



June Board Cycle

Milwaukee County Parks
9480 Watertown Plank Rd.
Wauwatosa, WI 53226
(414) 257-PARK

Date: May 18, 2018
To: Theodore Lipscomb, Sr., Chairman, County Board of Supervisors
From: Guy Smith, CPRP, Interim Parks Director
Subject: **Update on development of an aquatic program to address disparities (INFORMATION)**

Policy

The 2018 adopted County Budget includes the request of Milwaukee County Parks for an update on a budget initiative to provide a program that addresses racial and ethnic disparities in drowning fatalities in Milwaukee County. (INFORMATIONAL)

Background

Milwaukee County Parks is actively implementing a program to address racial and ethnic disparities in drowning fatalities. This program is focused on promoting water safety and increasing swim ability to prevent accidental drownings and was supported as an initiative in the 2017 and 2018 operating budgets as the "Diverse Swimming Program".

Beginning in 2017, Milwaukee County Parks has collaborated with local recreation and aquatics leaders, including representatives from Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee YMCA, Schroeder Swim Club, and the Boys and Girls Club to discuss water safety and methods to address drownings and lack of swim ability in the community. A common theme in these discussions has been the need to increase awareness of water as a recreational opportunity along with the dangers it poses to those unfamiliar or unable to swim. Parks continues these partnerships and in particular the YMCA which will continue youth swim programming at three aquatics facilities this summer.

To assist in educating youth, Milwaukee County Parks partnered with MPS – Stewart Elementary School in fall of 2017 to offer water safety classes at Noyes Indoor Pool. These classes were provided once a week for four weeks to third graders at no cost. The program involved both land based education dealing with water safety



MilwaukeeCountyParks

countyparks.com



MILWAUKEE COUNTY
PARKS

as well as introductory swim lessons in the pool. This program was based upon the following best practice principles:

- Provide low or no transportation costs for the participants to get to the aquatic facility, which can substantially impact participation or involvement
- students already engaged in a learning group, class, or environment

Details of the program are as follows:

- Dry land information session
 - Pretest
 - Discussion of pool rules
 - Review of in-water lessons to come, and purpose for learning the skills

Throughout the sessions both safety lessons and swimming skills are introduced to the student including the following classes:

- Safety lessons
 - Swim as a Pair Near a Lifeguard's Chair
 - Be Cool, Follow the Rules
 - Look Before You Leap
 - Think So You Don't Sink
 - Reach or Throw, Don't Go
 - Don't Just Pack It, Wear Your Jacket
- Swimming skills
 - Entering the pool
 - Breath control
 - Bobbing
 - Bobbing to safety
 - Floating
 - Kicking
 - Rolling over
 - Introduction to arm strokes
 - Introduction to combined stroke on front and back

While the 2017 efforts were able to reach the youth that participated in the initiative, Parks Aquatics staff have sought to expand the geographic reach of the Diverse Swimming Program. The 2017 initiative at Noyes would need substantial resources to be expanded throughout the system as there are approximately 6,000 3rd grade students in MPS alone. It is also the intent of the Parks Aquatics staff to expand the Diverse Swimming Program to higher visibility locations and in turn reach teens and adults as well as youth. Efforts that are underway in 2018 include the following:

- Continued partnership with the YMCA at Washington, Lincoln, and Jackson Park aquatics facilities.
- Develop a system-wide public communication and messaging strategy around water safety.



- Create and install signage with water safety best practices at the beachfront, pools, and lagoons.
- Develop partnerships around water safety education at the Kosciuszko Community Center to leverage the proximity of youth-serving organizations and the adjacent Pelican Cove family water park.
- Produce and install informational kiosks and lifesaving ring buoys and life jackets throughout the parks system.
- Produce and distribute water safety flyers through Milwaukee Public Schools.

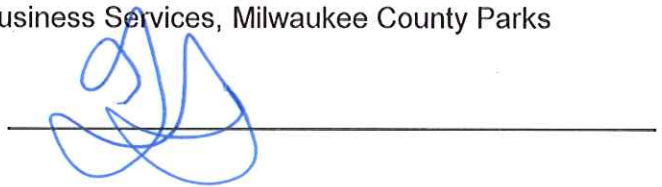
It is intended that elements of this plan that are currently in production will be completed by July 1 and the partnerships that are necessary to reach MPS youth will continue through the late summer and fall. These efforts intend to increase educational awareness and water safety across the parks system to reach beyond just youth alone.

Recommendation

There is no recommendation at this time, this report is for informational purposes.

Prepared By: Jim Tarantino, Director of Recreation and Business Services, Milwaukee County Parks

Approved By: Guy Smith, CPRP, Interim Parks Director



Copy:

- Chris Abele, County Executive
- Raisa Koltun, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office
- Jason Haas, Parks, Energy & Environment Chair, Supervisor District 14
- Sheldon Wasserman, Parks, Energy & Environment Vice-Chair, Supervisor District 3
- Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, County Board of Supervisors
- Allyson Smith, Committee Coordinator, Office of the County Clerk
- Erica Hayden, Research & Policy Analyst, Office of the Comptroller
- Jeremy Lucas, Fiscal Mgt. Analyst, Admin & Fiscal Affairs/DAS



MilwaukeeCountyParks

countyparks.com



MILWAUKEE COUNTY
PARKS

