



# MIAMI-DADE PARKS DISABILITY SERVICES

Newsletter  
Spring 2014

## Parks Needs Your Input!

### WHAT DO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WANT FROM THEIR PARKS SYSTEM?

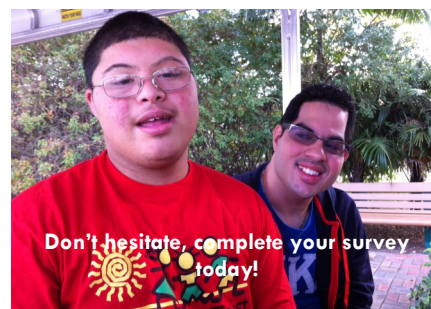
Miami Dade Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department is interested in receiving feedback from persons/parents of children with disabilities in Miami-Dade County about recreation activity preferences. Please click on the link below and answer the 21 survey questions, then click "submit". There is space for you to add your own comments, if the survey does not ad-

dress all of your recreation needs. Your answers will be used to improve future recreation programming for persons with disabilities in Miami Dade County.

To tell us, please visit the Parks Disability Services-Leisure Access Foundation page at the link below and select the Assessment Survey on the right-hand side of the page:

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

Please share this link with others!



*Delivering Excellence Every Day*

Check us out on the web!

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



Miami-Dade



The Children's Trust



## Parks Disability Services and Spina Bifida South Florida Welcomes Misty Diaz

Misty Diaz is a beautiful, athletic 29 year old woman who enjoys skateboarding, mountain climbing and Spartan races. She was at Tropical Park's Mary Abreu Community Center on February 1 to present a motivational talk to a group of young adults with Spina Bifida. The reason Misty can motivate young adults with Spina Bifida is because she has Spina Bifida as well. Although she resides in California, Misty was in Miami to participate in the Miami Marathon on Sunday, February 2. When Misty travels to participate in her many sporting events, she looks for opportunities to speak to the local

population of children and adults with spina bifida to share her incredible story of hope and inspiration. She will run the marathon on two crutches, with two helpers. One person running close behind will protect her from literally getting run over by other runners and another person by her side will assist with medications, water and other personal needs during the race. Young women with spina bifida from the audience asked questions, shared stories and connected with "one of their own" while parents clearly appreciated the brave and exciting personality Misty was able to share with her attentive audience. Thank you Misty and Spina Bifida of Southeast Florida for providing a heartwarming and deeply transforming message to our own young adults with Spina Bifida.



Misty Diaz speaks to a group of young adults at Tropical Park.

**Leisure Access Foundation**  
Making sports, recreation and the arts accessible to all

## The 2013 Junior Orange Bowl Sportsability Games

Six swimmers from PDS took to the water for the Junior Orange Bowl Sportsability Swim Meet on Dec. 6th. This year, the meet was held at Ransom Everglades Upper School. The six swimmers competed in 18 events and brought home 18 gold medals! Djibril Lamprecht also won the trophy for the male category of Sportsmanship Award. Lissie Montoya, reported

that she was really happy, because participating in the competition built up her confidence. She did not think that she was able to do it, and she did! All the swimmers take part in our Saturday swim program at AD Barnes Park. For more information call Belinda Phillips at 305-752-4966 or email bphil-li@miamidade.gov



Swimmers who competed: Brian Douglas, Djibril Lamprecht, Gerald Garcia, James Anuff, Lissie Montoya and Alijah Jackson>

## The Leisure Access Center Hosts a Movie Night



Pictured at the event: Gisel Prado, CTRS, Carolina Mugar and Arlene Bouza-Jou, Recreation Specialists and LAC Participants Josette Mascaro and Ignacio Azcoitia.

On Friday December 13, 2013, the Leisure Access Center hosted a movie night to benefit the Leisure Access Foundation. Families brought their lawn chairs and blankets and spent a great evening under the stars. During the event, Bromeliads and pineapple plants were sold, along with refreshments for a maximum movie night experience. The Bromeli-

ads and pineapple plants fundraiser sale was possible thanks to the efforts and contributions of Mrs. Paula Mass, Ashley Trop President of Plants in Design, Mr. Rory Johnson, and Wayside Baptist Church. This was a successful fundraising event and we could not have done it without the support of our clients, families, and friends.

## The 11th Annual Family Festival of Arts and Games at Kendall Indian Hammocks Parks

We had a rolling, roaring and explosive time at the 11<sup>th</sup> annual Family Festival of Arts and games. Our families really enjoyed the many activities, music and experiments this year.!

Charlie Suthers and Ivan Lopez from the Roxy Theatre Group played scientists as the demonstrated how a volcano explodes.



Participants at the Family Festival had the opportunity to get their face painted.



## Sweathearts Café Opens up at Tamiami's "Valentunes" Dance

Sweathearts Café opened for its Inaugural "Valentine's" Dance at Tamiami Park on the evening of February 12<sup>th</sup> 2014. Reservations were made in advance with hostess seating and ensuring guests were accompanied to their tables for a sit down dinner. Participants took orders and served guests food and drinks. Throughout the evening various courses went out- Italian salad, spinach bowtie pasta and red velvet cheese-

cake. DJ Tommy DeDios entertained participants and family members all night with delightful music. Local artist Marc Gonzalez created pieces of Valentine's Day Art for families to take home and display.



Tommy DeDios and family at the DJ Booth.



## MDPROS and Miami-Dade County Public Schools Partner to Fight Childhood Obesity

According to the Center for Disease Control, 20% of children 10 through 17 years of age with disabilities are obese. One of the best preventive measures for obesity is physical activity. Miami Dade Parks in partnership with M-DCPS is offering an adapted sports and fitness program at schools during the school day to children with visual and physical impairments. This program, known as the Jr. Paralympic Program, will give them the opportunity to learn adapted sports and fitness activities that will keep them healthy now, and

throughout their lifetime. The program, which is funded by the Community Transformation Grant, also offers an out-of-school component on Saturdays from 10am -3pm. The Super Saturday Sports program which takes place at Tamiami Park, provides participants with visual and physical impairments, the opportunity to become exposed to adapted sports such as basketball, soccer, volleyball, and swimming. Transportation is provided free for the Saturday sports program. Anyone interested in the program that has a

physical and/or visual impairment and takes the FCAT, can contact Thera Johnson at 305-931-5025 to register for this exciting sports and fitness opportunity. "**Children need no prior experience in sports to participate.**"



Children from the Super Sports Saturday program participate in the Hope & Possibility Event.

## The 2014 Hope & Possibility Event

On January 25th, MPROS partnered up with Achilles International to hold their first omnium, or three-component event, called the Hope & Possibility Road Race and Wheelchair Obstacle Course. The event encouraged participants to complete a 1-mile timed handcycling trial, a wheelchair

obstacle course, and a group walk/run/roll at the end. The day was filled with lots of fun and new opportunities for everyone. A special thanks to the volunteers from Achilles, F.I.U., and Belen Jesuit School, who helped out with the day's activities, and a BIG thanks to our D.J., Laura Ortiz who kept us thumping the whole day long!



Every participant had the opportunity to challenge themselves on the wheelchair obstacle course.



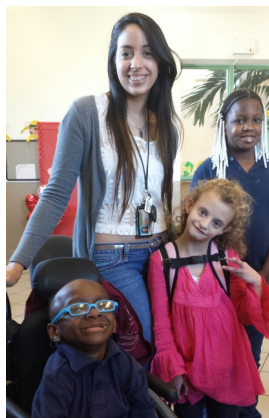
## Miami Heat Wheels Car Washes

Please come out and support the Miami Heat Wheels at their upcoming car washes at the Mobil gas station located at 10345 S. Dixie Hwy, from 10 am to 3pm.

Car Wash Dates:

May 18th

June 29th



## Volunteer Highlight

For the last two years, Sophia Estrada has been volunteering her time with the children at Goulds Park. Sophia, now a senior in high school, started volunteering when her brother started attending the program. She is a very dedicated young woman who works very

well with the younger participants and Delivers Excellence everyday she is with the group. Sophia has applied for the Silver Knight Award and this young lady certainly deserves to be recognized for the hard work she puts in at Goulds Park!

Sophia Estrada with participants from Goulds Park.

## Parks Disability Services Interns

PDS would like to recognize and thank the hard-working interns that spent the Spring Semester with us:

Natalia Orrego, Undergraduate Recreation Therapy student from F.I.U.

Stephanie Gonzalez, Undergraduate Recreation Therapy student from F.I.U.



**Photos from the 9th Annual Paralympic Experience held on March 22nd, 2014 at Tropical Park.**



## Contact Us

**Lucy Binhack, CTRS** 305-755-7848  
**Disability Services Manager**  
 Disability Services Administration

**Thera Johnson, CTRS** 305-945-3425  
**Recreation Specialist**  
 Greynolds Park Out-of-School Program for \*CWD  
 Youth Arts Program-North, CIL Program, Special Olympics, Jr. Paralympic Program, Super Sports Saturday

**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, TOPS Soccer  
 Water Exercise-Tamiami Pool

**Gisel Prado, CTRS** 305-665-5319  
**Recreation Therapist II**  
 Adult Day Programs at the Leisure Access Center  
 Special Olympics, Fun on Fridays  
 Saturdays in the Park, Programs for Hearing Impaired Assoc. of Miami-Dade

**Belinda Phillips, CTRS** 305-752-4966  
**Recreation Therapist II**  
 Camp Matecumbe Out-of-School Program for CWD  
 Swimming, Special Olympics

**Diana Bonet** 305-380-9106  
**Recreation Specialist**  
 Westwind Lakes Out-of-School Program for CWD  
 Wheelchair Basketball, Wheelchair Tennis  
 Recreational Skill Development

**Jody Cox, CTRS** 305-234-1673  
**Recreation Therapist II**  
 Goulds Out-of-School Program for CWD  
 Goalball, Handcycling, Youth Arts Program South, Boccia

\* Children with Disabilities

## Inclusion and Accessibility to the MDPROS System

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.

## Special Thanks!

Parks Disability Services would like to extend a thanks to the following organizations that donated to their United Way fundraiser which raised over \$400!:

**Trader Joes, South Miami**

**Harley Davidson of South Dade**

**Coopertown Airboats**

**Miami Kiteboarding**

**Key Largo Princess**

**Bird Bowl**

**Jewelry Designs by Esther Rios**

## Upcoming Events & Programs...

### April

**Super Sports Saturdays**  
 (program for children with physical or visual disabilities)  
 \*free transportation  
 Saturdays, 10 AM –2 PM  
 305-931-5025

### May

**Water Exercise at Tamiami Park**  
 Classes begin May 6th  
 Tues. & Thurs., 12-1 PM  
 305-222-2128