



MIAMI-DADE PARKS DISABILITY SERVICES



Inclusion success in summer camps

This summer, many children with disabilities attended typical summer camp programs throughout the Miami-Dade Parks, Recreation, and Open Spaces (MDPROS) system. These children were included with typical children in all activities. In order to address any special needs they had, staff working in the summer camp program completed an Inclusion Interview which specifically asks what type of assistance the child will need in order to accommodate that child into the program.

Inclusion had a significant impact on one

"My son really needed this program so he would be able to interact with other kids."- Johnnie Perpall, parent

particular family whose child with autism attended the summer camp program at Cinco de Mayo Park in deep South Dade. "My son really needed this program so he would be able to interact with other kids.",

said Johnnie Perpall, mother of Elijah Elzie who was included in the program at Cinco de Mayo Park.

Michelle Fletcher, manager at Sgt. Delancy Park, reported that the sign-language interpreter who was provided for a child that is deaf indicated that the child's ability to communicate through sign-language improved by the end of summer. Michelle, who had several kids with disabilities included in her program this summer, noted that by the end of summer, she and her staff felt more comfortable and confident in being able to include children with disabilities in the program, that she and her staff had a positive overall experience, and that she is interested in attending more trainings on inclusion to provide access to everyone.

Barbara Penrod, manager at Southridge Park, who has been including children with disabilities in her programs for over 15 years stated, "Working with kids that had

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disabilities took some adjusting for me and the staff. We weren't sure about it at first but it worked. I feel they (children with disabilities) have the right to be with other children. I do not turn anyone away. Kids are kids no matter what. This (inclusion) has been a beautiful experience. We've seen how the other kids have accepted children with disabilities and how even the kids with disabilities learn to help each other out". Whenever she needed some assistance with an Inclusion Interview or making accommodations, she contacted Parks Disability Services (PDS) staff who assisted her with the process. Time and effort will prove to be a valuable and positive experience for staff, the child with the disability, and all the other children in the program.

Volunteers make a difference!

Much of what is accomplished in PDS could not be done without the wonderful volunteers who give of their time, talents, energy, and most of all, heart.

One volunteer in particular, Courtney Chisholm, has decided to give back to the program that served her once. Courtney was a former participant at the Greynolds Park program for Children with Disabilities. This summer, she

volunteered 181 hours and assisted staff with program preparation and operation,

"How wonderful that no one need wait a single moment to improve the world." --Anne Frank

cleaning, and assisting other participants during literacy activities. Nicholas Mesa, a 15 year-old boy with Autism, spent

his summer volunteering at Westwind Lakes Park. He was responsible for setting up activities, cleaning, and any other task staff assigned to him. Nicholas always reported to his duties on time and has plans to return next summer.

To all the volunteers who gave of themselves this summer, a **BIG THANK YOU** from PDS!!!



Miami-Dade

Check us out on the web!

<http://www.miamidade.gov/parks/fun-leisure-access.asp>



Delivering Excellence Every Day

Greynolds campers serve up some lemonade

High school and Middle school participants at PDS Camp Greynolds went to “work” during the nine weeks of summer camp 2012. The 1st Annual Camp Greynolds Lemonade Stand became operational in July 2012 through the efforts of TCT contracted teachers Amy Pogorzelski and Lynnette Gonzalez. Participants who were interested in any position; manger, server, cashier and stock, were required to complete a “job application” and “interview”. Weekly role play assisted participants improve their self awareness,

expressive and receptive language skills, social interactions and living skills. The hard work our participants put into learning was demonstrated during our Family Night when parents, peers and staff were encouraged to “support” the Lemonade Stand. MDPROS, PDS, and The Children’s Trust (TCT) programming at Camp Greynolds strives to provide a positive, fun and therapeutic environment to assist in the transitioning from student to young adult.



Ms. Pogo, William, Andres, Ms. Lynnette make lemonade.

Morning Mile Achievement: more than 5,232 laps...436 miles!



Twenty One participants at MDPROS, PDS, and TCT camp at Greynolds accepted the challenge of improving their health and wellness via a morning mile walk/run to start their day during Summer Camp 2012. The combined twenty one participants walked laps at Camp Greynolds totaling an excess of 436 miles. Way to go Team Greynolds! The Morning Mile was a county-wide initia-

tive to get summer campers out walking every morning during summer camp. Over 1,899 campers participated in the program and the total cumulative miles walked/run by summer campers exceeded 38,995 miles!

Goalball programs serves youth from Miami Lighthouse for the Blind

This summer, PDS partnered with Miami Lighthouse of the Blind to provide a 5-week Jr. Goalball program to youth who attended a 6-week summer program at the Miami Lighthouse for the Blind. Approximately 25 youth, ages 9-13 took part of the program which occurred twice a week for one hour. The majority of the participants had never played Goalball before let alone heard of the sport. The program consisted of lead up activities that taught basic Goalball skills, team play, and ultimately a mini-tournament where participants got to play against each other. Goalball is a great equalizing sport as every person playing must be blind-folded. It teaches players to rely on other senses such as hearing and touch to locate their position on the court and

to hear the ball coming towards them. Players must also communicate with each other so they know who has the ball and where their teammates are on the court respectively. It’s a fun game that builds coordination in mobility skills, endurance, confidence, and sensory processing. These skills are necessary to any individual who is blind or visually impaired.

Isabel Chica, Manager of the Children’s Programs at the Miami Lighthouse stated, “The campers truly enjoyed participating in Goalball. Goalball provided them the opportunity to participate in a team sport where all players were equal regardless of their varying degrees of vision. It was both physical and fun.”

The program was such a success that PDS is looking to expand their Goalball offering to youth beginning in January of

2013 in an 8-week Saturday program that will alternate with days that youth attend Saturday training at the Miami Lighthouse.



Rey Cubas prepares to throw the Goalball to the opponent’s side during the Jr. Goalball program.

As one chapter ends, another begins...

As summer camp came to an end, it was time to say goodbye to several of the campers at various sites who aged out of the program. One of those campers was Raul Blanco who has participated in the summer camp program at Camp Matecumbe for the last five years. This summer, he graduated from the program. He has cerebral palsy and uses a power wheelchair to get around. This summer, Raul excelled at various activities, such as discussing stories of Kidzlit, Wii tennis and boxing, (stretching both arms), socializing with other participants and the staff, and his favorite activity of swimming. At the beginning of summer, Raul was able to take a couple steps in the water, and at the last swim class he was able to take at least six steps and able to turn around in the pool. Raul also went on the snorkeling

field trip to Crandon. He said it was the first time he had swam in the ocean and he enjoyed using the beach wheelchair. The staff unanimously voted Raul the most outstanding camper for summer 2012 at Camp Matecumbe.

Maggie Barclay, a camper from Goulds Park, also graduated from the program. Maggie attended the program at Goulds since it began in 2006. Debbie Barclay, Maggie's mother, stated, "I was afraid that because she couldn't speak or walk and needed much assistance with everyday tasks that she would not be able to stay in the program. My heart felt good knowing that my disabled child was finally accepted and was able to participate in sports, arts and crafts and enjoy many very nice field trips around the Miami-Dade county area. The program concen-



Raul Blanco doing what he loves the most, swimming, with Rafael Amaya (staff).

trated on what Maggie was able to do, instead of what she couldn't do. She walked the track with her walker, she was able to play on the playground, she splashed in the pool without her life vest and learned to go under the water. But the best part was Maggie making so many nice friends that made her feel welcome and part of the group".

2012 Olympic Opportunity Fund awarded to Miami-Dade Parks Disability Services

Miami-Dade PDS has been named as one of a few organizations nationwide to receive the 2012 Olympic Opportunity Fund Grant through the U.S. Olympic Committee, U.S. Paralympics Division. Funding to U.S. Paralympics was provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in order to promote lifelong health and to motivate, encourage, and sustain participation and competition in adaptive sports among dis-

abled veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces. Over \$24,000 was awarded to the department to support the **COVERT** Project (Connecting the Outdoors with Veterans through Education, Recreation, and Training). The **COVERT** Project will be implemented beginning in October and will provide disabled veterans with the opportunity to participate in archery, shooting (air guns/rifles), kayaking, and

swimming. The program is limited to disabled U.S. veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces who have had a spinal cord injury, amputation, or head injury. There is no cost for the program.

Peter and the Wolf performance at A.D. Barnes Park

The Miami-Dade PDS Leisure Access Center presented a free, live theatrical performance from the classic "Peter and The Wolf" on May 31, 2012. The production was possible thanks to the collaboration of The Leisure Access Center Staff, The Play Ground Theatre, and choreographer/ Dance Therapist Ana Miranda and also with the support of the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners.

Program participants practiced on a weekly basis with artists who took the



Eric Barrow and Julia Davis in their roles of "Peter" and "The Wolf"

group through a creative process in which the participants learned about the different personalities of the story characters, prac-

ticed script lines, assisted in the creation of their own stage props, learned how to project their voices, and communicated both verbally and through movement.

The Peter and the Wolf presentation has been an opportunity to develop better communication, social skills, and body awareness, thus, improving the participants' quality of life. The In-Park series program has provided a very creative way for adults with developmental disabilities to engage in the arts and develop self confidence by performing in front of an audience.

Inclusion & Accessibility to the MDPROS System

Miami Dade Parks is committed to including children and adults with disabilities in general park programs. General recreation staff participate annually in Inclusion Training to reinforce their skills and Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists are on hand to assist when needed. If you are interested in participating in a program and feel you may need an accommodation, please call the Parks Disability Services Administrative office at 305-755-7848.

In striving to make our Park system as accessible to persons with disabilities as possible, we have the following equipment for use by persons with disabilities at no charge.

Pool Lifts are located at all Miami-Dade Parks pools.

Beach Wheelchairs are located at Crandon (call 786-336-6982) and Haulover (call 786-336-6990) Beaches.

Single Rider Golf Carts are located at Country Club of Miami (305-829-8456) and Palmetto Golf (305-235-1069) courses. The carts can be transported to any County Course by calling either of these courses and requesting the cart in advance.

We are always interested in hearing from persons with disabilities about our services and their needs. Please feel free to contact us with suggestions and comments at the Parks Disability Services Office, 305-755-7848.

Upcoming Events & Programs...

September 8th

Jr. Paralympic Swimming begins
AD Barnes Park, 3401 SW 72 Ave.
Saturdays, *call to schedule time
Belinda Phillips, 305-752-4966

Goalball begins
NFL YET Center, 7090 NW 22 Ave.
Saturdays, 2-4 PM
Jody Cox, 305-234-1673

Wheelchair Basketball begins
Miami Springs Gym, 1401 Westward Dr.
Saturdays, 2-4 PM
Diana Bonet, 305-380-9106

September 22

Youth Arts in the Park begins
Camp Matecumbe, 13841 SW 120 St.
Saturdays, 9-11 AM, 305-234-1673

World Beat Drumming begins
Goulds Park, 11350 SW 216 St.
Saturdays, 11am-12pm
Jody Cox, 305-234-1673

September 29

Boccia Clinic
NFL YET Center, 7090 NW 22 Ave.
3-5 PM, 305-234-1673 for more info. & to pre-register.

Autism Sports (Soccer) begins
Coral Estates Park, 1405 SW 97 Ave.
Saturdays, 10am-11am & 11am-12pm
Arlene Bouza-Jou, 305-222-2128

October 2nd

Handcycling begins
Curtis Park, 1901 NW 24 Ave.
1sr & 3rd Tuesday monthly, 10am-12pm
Jody Cox, 305-234-1673

October 6th

Miami Heat Wheels @ 2012 Disabilities Expo Basketball Tournament
Nova Southeastern University
3301 College Ave., Ft. Lauderdale
*Games begin at 11AM.

November 17th

Paralympic Experience, 10am-3pm
Tropical Park, 7900 SW 40 St.
For more information call 305-755-7848.

Lucy Binhack, CTRS 305-755-7848

Disability Services Manager
Disability Services Administration

Kim Fowler, CTRS 305-945-3425

Recreation Therapist II
Greynolds Park Out-of-School Program for CWD

Celia Leyva 305-226-1622

Recreation Specialist II
Coral Estates Out-of-School Program for CWD

Arlene Bouza-Jou 305-222-2128

Recreation Specialist
Tamiami Out-of-School Program
Autism Sports Program

Gisel Prado, CTRS 305-665-5319

Recreation Therapist II
Adult Day Programs at the Leisure Access Center

Belinda Phillips, CTRS 305-752-4966

Recreation Therapist II
Camp Matecumbe Out-of-School Program for CWD
Swimming
Jr. Wheelchair Tennis

Diana Bonet 305-380-9106

Recreation Specialist
Westwind Lakes Out-of-School Program for CWD
Wheelchair Basketball
Wheelchair Tennis

Jody Cox, CTRS 305-234-1673

Recreation Therapist II
Goulds Out-of-School Program for CWD
Goalball
Handcycling
Youth Arts Program, World Beat Drumming