

NATIONAL PARK & RECREATION PROFESSIONALS DAY IS JULY 19

Show Your Gratitude for a Local Lifeguard, Camp Counselor, Trail Educator, Park & Recreation Director or Maintenance Person with a Simple Thank You Note

STATE COLLEGE, PA, UNITED STATES, July 1, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Ask most people which community services save lives and they'll immediately name fire, police and EMT. But a short thank you note to one Southeastern Pennsylvania park and recreation director made the case that parks and recreation is lifesaving, too.



Pennsylvania Parks and Recreation are good for you

The anonymous park user wrote:

"...having a robust parks/rec department in a community is so important on many levels. The fitness classes and the trails and parks definitely made a very positive difference in my health and fitness. Without them I literally don't think I would have survived a sudden major medical trauma."

“

It's one thing to talk internally about our impact on the community; it's completely different to hear about the impact we've had on someone's life. It's a good reminder of why we do what we do."

Derek Dureka, director, Upper Dublin, PA Parks & Recreation

The note became a source of pride for the entire Upper Dublin Township Parks & Recreation Department, according to director Derek Dureka. "It validates the things we do that may not feel measurable until something happens. It's one thing to talk internally about our impact on the community; it's completely different to hear about the impact we've had on someone's life. It's a good reminder of why we do what we do."

July 19 marks the [Sixth Annual National Park & Recreation Professionals \(PRP\) Day](#). Ironically, the day set aside to

celebrate park and recreation professionals falls during these civil servants' busiest season,

when they are providing summer care at camps, keeping families safe at local pools, planning and managing outdoor community celebrations and ensuring local trails and playgrounds are safe and clean.

This national celebration is the brainchild of Pennsylvania Recreation & Park Society (PRPS) CEO Tim Herd, who created the first PRP Day in 2019.

"It's reasonable to expect that when you visit a park, it is clean, safe and ready to use. But that doesn't happen by magic," says Herd. "Most people have no idea the level of detail it takes to ensure activities at their local park go well or just to run the summer camp or pool."

For all the fun park and recreation professionals create, their impact is serious. [According to a survey](#) by the National Park & Recreation Association (NRPA), 93% of U.S. adults say their mental health is improved by services offered by local park and recreation programs. The top three activities cited were socializing with friends and family, spending time in nature and exercising.

During the pandemic, local park usage rose across Pennsylvania. Some counties saw a jump in visitors of more than 200%, as residents combated loneliness, uncertainty and social isolation.

According to Mitch Kulp, Park Superintendent of Lower Gwynedd Township and winner of the 2022 PRPS Good Job Award, during the pandemic, people who were always indoors suddenly flocked to their community's parks and trails, and discovered the gift in their own backyard.

A 2022 survey in Upper Dublin Township found that 88% of community members visited one of the township's parks in the last year and 30% visited one of the parks several days each week.

"I just wanted to say that having a robust Park/Rec dept. in a community is so important on many levels..."

- Citizens of UD since 2006

A thank you letter to Upper Dublin, PA Township Parks & Recreation Director Derek Dureka was a good reminder of the importance of local parks and rec.



Centre Region Recreation Supervisor Beth Lee high fives one of the campers at a Centre Region Parks & Recreation summer camp in Pennsylvania.

“We used to be seen as a luxury,” says Dureka. “The pandemic changed that. Now people are realizing their need for our services is just as vital as their streets being plowed, the police patrolling their neighborhood and their trash being picked up.”

Pennsylvania is home to more than 6,473 local and state parks. The typical Park & Recreation Agency in the Commonwealth manages more than 19 parks and offers 175+ recreational programs. Together these agencies employ more than 8,000 people and engage more than 2,000 volunteers each year.

“Park & Recreation Departments have a unique ability to build bridges with other essential township services to sustain and improve local quality of life. For example, we light basketball courts, manage youth sports and offer after school and evening programs that support police in fighting gang violence. These same after school programs boost student achievement and provide publicly subsidized meals. The centers that house them are often the rendezvous point during an emergency,” says Herd.

About Park & Recreation Professionals Day:

Park and Recreation Professionals Day falls on the third Friday of July during National Park and Recreation Month. It was created in 2019 by the [Pennsylvania Park & Recreation Society](#) and was elevated to a national celebration by NRPA four years ago. PRP Day complements PRPS’s good campaign, designed to highlight the good in Pennsylvania’s parks and how local parks and recreation improve residents’ lives.

Rachel Ezekiel-Fishbein

Making Headlines Public Relations

267-679-2463

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[Facebook](#)

[X](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/713759006>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2024 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.