships—helping to keep our parks green and clean!

Throughout the year, many volunteer groups help make East Goshen Park the beautiful vibrant place to enjoy a nice, sunny day! Whether that is volunteering at an event, or assisting with the Butterfly Pollinator Garden, many hands together make the park a special place. One such partner is the HMD Package Development Division of Depuy-Synthes. Located right here in East Goshen Township, staff from Depuy-Synthes wanted to tackle something important in the park—the Butterfly Pollinator Garden! While beautiful, the garden is a constant work in progress as seeding, weeding, pruning and watering are on going processes! The team from Depuy-Synthes began helping out in 2019, they've decided to formally adopt the garden in 2020! They assisted the Township and West Chester Garden Club on a routine and formal basis, to ensure the garden is a lovely, colorful place for pollinators to land and kids to learn about environmental education! In October, we held a ceremony to thank and permanently recognize their efforts at the garden!



*Pat E. King Pollinator Garden  
Adopt a Garden Partner  
Proudly volunteering since 2019*



*1301 Goshen Parkway West Chester, Pa 19380*



# Volunteer Spotlight—Aarushi Jain, 2020 Volunteer of the Year

The Township's Park and Recreation Commission was pleased to recognize Aarushi Jain with its 2020 Volunteer of the Year award! Aarushi has been a key member of the planning committee's for both the Teen Awesome FEST and the SE PA Teen Filmmakers Showcase. She is the best volunteer we've had in the last decade, really taking ownership over the events and making them authentic teen experiences. We are pleased to announce she will stay close to home for school and be able to continue volunteering with East Goshen Township, leaving to attend the University of Pennsylvania in the fall.

Our parks and recreation department loves bringing new programs, activities and classes to our residents and love residents who roll up their sleeves and help! Whether you have a talent you would like to share or simply want to help us keep the park clean, we welcome you!

Contact Jason at [jiang@eastgoshen.org](mailto:jiang@eastgoshen.org) to talk about opportunities!



# Your award winning park system is getting national recognition, again!!



In 2020, East Goshen Parks and Recreation was once again named an National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Gold Medal Finalist community, one of four Finalists in the 30,000 and under population category. The National Gold Medal Award honors communities throughout the United States that demonstrate excellence in long-range planning, resource management and innovative approaches to delivering superb park and recreation services with fiscally sound business practices. Specifically, it looks at contributions in health and wellness, conservation and social equity. While we didn't win the "Grand Plaque" as best in our category at NRPA's national conference in October, we could not be more proud of our community who truly bring our parks to life and build memory –filled lives in their public spaces.

# EGPR impacts felt across the state

The Department Director is the Chair of the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society's Health and Wellness Committee. In this role, he helps to identify new ways municipal park and recreation agencies across Pennsylvania can support healthy lifestyles in their communities. The committee has been working on a statewide Culture of Health program, that will introduce a more holistic definition of health to children in day camp and out of school time activities.

The Department Director also volunteers professionally in the following roles:

PRPS Board of Directors, Secretary

PRPS Government Affairs Committee Member

PRPS Dig It! Blog Contributor

NRPA Mentor

Speaker at a variety of national/state events



# Promoting Community Engagement and Social Equity

East Goshen Township parks also celebrates events, activities and programs that help build communities capacity to serve all populations. In keeping with this goal, we partner with numerous community organizations throughout the calendar year and looks forward hosting these community partners again in 2021.

YMCA of the Greater Brandywine, West Chester branch

Bob Kelly BK5K for Nemours Hospital

PRO-ACT Ambassadors for Recovery

Youth Mentoring Partnership

National Alliance on Mental Illness

Headstrong Foundation

Brain Injury Association of America

Walk MS

American Cancer Society

National Eating Disorder Association

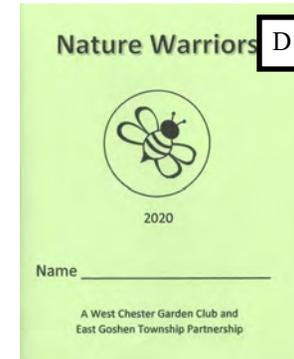
Stages Arts Initiatives

SEWA International



# Let's get ready for an amazing 2021 in the parks!

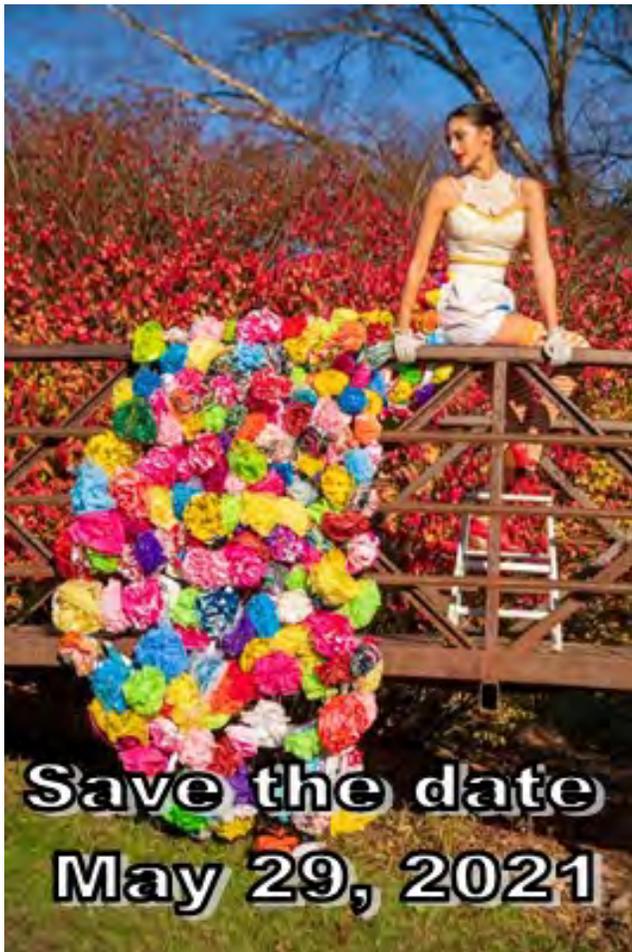
We are hopeful many of the programs and events that breathe life into our parks will once again be offered in 2021!  
Some of these include:



- A. Egg Hunt
- B. Community Day
- C. Santa's Toy Hunt
- D. Nature Warriors in partnership with WC Garden Club
- E. Ghost Walks & Escape Rooms
- F. Food Festival
- G. Pumpkin Festival
- H. Preschool Entertainment Series
- I. Partner events (5K, Cause walks etc.)
- J. Fitness classes

## 2021 Event Spotlight: The Big Top Re-Imagined - Arts, Parks and Sustainable Living

The Carnival of Ruin was postponed in 2020, but West Chester University's Theatre and Dance Department is hard at work getting ready for May 2021! The performance marries the department's loves of theatre and sustainable living, with a story that follows the Carnival Barker on a journey of self discovery. All elements of the staging and costuming are 100% recycled or repurposed materials! A mermaid's tail made from soda cans? Check. A big top made from single use plastic bags? Check! East Goshen residents helped with material collection last spring, donated thousands of bags, kitty litter containers and soda cans!



Recycled plastic bags are first converted to "plarn", then woven together to create the big top.



Shooting promos in the park, Nov. 2020





Danny Leicht, Chair

Debbie Snyder, Vice-Chair

Peter Knupp, Secretary

Joe Zulli

Ann Marie Fletcher-Moore

Ed Coyle

Christine Taraborelli

Kishor Thakrar

Eric Tobin

Jason Lang, Department Director

