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Oakland County Parks marks National Therapeutic Recreation Month

Adaptive recreation enhances wellness, promotes fun opportunities for people of all abilities

OAKLAND COUNTY, MI – Feb. 11, 2025 – Throughout National Therapeutic Recreation Month in February, Oakland County Parks (OCP) is highlighting the essential role its adaptive programming plays in the lives of individuals with physical, intellectual, developmental and cognitive disabilities.

Equitable access to recreation is one of OCP's core values and adaptive recreation plays an important role in ensuring people of all ages and abilities can safely and comfortably enjoy spending time in the parks system. Adaptive recreation opportunities include award-winning Disability Dirt Days programming at Holly Oaks ORV Park and adaptive golf leagues at Red Oaks Golf Course. A Quiet Zone space provides a calming place to reestablish sensory regulation during large, crowded events. Partnerships with local community agencies continue to expand programming throughout Oakland County.

"We know that there are proven health and wellness benefits that come with spending time outdoors and in a park setting," Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist and OCP Recreation Supervisor Sandy Dorey said. "Adaptive programming facilitates ways for individuals with disabilities to participate in physical, wellness and social activities that deepen connections with nature and others in the community."

Sponsored by the American Therapeutic Recreation Association, National Therapeutic Recreation Month focuses on the essential role recreational therapy plays in promoting overall well-being and fostering inclusion. This year's theme is "More Than Fun," highlighting the powerful ways recreational therapy impacts everyday moments through increased physical activity, independence and social interaction.

This year, OCP's adaptive recreation programming includes returning social favorites like Grand Slam Frenzy, DiversAbility Days and Halloween Happiness for individuals with developmental or intellectual disabilities and their caregivers. There is also a variety of adaptive kayaking and adaptive golf opportunities available throughout spring and summer.

In July, the popular Dreams and Wings program will celebrate its 30th anniversary. More than 1,000 children with disabilities and their families have enjoyed free rides in an airplane as well as flight-related activities and more at the Oakland County International Airport thanks to generous philanthropic donations and pilots who volunteer their time.

“The Dreams and Wings program through Oakland County Parks’ Adaptive Recreation was just wonderful. My daughter attended with my husband/her dad when she was elementary school-age and they had a great experience,” Royal Oak resident Kathy Williams said. “The pilot was very kind and understanding to my daughter’s level of verbal communication and encouraged her to participate and get the most from her flight. From the ground, staff did a nice job of providing all necessary safety and participation details as well as ways to spend time while waiting. The certificate remains in her scrapbook with a family photo with the pilot. Such an amazing opportunity.”

To be notified about these and other programming opportunities, sign up for OCP’s email list at OaklandCountyParks.com and like OCP’s [Facebook](#) page. A 2025 adaptive recreation event calendar and more information, including a Therapeutic/Adaptive Recreation Resource Guide, is also available at OaklandCountyParks.com.

In addition to programs and events, OCP offers a variety of adaptive equipment at its 17 parks, including adaptive golf carts, pedal boats, pool transfer chairs, picnic tables, all-terrain trail and beach chairs and hand cycles. There are also paved trails, accessible playgrounds and campsites, cabins and yurts with accessible features.

For more information about Oakland County Parks, visit OaklandCountyParks.com. Join the conversation on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [X](#).