

# 2017 RECREATION DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORT



WHEATON PARK DISTRICT

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Meet the Recreation Department
2. About the Recreation Department
3. Accomplishments
4. Benefits
5. Marketing and Promotions
6. Financial Overview
7. Participation Statistics
- 8-9. Special Events
10. Adult Education
11. Camps
12. Community Center
13. Creative and Performing Arts
- 14-15. Lincoln Marsh
16. Mary Lubko Center
17. Preschool and Early Childhood
18. Varied Interest



*create.* discover. **play.**

# MEET THE RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Each year Wheaton Park District residents and nonresidents are positively impacted by participation in Recreation Department programs, events, trips and services. Whether they are participating in an oil painting class at the Community Center, taking a walk on the trails at the Lincoln Marsh or enjoying a trip with the Mary Lubko Center, the Recreation Department offers hundreds of diverse recreational opportunities that enrich the quality of life for our community.



## RECREATION DEPARTMENT STAFF

**Vicki Beyer**, *Director of Recreation*  
**Deb Ditchman**, *Environmental Education Supervisor*  
**Linda Dolan**, *Mary Lubko Center Manager*  
**Cristin Handlon**, *Cultural Arts and Varied Interest Supervisor*  
**Lyn Havelka**, *Evening Community Center Manager*  
**Terra Johnson**, *Lincoln Marsh Program Manager*  
**Mike Kelly**, *Challenge Course Supervisor*  
**Jamie Martinson**, *Preschool and Camp Manager*  
**Rick Napier**, *Daytime Community Center Manager*  
**Sue Vasilev**, *Registration Manager*  
**Matthew Wrobel**, *Adult Education and Recreation Supervisor*

# ABOUT THE RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The Wheaton Park District Recreation Department is comprised of nine business units which offer comprehensive year-round programs for all age groups and interests at a number of facilities throughout the Wheaton Park District.

- **Adult Education**
- **Camps**
- **Community Center**
- **Creative and Performing Arts**
- **Lincoln Marsh- Environmental Education**
- **Lincoln Marsh- Challenge Course**
- **Mary Lubko Center**
- **Preschool and Early Childhood**
- **Varied Interest**

**28,157**



**PARTICIPANTS**

**180+**

**PART-TIME  
AND  
SEASONAL STAFF**

**MORE THAN  
1,200**

**VOLUNTEERS**

**11** FULL TIME STAFF

As part of a 2017 Leadership Academy assignment, the Recreation Department Team was charged with writing mission and vision statements.

## RECREATION DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

To aspire to provide programs, events and services that reach all age groups and interests and align with our vision, values and community feedback.

## RECREATION DEPARTMENT VISION STATEMENT

We, the Recreation Department Team, commit to improving our programming reach, balance, and frequency of use in ways that benefit, encourage and promote lifelong leisure.

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Wheaton Park District Recreation Department strives to continuously provide the community with the highest level of quality programs and services. 2017 accomplishment highlights include:

## COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

- Staff members serve on the Health and Wellness, Green Team, Values Team, Holiday, Safety, Taste of Wheaton and Fourth of July Committees.
- Nine staff are active members of the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan Charters.

## CERTIFICATION & ACCREDITATION

- Staff played an integral role in the Illinois Distinguished Agency Accreditation.
- Five camps were accredited by the American Camping Association.
- Challenge Course Supervisor obtained Challenge Course Manager Certification.



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Eleven staff completed the year-long Leadership Academy training through Corporate Learning Institute.
- Preschool and Camp Manager attended year one of NRPA Revenue Development & Management School.
- Hosted Annual Challenge Course Roundtable Conference.
- Additional trainings completed: PDRMA Online, Western DuPage Special Recreation Association, Morton Arboretum and Growing Up Wild curriculum.
- Conferences attended: Inspiring Nature Play, Midwest Early Childhood Educator Symposium, National Recreation & Park Association, Illinois Park & Recreation Association, LERN (Learning Resources Network), American Camping Association Mid States Conference and Challenge Course Roundtable.



PARK & RECREATION ASSOCIATION  
Learn. Connect. Inspire.

# BENEFITS

The Wheaton Park District Recreation Department offers a wide variety of programs, services and events that promote positive benefits for physical, mental and social aspects of life.

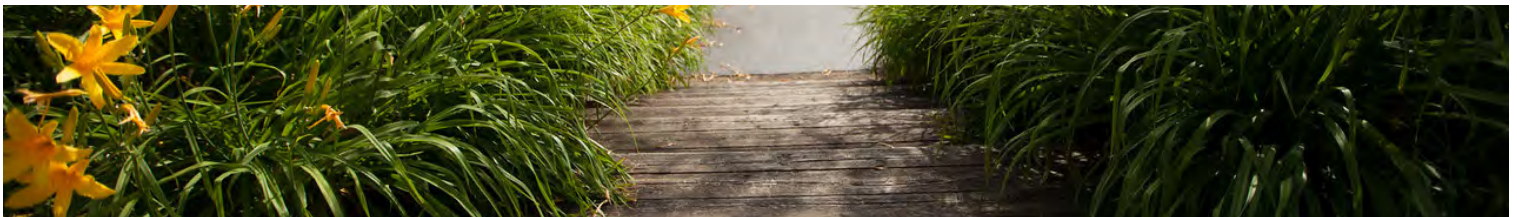


## PHYSICAL

Challenge Course  
at Lincoln Marsh

Fitness and dance  
classes provide  
flexibility and  
balance for all ages

Fine and gross  
motor skill  
developed in  
preschool curriculum



## MENTAL

Varied interests  
expand knowledge,  
interests and  
hobbies

Preschool programs  
improve confidence and  
social, emotional and  
basic problem solving  
skills

Walks and nature  
programs can  
assist participants  
with a variety of  
developmental  
disorders/delays



## SOCIAL

Provide a sense  
of belonging

Theatre programs promote  
community engagement, building  
self-esteem, establishing  
friendships and team building

Gathers like-  
minded individuals  
to create a sense  
of community

# MARKETING AND PROMOTIONS

In 2017, the Recreation and Marketing Departments worked closely together to unify promoting our programs, offering events and continuing to best serve our community. The Marketing Department helps support the Recreation Department by providing a voice to the community and assuring our communication to the public is exceptional.

The Recreation Department's marketing efforts consist of our quarterly program guide, which is delivered to 26,000+ households each season, targeted marketing via direct mail, e-blasts, social media outreach and print materials.

## 2017 SPECIALIZED MARKETING

- 45+ dedicated e-blasts for recreation programs sent.
- Preschool promotional piece created to recruit new students.
- Toohy Park promotional piece created to showcase programs and facility offerings.
- Lincoln Marsh Flash Sale for winter nature programs resulting in 1,033% increase in registration.
- Lincoln Marsh Summer direct mailing postcard to 500 households selected by carrier route.
- Quarterly posters/e-blasts featuring 4-5 programs for adults, youth & family, Lincoln Marsh, Mary Lubko Center and special events.

## PARTNERSHIPS

- Cooperative programming offered with Glen Ellyn, Winfield, Bloomingdale, Lombard and Carol Stream Park District to increase registration and program offerings.
- Partnerships with local government agencies including Community Unit School District 200, Wheaton Fire Department, Wheaton Police Department and Wheaton Public Library.
- 28th consecutive year partnered with Kiwanis Club of Wheaton for annual Fish-O-Rama event.
- Lincoln Marsh partnership with Church of the Resurrection and Corporate Learning Institute.
- Adult education programming partnerships with local businesses including: Sipping Muse, Suburban Music and Ed2Go.
- Kidslist media promotion for Pizza with Santa.
- Seventh consecutive year receiving room donations from Hampton Inn-Naperville for Missoula Children's Theatre.

## SPONSORSHIPS

- \$4,500+ sponsorship dollars secured for recreation programs and events.

**WIDE HORIZONS preschool**

**RECREATION PARK DISTRICT ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

**Revolution Brewery Tour**  
Saturday, Nov. 11  
12-4P  
Join fellow craft beer enthusiasts during this 45-minute tour of Revolution's 90,000 square foot production brewery and canneries where you'll learn about the brewing process packaging, bourbon barrel aging, and some company history. You'll receive two 7-ounce tastings and a free Revolution pint glass. Fee includes coach bus transportation from the Community Center.

**Women in Career Transition**  
Thursday, Sept. 28  
7-9P  
Community Center  
Hands-on, interactive workshop designed to assist women re-entering the workforce, changing careers, or searching for a new job. Learn to organize skills, interests, and qualifications using effective tools as strategies to begin the job search and create your next job by choice rather than by chance.

**Creative Writing for Adults**  
Sunday, Sept. 10-Oct. 29  
4-5:30P  
Community Center  
This introduction to the craft of creative writing draws inspiration from daily life, and through a range of in-class activities you'll compose short stories and creative non-fiction pieces using the engaging elements of fiction. Whether you are new to writing or experienced, this class is a welcoming space for you to try something new, receive helpful feedback, and develop your skill.

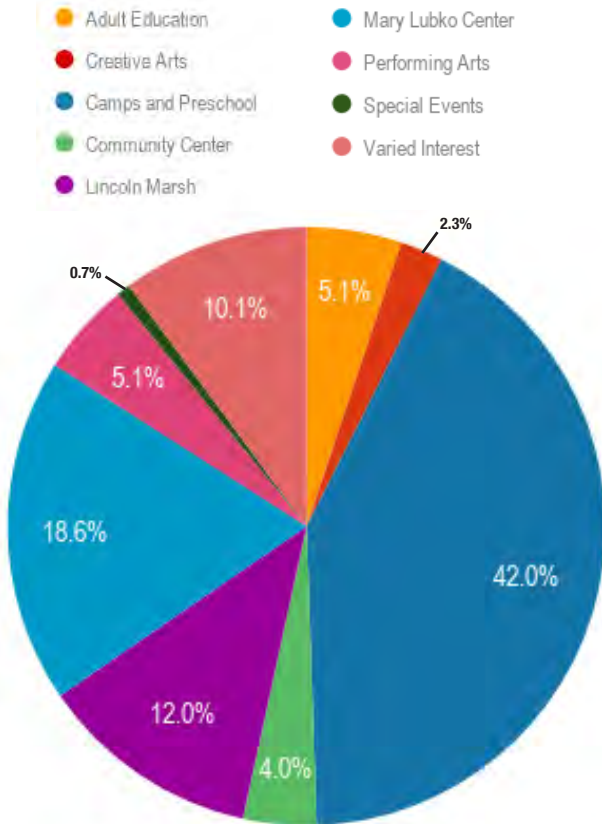
## SOCIAL MEDIA

- Facebook events for Mom/Son Bingo, Preschool Open House, Halloween Happening, Wheaton Community Garage Sale, Children's Playhouse and Mary Lubko Center concerts.
- Two boosted Lincoln Marsh Open Climb posts on Facebook.



# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

## 2017 REVENUES



## 2017 REVENUES\*

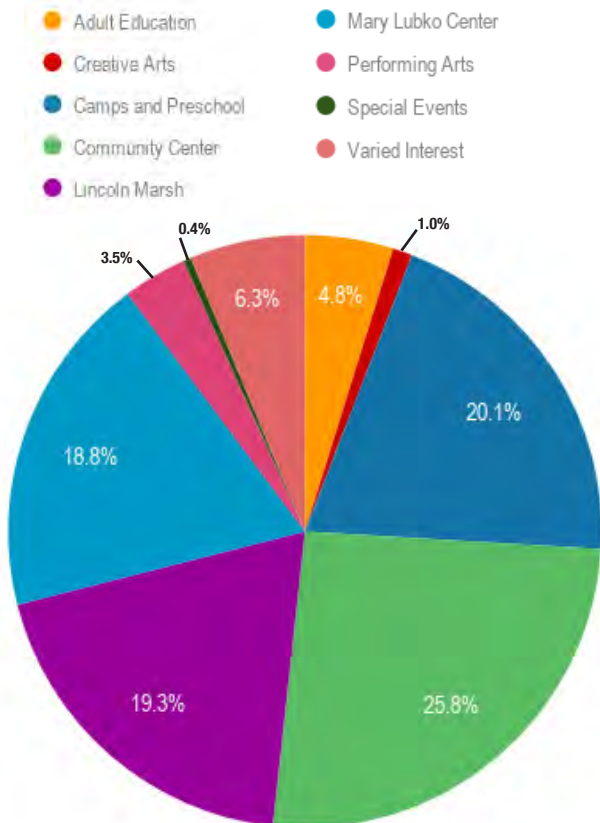
### REVENUES BY AREA

Adult Education	\$79,597
Creative Arts	\$36,107
Camps and Preschool	\$649,447
Community Center	\$61,295
Lincoln Marsh	\$185,614
Mary Lubko Center	\$288,348
Performing Arts	\$78,581
Special Events	\$11,342
Varied Interest	\$156,667

TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE=

\$1,546,998

## 2017 EXPENDITURES



## 2017 EXPENDITURES\*

### EXPENDITURES BY AREA

Adult Education	\$101,670
Creative Arts	\$22,517
Camps and Preschool	\$423,382
Community Center	\$544,309
Lincoln Marsh	\$407,178
Mary Lubko Center	\$396,369
Performing Arts	\$73,725
Special Events	\$9,061
Varied Interest	\$132,494

TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES=

\$2,110,706



# PARTICIPATION STATISTICS

## ADULT EDUCATION

	2016	2017	% Chg.
Revenues*	\$79,806	\$79,597	-0.3%
Expenditures*	\$101,043	\$101,670	0.6%
Programs	136	135	-1%
Participants	1,558	1,711	10%

## CAMPS AND PRESCHOOL

	2016	2017	% Chg.
Revenues*	\$609,170	\$649,447	6.6%
Expenditures*	\$382,971	\$423,382	10.6%
<b>Summer Camps</b>			
Camps	5	5	0%
Campers	3,430	3,373	-2%
Before/After Care Passes	5,348	5,768	8%
<b>Community Center Early Childhood Programs</b>			
Programs	96	127	32%
Participants	756	920	22%
<b>Toohy Park Early Childhood Programs</b>			
Programs	48	48	0%
Participants	420	472	12%
<b>Safety City Birthday Parties &amp; Field Trips</b>			
Groups	16	23	44%
Participants	247	345	40%
<b>Wide Horizons Preschool (2015-2016) (2016-2017)</b>			
Classes	9	9	0%
Participants	130	126	-3%

## CREATIVE ARTS, PERFORMING ARTS AND VARIED INTEREST

	2016	2017	% Chg.
Revenues*	\$297,992	\$271,355	-8.9%
Expenditures*	\$238,607	\$228,737	-4.1%
<b>Theatre</b>			
Programs	19	16	-16%
Participants	220	219	-0.5%
<b>Dance</b>			
Programs	88	71	-19%
Participants	596	549	-8%
<b>Creative Arts</b>			
Programs	206	281	36%
Participants	925	775	-16%
<b>Varied Interest</b>			
Programs	201	213	6%
Participants	469	540	15%
<b>Teens (including Zone parties)</b>			
Programs	61	96	57%
Participants	627	821	31%
<b>Cooking Programs</b>			
Programs	20	7	-65%
Participants	202	103	-49%
<b>No Schoolapalooza</b>			
Programs	7	14	100%
Participants	203	529	161%



## COMMUNITY CENTER

	2016	2017	% Chg.
Revenues*	\$56,506	\$61,295	8.5%
Expenditures*	\$530,496	\$544,309	2.6%
<b>LeisureShip</b>			
Funding	\$36,026.01	\$33,758.00	-6.3%
Families Served	124	125	1%

## LINCOLN MARSH

	2016	2017	% Chg.
Revenues*	\$190,853	\$185,614	-2.7%
Expenditures*	\$405,301	\$407,178	0.5%
<b>Challenge Course</b>			
Programs	536	540	1%
Participants	7,299	7,302	0.04%
<b>Environmental Education</b>			
Programs	486	494	2%
Participants	7,058	7,583	7%

## MARY LUBKO CENTER

	2016	2017	% Chg.
Revenues*	\$214,517	\$288,348	34.4%
Expenditures*	\$336,363	\$396,369	17.8%
Programs	67	79	18%
Participants	2,908	2,915	0.2%

## SPECIAL EVENTS

	2016	2017	% Chg.
Revenues*	\$10,913	\$11,342	3.9%
Expenditures*	\$6,142	\$9,061	47.5%
Events	7	7	0%
Participants	1,311	1,404	7%

# SPECIAL EVENTS

Each year the Wheaton Park District Recreation Department hosts several events. Below are some highlights from 2017:



## WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD

A nationally recognized week celebrating the young children in our lives! Engages children in free classes, special events and more!

**450+**  
ATTENDEES



## PIZZA WITH SANTA

Meet Santa while enjoying pizza, crafts and story time!

**100**  
ATTENDEES



## AFTERNOON BAND STAND WITH THE LAURIE DEAN DANCERS

Live music featuring two hours of your favorite “oldies but goodies”. Participants dance along or sit back and enjoy the show.

**50+**  
ATTENDEES



## ANNUAL WHEATON COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE

Sell your gently used clothes or other items gathering dust.

**50+**  
ATTENDEES



## HALLOWEEN HAPPENING

Carnival games, airbrush tattoo artist, costume parade, “Trunk-or-Treat”, “It’s Bat-tastic” provided by Lincoln Marsh, Kidz Kingdom craft, “Trick-or-Treat Trail”, concessions and strolling magic.

**1,500+**  
ATTENDEES



## MOTHER/SON BINGO

Play bingo, enjoy pizza, treats and have a chance to win prizes!

**80**  
ATTENDEES

# SPECIAL EVENTS



## DADDY/DAUGHTER PRINCESS BALL

Special memories are made while enjoying great music, dancing, sundae bar and a surprise guest visit!

**200**  
ATTENDEES



## NERF BATTLE FAMILY EVENT

Enjoy different obstacles and games with Nerf darts while enjoying pizza. Event offered in cooperation with the Athletic Department.

**40+**  
ATTENDEES



## FISH-O-RAMA

Lincoln Marsh hosts an annual fishing contest partnered with the Kiwanis Club of Wheaton at Northside Park.

**236**  
ATTENDEES



## SILVERTONE CHORUS SPRING CONCERT, WE'RE PLAYING THE PALACE

50 passionate and dedicated singers over the age of 55 perform two large concerts and a dozen outreach shows every year.

**200**  
ATTENDEES



## BEYOND GLEE PERFORMS BEYOND CHRISTMAS

An adult chorus where 30 talented singers perform two large community concerts and four outreach shows a year.

**400+**  
ATTENDEES



# ADULT EDUCATION

The Adult Education program area was created in April 2000 and replaced the adult education program formerly offered by Community Unit School District 200 (CUSD 200). Programs addressing the needs of multigenerational adults between the ages of 18-99 are offered in the areas of fitness, athletics, visual arts, dance, music, personal growth, hobbies, cooking, technology and financial skills.

## TRENDS

Survey results indicated the need/desire for:

- Adult fitness/wellness programs – Now offering Restorative Yoga and Adult Water Fitness in partnership with the YMCA.
- Adult social, trips and hobbies – Two local Brewery Tours were added.
- Adult music and instrument instruction – Violin instruction in partnership with Suburban Music was offered.

## CHALLENGES

- Finding/retaining qualified instructors.
- Developing programs that are trending.
- Competition with other active adult education programs in the surrounding area including but not limited to: fitness studios/centers, DuPage Art League, College of DuPage etc.

## LOOKING FORWARD

### Online Programs/Webinars

- Virtual seminars or training sessions presented live on the internet through PowerPoint presentations, handouts, videos and interactive Q+A sessions.

### Life Sports

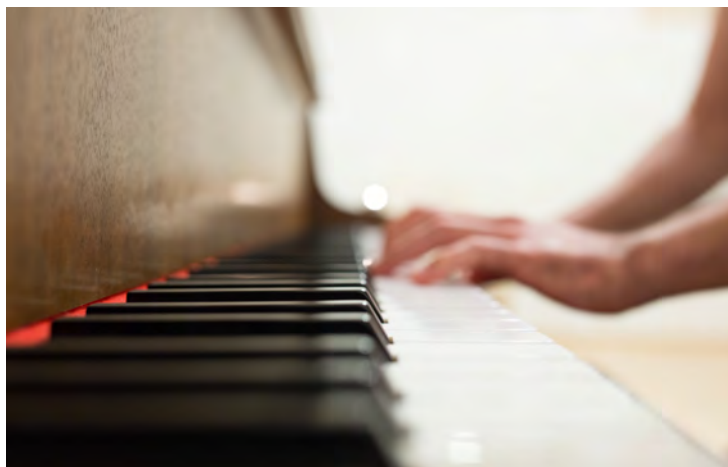
- Sporting programs, clubs and tournaments where active individuals can participate.

### Social Groups/Outing and Trips

- Geared specifically for the 21-to-50-year-old demographic. Events may include brewery tours, winery tours, culinary tours and trips.

## PARTICIPATION

	2016	2017
<b>PROGRAMS</b>	136	135
<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	1,558	1,711



# CAMPS

The Wheaton Park District summer camp programs thrive in the Wheaton community. We offer a variety of camps including five that are American Camp Association accredited camps. Camp locations and timeframes vary offering full-day and part-day camps at the Community Center, Toohey Park, Rathje Park, Northside Park and Central Athletic Complex. We strive to assure our camp programs are fun, safe, affordable and flexible.

## TRENDS

- Flexible registration options.
- Wide variety of program offerings that make the Wheaton Park District an attractive option for campers who want new activities.

## CHALLENGES

- Outside competition of surrounding districts. We must remain competitive in our pricing and flexible options to assure we retain our customers.
- Hiring quality seasonal staff during summer months.

## LOOKING FORWARD

- Continue to offer the best quality summer camp options for the residents of Wheaton and surrounding area.
- Stay creative with our field trips, programs, contractual offerings, etc. to assure we are providing new and fun experiences for our campers.
- Host a job fair in the spring of 2018 to try to secure quality staff members to lead our programs.



## CAMP PARTICIPATION

	2016	2017
<b>PROGRAMS</b>	5	5
<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	3,430	3,373

# COMMUNITY CENTER

The Community Center continues to be the “hub” of all four seasons of recreation programming. When the facility is not occupied with programs, we focus on room rental revenue, generating opportunities and forming relationships with the community.

## COMMUNITY CENTER MISSION STATEMENT

To provide a safe, inviting and well-maintained facility that meets the recreational, educational and social needs of the residents and user groups.

## COMMUNITY CENTER VISION STATEMENT

The Community Center is committed to meeting or exceeding facility expectations by providing fast, friendly and helpful service. We exist to promote a strong sense of community by ensuring the Community Center is available to be used by individuals, groups and organizations.



## FACILITY HIGHLIGHTS

- 1,502 program sessions offered.
- 62.32% of activity registration was done online.
- \$951,968 Community Center program revenue.
- Staff maintained a clean and safe facility with no major incidents or injuries in 2017.

## MAINTENANCE, REPAIRS AND UPGRADES

- Panic buttons installed in men’s locker room.
- Panic buttons installed on indoor track.
- In-house custodial services began in August 2017.

## MAJOR PROJECTS

### EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS

- Roof demolition
- Water tight
- Installation of new roof panels
- Courtyard demolition
- Masonry repairs
- Drywall repairs
- Frame entry canopy
- New signage on canopy

### INTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS

- Application of fireproofing
- Replacement of ceiling tiles on second floor

# CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS

The Wheaton Park District Cultural Arts program goal is to provide high-quality classes in a non-competitive environment. Participants are encouraged to become technically proficient in their craft and at the same time build self-esteem, cooperation, leadership skills and most importantly, have fun! We offer unique opportunities, such as pottery, that are not offered in the surrounding areas due to lack of supplies and equipment.



## TRENDS

- 108 pottery programs offered; 13 pottery parties held.
- 549 dancer participants.
- Private dance lessons were introduced.
- Children's Playhouse continues to utilize more modern and recognizable scripts that draw in the participants and audience members. Titles were: Disney's Little Mermaid Jr. and Annie Jr.
- 137 cast members between three full-scale theatre productions.



## CHALLENGES

- Targeting the older age group for dance lessons.
- Young Rembrandts has been struggling to find its niche as more kids are opting for a more physical activity approach.
- The rising cost of Missoula Children's Theatre continues to threaten the program.

## LOOKING FORWARD

- The dance program is making changes to provide an opportunity to address challenges and retention rates.
- Children's Playhouse fundraising to begin to build a library of costumes and set pieces to enhance our productions and offset the cost of the playwrights.
- Cooking classes have been repackaged to target larger class sizes.
- Expanding diversity of pottery classes for wider range of skills and interests.

# LINCOLN MARSH

Lincoln Marsh Natural Area is 151 acres comprised of woodlands, marshes and prairies which are highly valued for recreation, education and environmental reasons. There are two business units serving patrons at the Lincoln Marsh: Environmental Education and Challenge Course.

## MISSION

To increase awareness and appreciation for our connections to the earth and to each other through educational and social experiences in a healthy ecosystem.

## Environmental Education

Hands-on activities promote interaction with and appreciation of the natural world through discovery and exploration.

## TRENDS

- All other program areas, including Field Trips, Outreach Programs, Birthday Parties, and Nature Camps, saw an increase in participation in 2017.
- In 2016, CCSD89 transitioned their 5th grade fall outdoor education program, previously held at an overnight camp, to the Lincoln Marsh incorporating both Environmental Education and Challenge Course programs. They returned in 2017.

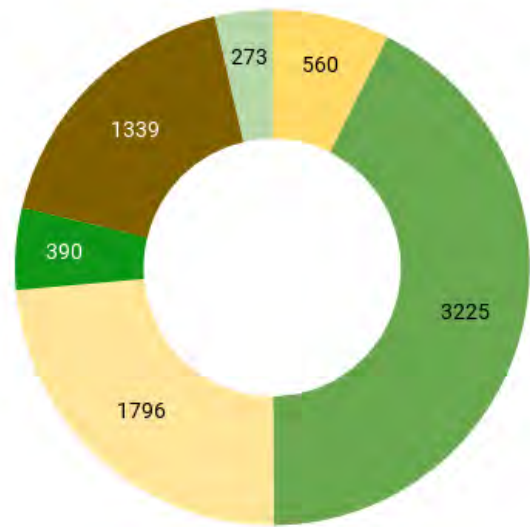
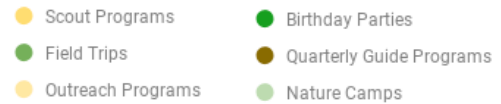
## CHALLENGES

- Participation in quarterly program guide programs, especially those for school aged children, has declined the past two years.
- Participation in Scout Programs is down this year due to fewer Cub Scout groups requesting programs in 2017.
- CUSD 200 significantly altered their curriculum beginning in the 2016-17 school year in response to the Next Generation Science Standards. This initiated the need for a review of field trip and outreach program options for school aged groups.
- Ongoing budget cuts and changes to curriculum in CUSD 200 has caused the Wetlands Education Program, a staple for over 25 years, to greatly decline.

## LOOKING FORWARD

- Restructure program options and increase marketing efforts for programs offered through the quarterly Wheaton Park District program guide.
- Expand scout program offerings for 2018 and increase marketing.
- Continue to build relationship with CCSD89 expanding programming into the spring as well as fall beginning in 2018. Look for opportunities to bring similar programs to other local school districts.
- Continue to review, revise and create new field trip and outreach program options for school aged groups making choices relevant to the Next Generation Science Standards.

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION TOTAL PARTICIPANTS: 7,583





# LINCOLN MARSH

## Challenge Course

Experience the dynamics of team work, problem solving, leadership, trust, and support through a series of experiential activities. The Northside Park Warming Shelter also falls under this business unit.

### TRENDS

- The vast majority of Challenge Course programs are those requested by outside groups. There has been a slight increase in these programs over the last several years with the Teams Course being the most popular.
- A few Challenge Course programs are offered in the Wheaton Park District quarterly program guide. Typically, 5-8 programs run annually.
- Team Adventure Camps usually have four sessions that run each summer. In 2017 there were only three sessions due to one low enrollment cancellation.



### CHALLENGES

- Ongoing challenges related to recruiting, training, scheduling, communication and team cohesion due to the nature of the Challenge Course Facilitator part-time position.
- Staying relevant and up to date on Challenge Course trends, standards and best practices.
- Increasing participation in programs offered through the quarterly program guide.

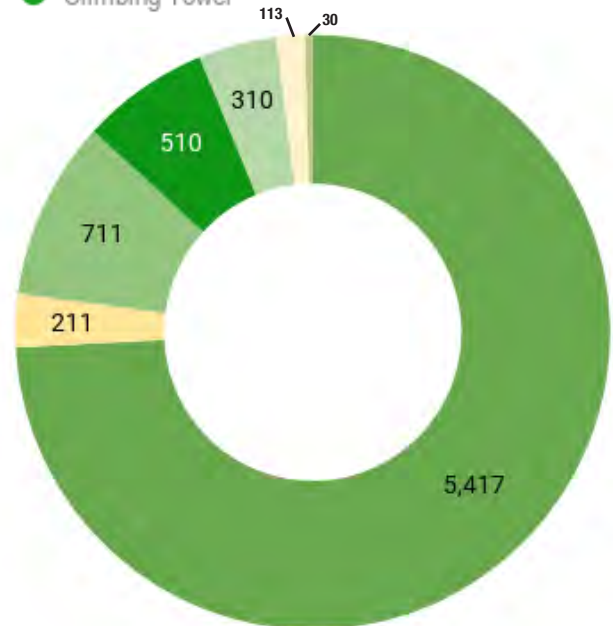
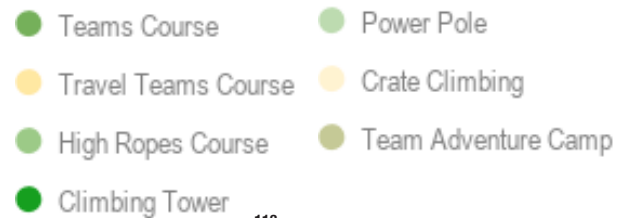
#### NORTHSIDE PARK WARMING SHELTER

WARMING SHELTER OPEN: 12 DAYS  
TOTAL SHELTER VISITORS: 1,879

### LOOKING FORWARD

- Meet with other Challenge Course managers to discuss issues related to staffing and program best practices.
- Incorporate the process of creating a feedback rich culture at staff development trainings and meetings as well as implement new processes for scheduling and communicating with part-time staff.
- Collaborate with staff to ensure quality, relevant and on-trend programming as well as begin implementation of the three year Challenge Course improvement plan.
- Increase marketing efforts for programs offered through the quarterly Wheaton Park District program guides, possibly incorporating sales and discounted pricing.

#### CHALLENGE COURSE TOTAL PARTICIPANTS: 7,302



# MARY LUBKO CENTER

The Wheaton Park District Mary Lubko Center has been a leading provider of innovative recreation programming for active adults since 1970. The center is conveniently located downtown in picturesque Memorial Park. The historic coach house, built in 1888, is warm and inviting, with a casual welcoming atmosphere.

We offer a wide variety of high quality, trend-conscious programs, services and travel opportunities that help people have the time of their life. In 2017, we offered 25 special events, 35 day trips, 12 free community service lectures, seven extended travel opportunities, five sport leagues, a variety of free weekly drop-in game programs, an opportunity to sing in two choirs and a variety of fitness, tai chi, and yoga classes. Our goal is to provide an opportunity for patrons to pursue their passions, learn and socialize with like-minded people.

## TRENDS

- Day Trip Adventures- Members love the convenience the day trip program provides. All the planning is done so they can hop on the bus and enjoy an adventure. Theatre, cultural, adventure and Cubs trips are popular among participants. The 31 trips offered in 2017 were popular, and bus trips averaged 45 participants.
- Extended Travel- The extended travel program is an all win situation. Patrons have the opportunity to take quality trips they could not plan themselves, with the security of knowing that all the details have been taken care of. Commission revenue from our travel partners jumped from \$10,717 in 2016 to \$12,775 in 2017. In addition, we took over 40 participants on overnight motor-coach trips to Door County and The Quad Cities, earning \$5,600.
- Fitness Senior Yoga is the newest fitness class at the Mary Lubko Center and has been received with enthusiasm by both men and women.



## CHALLENGES

- Many people are either not aware that we offer programs for seniors or are confused by the name Mary Lubko Center. Our marketing goal in 2017 was to raise awareness and make the words senior, active adult and over 55 more prominent on our marketing materials and the website. This goal will continue to be addressed in 2018.

## LOOKING FORWARD

- Extended Travel opportunities will be expanded in 2018 based on our success in 2017.

# PRESCHOOL AND EARLY CHILDHOOD

Wide Horizons preschool is a play-based preschool program which has been a staple in the community since the 1970s. Our preschool program provides our youngest residents with a safe and welcoming learning environment focused on building confidence, kindergarten readiness and social and emotional development.

Toohy Park hosts a variety of early childhood classes for ages 1-6. These classes focus on “learning through play” and work towards building socialization skills, cooperative play skills and fine and gross motor skills.

Safety City, a miniature downtown Wheaton complete with buildings, sidewalks and traffic signals, provides children a unique opportunity to learn safety essentials.

Our early childhood special interest programs allow participants the opportunity to experience music, cooking, athletics, arts and crafts, birthday parties, special events and more.

## TRENDS

- Families are always looking for something “more” to add to their child’s week.
- We are assuring our classes are offered at the most appropriate time to make it easier on the families to sign up for multiple programs.
- We understand that parents like to “build” their child’s week based on their child’s own special interests and schedule.

## CHALLENGES

- The main challenge of this business unit is the surrounding competition.
- The City of Wheaton boasts many opportunities for preschool and early childhood programming and it is our goal to stay competitive and current with trends in regards to all classes that we offer for this age group.



## PARTICIPATION

	2016	2017
PROGRAMS	173	191
PARTICIPANTS	1,508	1,621



## LOOKING FORWARD

- We plan to expand on our Wide Horizons Preschool classes by offering an additional afternoon class as well as continuing to add value to the current classes through special events, special visitors, field trips, etc.
- We also strive to continuously offer popular as well as new early childhood programming to stay current with trends in the market.
- Implementation of new marketing techniques with the marketing department such as promotional pieces as well as heavy cross-marketing amongst the early childhood programs.

# VARIED INTEREST

Varied interest programs offered include day, evening, weekend, camp, individual, parent-child, family, special events, parties and workshop opportunities, computer classes, horsemanship, volunteerism, babysitting, magic, technology, science, trips, teens, foreign language, fencing and more.

Classes are held at the Community Center, Central Athletic Complex, Memorial Park and at cooperative park district partnership facilities.

Many households consider varied interest programs as additional expenses. In difficult economic times, fewer families have money set aside for “additional expenses”. It is our goal to continue to provide fun and educational programs at an affordable price.

## TRENDS

- St. Francis, Wheaton North and Wheaton/Warrenville South High Schools returned to the Community Center for their post prom events, serving over 1,000 students and hundreds of parent volunteers.
- There were 51 Zone Parties in 2017 resulting in a net revenue increase of over \$4,000.
- The Wheaton Park District strengthened its cooperative programming of Cool Science programs with the Glen Ellyn Park District, resulting in a Net Revenue increase of over \$3,000.
- Private music lessons are becoming more popular as we are seeing more adults opting for this opportunity, resulting in a net revenue increase of approximately \$1,300.

PARTICIPATION	2016	2017
VARIED INTEREST PROGRAMS	469	540
TEENS (INCLUDING PARTIES)	627	821
TOTAL	1,096	1,361



## CHALLENGES

- Targeting the interests of teens, ages 11-14, is difficult as more teens are becoming “latchkey kids” and choosing to stay home instead of attend day camps. This was evident by the drop in Camp I Don’t Know enrollment in 2017 resulting in a \$10,000 decrease in net revenue.
- Trying new programming is often risky, however, we continue to reach out to specialists and experts in the community to offer a wide range of varied interest programs.
- Horsemanship programs and camps changed their location and are running programs further away. We have seen a drop in registration since this move took place.

## LOOKING FORWARD

- Opportunities for online programs for teens.
- Increase cooperative program opportunities for varied interest and teen programming with additional surrounding park districts.
- Create blueprints for a Counselor in Training program with the information collected in 2017. Introduce the new “camp” option in summer 2019.
- With the assistance of the Program and Recreation Services Charter, research underutilized spaces to try to increase programming options.
- Partner with a music company to introduce additional musical instrument private lessons.

# TESTIMONIALS

“We had a fantastic experience with our facilitator. My three kids had a wide range of climbing experience – from lots to none at all – and she was so patient and encouraging with them. They all were able to make it to the top with her help, and they felt a huge sense of accomplishment.”  
– Parent of Open Climb participant

“The instructors are amazing – caring, excited to see the kids each day, and you know your kids are well taken care of!”  
– Preschool parent

“With each class, I learn more about pottery and I can be more creative the better I get.”  
– Pottery participant

“I never miss this party! The food is excellent and I love that I can make an entrée choice. The entertainment is always great. Hearing the holiday songs brings back a lot of wonderful memories. You have been my salvation since I moved to Wheaton, I love everything you do.”  
– Holiday Gala attendee

“My husband and I love your extended trips. We’ve even brought our family on some of them. They are always fun and well organized. The staff is always pleasant, and very helpful. You make us all feel special!”  
– Extended Travel participant

“Can’t say enough good things about these programs. My child **loves** every minute!”  
– Wheaton resident

“This was definitely the best birthday party we’ve had for any of our kids. All the guests loved it because it was **unique** and not the same as most birthday parties out there – and it was fun for parents and adults. Exploring nature and being outside was great because all the kids loved it!”  
– Lincoln Marsh Birthday Party parent

“My son loves going to magic class and learning new tricks. Gary is also good about teaching a different trick to kids who already learned one of the tricks he’s teaching that day.” – Magic class parent

“My son is 12 and was not happy to be signed up for a camp, but he didn’t have a choice. He **LOVED** the camp from the first day and was even asking me to sign him up in August when I wasn’t even planning it because we had other things going on. Extended care options were great too. **Thanks so much!**”  
– Camp I Don’t Know parent

“The program was exactly what we were looking for to start off our leadership trip. I would really like to bring back my entire team.”  
– Wheaton North Girls Cross Country Team

“My son just love this camp. He told me he loved camp and couldn’t wait to bring me back to Lincoln Marsh to show me the trails and where they found frogs. It made him **love the outdoors** and I’m thankful we have this here in Wheaton.”  
– Curiosity Camp parent

“Thank you for a wonderful first school experience for my child!”  
– Wide Horizon Preschool parent



COVER PHOTOS BY:  
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