

Providing Shade
from Summer Sun

Athletic Programs offer youth
with special needs the chance
to get back in action

Nature-Playscape
at Carl Levin Park



FY2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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WHO WE ARE

OUR VISION AND MISSION

To Create Community Through People, Parks, and Programs

To provide community enrichment opportunities through exceptional customer service and innovative programs and by creating and maintaining attractive, safe, clean, accessible, and interconnected parks and facilities.

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Jeff Achee, Director

Adam Trujillo, Activities & Special Events Manager

Casey Brazzil, Parks & Facility Operations Manager

Alex Beaver, Recreation Manager

Nichole Broemer, Rec Center & Senior Programs Manager

Kiarrah Carlisle, Athletics Coordinator

Wes Alvarez, Athletics/Aquatics Coordinator

Kailie Gomez, Outdoor Programs Coordinator

Sara Gibbs, Activities Coordinator

Nicole Loayza, Administrative Assistant

Duston Wilson, Athletics Crew Leader

Henry Nash, Parks Crew Leader

John Leivan, Building Maintenance Crew Leader

Billy Stevens, Parks & Open Space Crew Leader

27 **22**
FULL TIME STAFF PART TIME STAFF

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Over the past year, we have improved our Department in many ways that we are very proud of. We will discuss those throughout this report, but I would first like to thank our City leadership for their support.

Thank you to Mayor Michael Blomquist and former Mayor Spencer Smith for their unwavering support of our parks, programs, and staff. Their involvement in our department has made us all better stewards of local public lands.

Thank you to our City Council for all that they do. Whether attending events and or programs, helping at a volunteer cleanup, or simply stopping by to say hello to staff and offer words of encouragement. You all have been instrumental in our success during the pandemic.

Thank you to our Parks & Rec Advisory Board. Your guidance has led us to achieve new heights throughout our parks system and citizens are able to reap the rewards of your hard work.

Thank you to City leadership: City Manager, Assistant City Manager, and Department Directors. This year has certainly showed us how important teamwork can truly be.

And lastly, thank you to our parks and program patrons. You are what make this community great. We look forward to seeing you out there!

Jeff Achee



PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD TREE ADVISORY BOARD

Angie Wilson, Chair
Alonzo Williams, Vice Chair
Brittany Harris
Heidi Heckel
Natalie Austin
Tina Capito

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board was assembled in 1995. The Board is composed of six members and two alternates, which are appointed by the City Council. The Board is governed by the Code of Ordinance § 33.35.

The Harker Heights Parks and Recreation Advisory Board shall meet on the second Monday evening of all odd number months, shall have no supervisory function, and shall have no rulemaking or quasi-judicial authority. The Board is organized to advise the City Council on policy and programs.



IMPROVING OUR PARKS AND FACILITIES



Carl Levin Park Playground Renovation

The playground at Carl Levin Park, original to when the park was constructed in 1999, was replaced with a Landscape Structures playscape by Whirlix Design. The design of the playscape incorporates natural play features and prominently features the Monarch Butterfly in the design. It also has a swing and other play features that are more accessible for children with various needs.



Shade Canopy at Purser Family Park Playground

Constructed in 2008, the Purser Family Park Playground area had little shade from the blistering Texas sun. A 50'x30' shade canopy was installed to ensure safety and comfortability of use all year long.



Seating Area at City Hall/Recreation Center & Mayor's Monarch Garden

In 2021, Mayor Spencer H. Smith took the Mayor's Monarch Pledge and, in doing so, committed to taking steps to preserve habitat for the state butterfly of Texas. Staff is currently constructing the Mayor's Monarch Garden outside of City Hall and the Chamber of Commerce Vision XXI Class installed seating areas for visitors to utilize, particularly for the Farmers Market hosted here much of the year.



Water Fountains at Athletic Facilities

The Harker Heights Community Park Baseball & Softball fields and Summit Soccer Complex received new outdoor water fountains that include bottle filling stations for staying hydrated while active.



Dog Park Improvements

The Harker Heights Purser Family Park Dog Park area had several renovations this year; including the entrance to the dog park, new signage, a new bench, and reconstructing/relocating the fence line to avoid common flood areas.

IMPROVING OUR PROGRAMS



GO Heights Program Receives \$30,000 Grant from Texas Parks & Wildlife

The Get Outdoors Heights program received a grant to expand access to the program by providing additional materials such as tents, kayaks, cookware, etc., to participants. It also funded the purchase of materials for the “Girls Outdoors” program, aimed at getting girls active and comfortable in the outdoors.



First Season of Youth Flag Football Since 2012

FY23 marked the first time that the Athletics department hosted a youth flag football program since 2012. Beginning in the late summer, over 100 participants between the ages of 7 and 12 participated in the program, which was held at Summit Soccer Complex.



Peaceable Kingdom Partnership Brings Archery Program “2U” with PK2U

The Parks and Recreation Department and Variety of Texas partnered to bring the Peaceable Kingdom Camp to Harker Heights and to bring Harker Heights to the camp! Archery programs were hosted in various parks throughout the year and Peaceable Kingdom hosted a “Day of Play” at the camp for the entire Harker Heights community.



Ability Sports Program for Children with Special Needs back to Full Strength

While staff began bringing back Ability Sports programming in late 2022, 2023 was when we really got back to full-scale Ability programming. New to the calendar this year was Pickleball, followed by Skateboarding, Bowling, and Soccer.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

AS COMPARED TO 2023 NATIONAL RECREATION & PARK ASSOCIATION
AGENCY PERFORMANCE REVIEW

5,683

Residents per
Playground
(NRPA: 3,759)

\$59.77

Operating
Expenditures
Per Capita
(NRPA: \$94.77)

7.33

Full-Time
Employees per
10,000 Residents
(NRPA: 8.9)

4,872

Residents per
Park
(NRPA: 2,287)

40.26

Undeveloped
Acres for Future
Park Holdings

5.38

Developed park
acres per 1,000
population
(NRPA: 10.8)





Staff Participate in Texas Recreation & Park Society 'Walk the Halls' at State Capitol during 88th Session



John Leivan recognized as City of Harker Heights' Employee of the Quarter

John Leivan, Building Maintenance Crew Leader, was recognized as the 2023 Employee of the Quarter for the first quarter of the year. John was nominated and elected by a committee of his peers from across City Departments for his work in assisting every facility and doing so with passion for service.



P&R Director Jeff Achee Receives NRPA Young Professional Fellowship

With this award, Jeff was able to attend the NRPA Conference in Phoenix and was paired with, Donnie Hayes, the Director of Parks and Recreation of Fairbanks, Alaska, as a mentor.



Staff attends Council Meeting where Mayor Michael Blomquist proclaims July "Parks and Recreation Month" in Harker Heights

The Parks and Recreation Department attended the June council meeting which officially proclaimed July as National Parks and Recreation Month in Harker Heights. Staff worked hard to fill the month of July (the hottest on record) with fun activities for the community to celebrate.

New Full-Time Staff
Kiarrah Carlisle, Athletic/Aquatic Coordinator
Wes Alvarez, Athletic/Aquatic Coordinator
Alex Beaver, Recreation Manager
Brandon Casto, Athletics Crew
Duston Wilson, Athletics Crew Leader



Wes Alvarez receives Lifeguard Certification

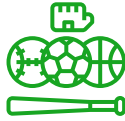
Athletics/Aquatics Coordinator Wes Alvarez earned his American Red Cross Lifeguard Certification, the first full-time staff member to do so. Wes expects to also earn his Lifeguard Instructor certification, allowing him to train guards in-house. We thank Wes for his hard work and dedication to the aquatics program!

PARKS AND REC BY THE NUMBERS

7,500
EVENT ATTENDANCE



1,919
LEAGUE PARTICIPANTS



332
VOLUNTEERS



10,215
VOLUNTEER HOURS



100
EVENT VENDORS



6,289
POOL ATTENDANCE



188
SWIM LESSON ATTENDEES



1,200
PARK & FACILITY RENTALS



240
MUNICIPAL ACRES MAINTAINED



136
SENIOR REC MEMBERS



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

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Smile Doctors Braces

Youth Sports Partners
Dicks Sporting Goods
Chick-Fil-A Harker Heights

Recreation Sponsors
Smile Doctors Braces
Tri-City Property Management

