



# MIAMI-DADE PARKS DISABILITY SERVICES

Newsletter  
Summer 2013

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

Please pass this survey on to others with disabilities.

**TO TELL US, CLICK HERE:**  
<http://tinyurl.com/ojng3lc>



Don't hesitate, complete your survey today!



Lillian Vega hands Judy Litt a program brochure before the presentation.

On Thursday May 9th, 2013 the Leisure Access Center showcased an adaptation of "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" from the Disney animated film Fantasia. In the presentation, the Apprentice borrows his master's magical hat and enchants a broom to do his chores for him. Unable to control the spell, chaos results with multiplying brooms and water buckets. The production was the concluding event of the "In-Park Series" grant sponsored by Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs, the Cultural Affairs Council, The Miami-Dade County Mayor's Office and the Board of County Commissioners. The produc-

## Leisure Access Center In-Park Series

tion featured performers from the Leisure Access Center led by artist Phillip Collazo and choreographer Ana Miranda. This production allowed the participants to use their bodies and voices to act on stage and interact with their peers and the audience. For more information on upcoming In-Park Series events, call 305-665-5319.



Jose Capdevila as The Sorcerer during the performance.



*Delivering Excellence Every Day*

Check us out on the web!

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



Miami-Dade



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

## The Leisure Access Foundation Provides Opportunities for Athletes with Disabilities

Many of the athletes that participate in the Special Olympic and Paralympic Sport Club programs offered by Parks Disability Services would never have the competitive opportunities they have had if it wasn't for funding from the Leisure Access Foundation. Each year, the Leisure Access Foundation has sent over 20 athletes to various competitions within the state of Florida as well as out-of-state regional and national tournaments.

Funding athlete travel is only one of the ways the Leisure Access Foundation has benefitted individuals living with disabilities in our community. The Leisure Access Foundation also sponsors events, purchases equipment, and pays for highly-skilled coaches to train athletes. For more information on how to support the Leisure Access Foundation, please call 305-755-7848.



Several Goalball players see snow for the first time on a trip to Michigan for a tournament paid for by the Leisure Access Foundation.

## Recreational Development Program Teaches New Skills

When a new program kicks off, it's always difficult to predict what the outcome may be. Such was the case for 6 year old, Anthony Nora, who has Autism. His parents enrolled him in the new Recreational Development Program at Westwind Lakes Park. His father, a football coach, wanted him to learn how to play football while his mother wanted him to learn soccer. Let's just say soccer won.

While the first couple of sessions were met with screaming and tears (part of the adjustment process to a new environment and new people), gradually, the tears subsided

and staff were able to focus with the child on the actual skills and goals identified.

Each session began with a greeting and a visual review of what was going to be learned, stretching and warm up exercises. The lesson was planned around the child's needs and abilities and included the child reading what he was going to do. Through the program, staff were able to teach basic skills such as not using his hands, kicking the ball, passing the ball, and stopping the ball. In addition, increasing his tolerance to physical activity and being outside were goals set.

The Recreational Development Program was developed for kids and teens with disabilities. The program is designed to teach a child or teen to develop his/her sports development skill on a one-to-one basis and teaches recreation skills such as a sport or activity of the parent's or child's choice. The program meets once a week during the school year for one hour and there is a fee of \$35.00. For more information on the program, contact Diana Bonet at 305-380-9106.



Players face off during an "end" or round of Boccia.

Boccia is an adapted form of the game Bocce. It is played on an indoor surface with balls that are soft, weighted, and easy to manipulate. The sport was originally developed for individuals with Cerebral Palsy but the classification system for players allows individuals to play who have hemiplegia or quadriplegia. It was first introduced to the Paralympics in 1984 and has been a part of the Paralympic games ever since. It can be played individually, in pairs, or as a team. When played rec-

tionally, Boccia can be played by anyone as long as they are seated so it's a great inclusive game.

On April 19th, Parks Disability Services held their first inter-hospital Boccia tournament. Teams from both Jackson Memorial Rehabilitation Unit and the Miami VA Medical Center participated in the event. Parks Disability Services first offered two Boccia clinics to each hospital as a way to introduce patients to the sport. The clinics culminated with patients from both hospitals competing against each other in a double-elimination tournament. The winning team hailed from Team Jackson who proudly took home the trophy. Cathy Herring, CTRS, Recreation Therapist from Jackson's Rehab stated, "This was one of the best things we did and we got to do it with the parks and with the veterans. It was such a big motivator for my patients. It was a sport that I could have anyone and everyone participate in. It gave me the opportunity to invite people I have not see in 19 years".

## First Annual Inter-Hospital Boccia Tournament

Congratulations to all who participated in the event and a special thanks to Charlie Brown and Dee DeMello from the US National Boccia team who came out and assisted at the event as well as the volunteers who helped out that day.

For more information on Boccia or if you are interested in playing the sport, please contact Jody Cox at 305-234-1673.



Patients from both hospitals pose together after the competition.

## Parks Disability Services Awarded the 2013 Active Leisure for Life Award!

The Florida Disabled Outdoors Association (FDOA) was founded in 1990 by David Jones to enrich lives through accessible, inclusive recreation for all. In 1988, David Jones was shot in a hunting accident resulting in a serious head injury that left him with permanent paralysis of the left leg, limiting mobility and no use of his left hand. David states it was the therapeutic recreation services he received that impacted his rehabilitation the most. He became aware of the importance of recreation for rehabilitation – not only to improve mobility, but to improve mental well-being. Turning his “tragedy” into an opportunity to change lives and help others, the Active Leisure for Life Award recognizes organizations who contribute to the disabled community.

Parks Disability Services has been recognized as the 2013 Active Leisure for Life Award Recipient. Parks Disability Services (formerly known as Leisure Access Services) was established in 1991. The division provides opportunities to meet the various needs of the disabled community throughout Miami Dade County: Adult-day treatment services, programs for adults with intellectual disabilities such as Special Olympics, Fun on Friday, and Saturdays in the Park, Out-of-school programming for children with disabilities, Autism Sports programs, Paralympic Sport club programs including goalball, wheelchair tennis, wheelchair basketball, hand-cycling, aquatics, and outreach programs to disabled veterans, water exercise, specialty clinics and programs for specific

disability populations, and special events. The Department ensures our facilities, special events, pools, beaches, and marinas are accessible and our general programs are inclusive.

The Miami Dade Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Departments’ core values: outstanding customer service, accountability and integrity, inclusiveness and accessibility ensure we are committed to promote the involvement of persons with disabilities throughout all park services, striving towards our Vision: Connecting People and Parks for Life.

### Swimming Helps With Recovery

Christian Valle is a young man who was in a car accident in November 2012, and suffered a spinal cord injury. He started swimming in February 2013, in our Saturday swim classes. When Chris started, he had to wear a TLSO (Thoracic-Lumbar-Sacral Orthosis), a two piece plastic brace which works like a body cast.

Chris has participated every Saturday, from February to May, and has found the swimming useful and helpful in his recovery, as it is an extra activity in which he can participate. “Before my injury, I loved going to the beach and the pool to swim. I now find the water a fun and easy way to help with walking, as the exercises I do in the pool compliment physical therapy and vice versa. I love all the work, the life-

guards, and the swim coaches (Charmaine Crosby, Camila Schuab and Belinda Phillips) do.”

Chris has been highly motivated, challenges himself, and is eager to try new exercises and improve his strokes. He wants to improve his strength and coordination and has developed a great trust with the swim coaches. Every week he has his very supportive family, who have dedicated themselves to his recovery, accompany him to the pool.

No matter what the challenge of the day is, Chris is seen working hard in the pool, always with a beautiful smile on his face!



Christian Valle poses with his dad, Julio Cue at AD Barnes Pool.

### Let's Keep Moving!

“Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt” is the Special Olympics athlete oath that exemplifies the true spirit of our Special Olympic athletes as they are “Training for Life”.

Being physically active is one of the most important steps we can take. Parks Disability Services is encouraging Adults 18 years and older with developmental disabilities to continue being fit. Come and learn a variety of

sports such as Basketball, Bowling, Track & Field, and prepare to compete in Special Olympics. We are “expanding” our Special Olympic program to several of our sites. Some of the sports that will be offering this fall will be Bocce at Coral Estates and Greynolds Park, Soccer at Tamiami Park and Basketball at Camp Matecumbe.

For more information on the upcoming programs, times and locations, contact:

**Camp Matecumbe**  
Belinda Phillips, 305-752-4966

**Coral Estates Park**  
Celia Leyva, 305-226-1622

**Camp Greynolds**  
Kimberly Fowler, 305-945-3425

## Inclusion and 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...

### July

#### Afterschool Registration opens

July 8th, 9:00 AM

### August

#### Afterschool Program begins

August 19th

#### Believe in Magic (In-Park Series Show)

August 30th, 7 pm

Leisure Access Center, 3701 SW 72 Ave.

Call 305-665-5319 for more info.

### September

#### Swimming North

Sept. 7-Nov. 2, Saturdays

PSN Pool, 7901 NW 176 St.

Call 305-931-5027 for more info.

#### Swimming Central

Begins Sept. 7th, Saturdays

AD Barnes Pool, 3701 SW 72 Ave.

Call 305-752-4966 for more info.

#### Wheelchair Basketball begins

Sept. 7th, Saturdays, 2pm to 4pm

Miami Springs Recreation Center

1401 Westward Dr., Miami Springs

Call 305-380-9106 for more info.

#### Recreational Development Program

Begins Sept. 7th, times vary

Westwind Lakes Park,

6805 SW 152 Ave.

Call 305-380-9106 for more info.

#### Special Olympics Bocce

Sept. 10th-Oct. 5th

Tues. 6 to 7 pm & Sat. 11 am to 12 pm

Call 305-931-5027 for more info.

#### Goalball begins

Sept. 14th, Saturdays, 1 pm to 4 pm

NFL YET Center, 7090 NW 22 Ave.

Call 305-234-1673 for more info.

#### Autism Sports Resumes

Saturdays, 10 am to 12 pm

Call for more info., 305-221-2128

### October

#### TOPS Soccer Resumes

Tues. & Thurs., 4 pm to 5 pm

Call for more info., 305-221-2128

#### Miami Heat Wheels Mini Tournament at the 2013 Broward Disability Expo

October 5th, games start at 10 AM

Nova Southeastern University Taft Ctr.

3301 College Ave., Davie, FL

Call 305-380-9106 for more info.

#### Special Olympics Basketball

Oct. 1 through Dec. 19th

Tues. 5:30 to 7:00 pm

Camp Matecumbe, 13841 SW 120 St.

Call 305-752-4966 for more info.

**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

Youth Arts Program-North, CIL Program, Special Olympics

**Thera Johnson, CTRS**

**305-931-5027**

**Recreation Specialist**

Oleta Campus Summer Camp, Special Olympics Bocce Swimming-North, Jr. Paralympics

**Celia Leyva**

**305-226-1622**

**Recreation Specialist II**

Coral Estates Out-of-School Program for CWD

DSAIL Program, Special Olympics

**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-Central, 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

COVERT Project (Veterans' Program)

\* Children with Disabilities