

Therapeutic Recreation Program sprouts new growth

By Katherine R. Dougan

Chandra Broomfield, the Director of Therapeutic Recreation in Clinton, started her presentation to the Board of Aldermen and Mayor at their June 18 meeting with a number: 6,329.

That number represents the number of participants in the City's Therapeutic Recreation Program as of May 31, 2019.

"The proof is in the numbers," Broomfield said, displaying the number of participants from 2015 to 2019 in a chart.

There are forty-seven activities handled by the program, with seven new programs added this year. This number does not include one-time programs, such as health screenings, panel discussions and seminars.

All of the programs are developed and organized by the Clinton Therapeutic Recreation Program, Broomfield said, which is impressive, considering the staff is comprised of only two full-time employees. Volunteers are used to implement programs under department supervision. Eleven of the forty-seven programs are volunteer-led or self-sufficient programs, such as music workshops, playing bridge, ceramics, yoga, AARP and sign language. These programs will meet for a minimum of 852 times in 2019, with the largest program being the Seniorsize program.

The department focuses on two groups of citizens. The Living Young Program serves the needs of individuals who are age 50 or better through monthly and weekly recreational opportunities, while the Abilities program serves individuals with physical or cognitive limitations.

"Anything fitness-related or food-related are our most popular programs," Broomfield said. The largest program in the Abilities Programs is bowling. The Abilities Programs, which comprise fourteen of the total programs, evolved from sports programs, she said.

Over the years, some programs have continued, and some been eliminated, depending upon the participation.



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The 2019 Challenger League softball program



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The annual Health Fair is held in early spring at the Wood Activity Center.

Year	Total Participants	Increase in Participants	Newsletters distributed
2015	9,843		298
2016	9,950	+107	485
2017	10,694	+744	667
2018	12,321	+1,626	738
2019	13,000 (projected)	+680	773 (800 projected)

However, Broomfield said she always tries a program at least twice before it is cut. Thirty programs have been added since 2013, and some programs have been removed from 2013-2016.

"I am currently working on my newsletter right now, but one thing we have added is partnerships with other organizations," she said. Not only do the partnerships allow Broomfield to add more programs, but also the programs are added at no cost to the City.

A Colorful Devotional Group met for the first time the week of June 10. The program, sponsored by Humana, Inc., allows the group to color, read scriptures and have devotionals. Thirty people participated at the first meeting.

An event planned that has Broomfield excited is the Penny Auction, which is sponsored by Kare-In-Home Health and Hospice.

"The Penny Auction – that's fun!" she exclaimed.

"I just have to ask; what is a Penny

Auction?" queried Ward 6 Alderman Mike Cashion. Broomfield explained: "Everybody gets twenty-five pennies and can bid on about thirty items donated by Kare-In Home.

"Sometimes when a person really wants an item, they will shout out '25 pennies' when they really want that item. It's a lot of fun. I wish I could participate."

She had eighty sign up for the Challenger League programs, with sixty-one coming to participate.

"We have two pretty good-sized groups for that, and are also working on a safety education program."

There's also a new weekly program planned for special groups such as Willowood, One Hope, and Clinton Public Schools, she said.

"You are now at 13,000 and only halfway through the year?" Mayor Phil Fisher asked.

"That's an estimate, but there's good growth in the program," Broomfield responded.

"Your work is greatly appreciated," Fisher said.

Future events include a Seniors Mystery Tour on July 30 (the destination is a surprise), as well as the Wood Center Talent Show on August 8.

"We've had that for the past two years; it really is a hit," Broomfield said.

An art exhibit is set for September, to allow members to display their painting and ceramic works, and a Fall Caregiver's Seminar, another partnership program, will be held November 14. The seminar will provide an opportunity for family caregivers to learn what to do and what resources are available to them. Also in November, from November 10-16, is the Charleston, South Carolina Fall Tour.

For more information about Clinton's Therapeutic Recreation program, stop by the Wood Activity Center from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. at 111 Clinton Boulevard or call 601-924-6387.

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