



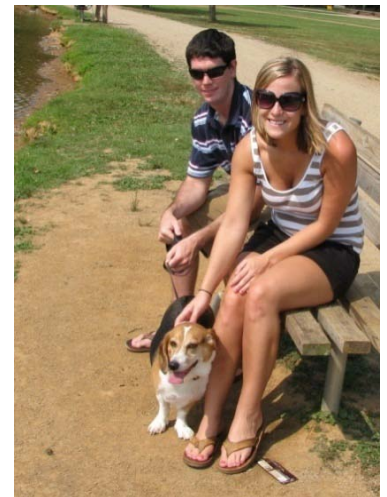
2009 ANNUAL REPORT



**Mecklenburg County
Park and Recreation**

*The Natural Place
To Be...*

www.parkandrec.com



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

A Key Year for Residents who Depend on Park and Recreation, But a Difficult Year for Budgets and Expansion of Services



Just as many of you are, Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation is coping with the tough economy. Our department has taken budget cuts, along with other departments in the County. The irony is that during a tough economy, more people use public recreation programs and facilities because we offer free and inexpensive opportunities for fun, fitness and appreciation of nature.

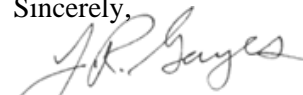
We are struggling not to reduce services at parks, recreation centers, greenways, nature centers and aquatic facilities. We have relied more heavily on partnerships with other organizations. We have delayed building many new facilities, even though they were approved in bond referendums. We also understand additional budget cuts are possible as the County faces increasing demands for social services.

We want to thank thousands of you who help us as volunteers in programs and facilities. You make a real difference in how much we can do. We want to thank our professional staff for their devotion to serving the public in a difficult time.

We will operate Park and Recreation to the very best of our ability with the resources we have. We have thousands of wonderful programs, activities and facilities. We are “the natural place to be” for you and your family. Even in a tough economy!



Sincerely,


James R. Garges, CPRP

Board of County Commissioners



Mecklenburg County Commissioners: (front row L to R) Vilma Leake, Harold Cogdell, Jennifer Roberts, Dan Murrey, Karen Bentley (back row) George Dunlap, Dumont Clark, Bill James, Neil Cooksey

Park and Recreation Commission



Mecklenburg Park and Recreation Commissioners: (front row L to R) Chairman Brad Pearce, Norman Mitchell, Scott McClure (second row) David Morgan, Charlie McRee, Brenda McMoore (third row) Beverly Lawston, Owen Furuseth, (top row) Paul Bailey, Rob Brisley (not pictured) John Barry, Jeff Tarte

REPORT ON OPERATIONS, FACILITIES, EVENTS, ACOMPLISHMENTS

For the Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department, 2009 was a year when people increasingly looked for free and inexpensive leisure activities during economic hard times. More than ever, they turned to Park and Recreation to fulfill their needs.

During FY 2009, the period for which we have definitive figures, visits to our facilities and programs were UP about 20 percent! We hosted more than 11 million visits to 210 facilities and thousands of activities. Money we took-in from attendance, program fees, rentals, memberships, etc. totaled \$4,524,241. Our hard-working staff accommodated the big increase in public demand and program participation/facility use despite cuts to our operating budget and delays in capital projects. We stretched hard to do more with less.

Even though citizens of Mecklenburg County approved a \$250 million bond referendum in November 2008 for major expansion of Park and Recreation facilities and services, we were not able to start any of these projects because of financial difficulties in the County. The referendum passed with 62 percent support, but the County has been unable to issue the bonds because of high unemployment, stagnant tax revenues and sharply increased demand for other government assistance. The bond projects remain on hold until better times. We were able to move forward toward building two greenway projects using federal stimulus grants.



Major projects completed during 2009:

- Winget Park (softball field/restroom/parking)
- Berewick Recreation Center
- Latta Park (pedestrian bridge)
- Midwood Park (amphitheatre)
- Harrisburg Sports Complex (2 synthetic multi-purpose fields)
- Bradford Park (5 softball fields, 3 soccer fields, parking)
- Eastway Park (2 soccer fields, restroom, parking)
- Shuffletown Park (2 baseball fields, restroom/shelter, parking)
- Southwest Park (mountain bike trail)
- Veterans Park (parking and sidewalk improvements)
- Elon Park (disc golf course)
- Revolution Golf Course (storm water management lake)
- Revolution Golf Course (First Tee of Charlotte Learning Academy)
- Historic Holly Bend acquisition (211 acres near Mountain Island Lake)

Major projects under construction at the end of 2009:

- Park Road Park improvements (lake and environs)
- Alexander Street Park improvements (soccer field, tennis courts, shelter, playground)
- Revolution Park Sports Academy
- Shuffletown Park improvements (volleyball, playground, trail, dog park)
- Eastway Park improvements (volleyball, playground, walking trail)
- Revolution Park Golf Course renovations



SPECIAL EVENTS, PROGRAMS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2009

The following list of events, activities and accomplishments demonstrates the breadth of our operations in 2009:

- Opened new Berewick Recreation Center, a joint-use facility with CMS. Includes Ray's Playhouse room, multipurpose rooms and gymnasium.
- Conducted 10 special events including Bark in the Park, Asian Festival and Dragon Boat Race, Great Outdoor Festival, Spring Fling Program Showcase, Tots Olympics, Festival in the Park, Freedom Park Tree Lighting, and First Night Charlotte, serving more than 195,300 people.
- Mecklenburg County Aquatic Center hosted the 2009 Ultra Swim featuring 2008 Olympians Michael Phelps, Cullen Jones and Aaron Pearsall. Direct delegate spending was \$422,000.
- Ceremonial events in 2009 included: two facility renamings, two groundbreakings and five new park/facility openings
- Therapeutic Recreation staff developed Paralympic Sports Club–Metrolina through the U.S. Olympic Committee–Paralympic Committee.
- Mecklenburg County Aquatic Center hosted 41 competitive events that promoted \$3.6 million “direct delegate spending” from out-of-town visitors.
- Hosted State Games of North Carolina for the first time. More than 13,000 participants competed in more than 30 sports in ten parks.
- Our pools provided 2,549 free swim lessons for youth and teens.
- Red, White & Boom 4th of July celebration attracted 10,000 people to Memorial Stadium.
- More than 80 summer day camp programs served more than 2,200 youth.
- The First Tee of Charlotte completed a 35-year lease at Revolution Park Golf Course and obtained BOCC approval to change its name to the First Tee of Charlotte Learning Academy at Revolution Park.
- Hummingbird Festival Reedy Creek Nature Preserve drew 2,900 participants
- Great Outdoors Festival at Latta Plantation Nature Preserve hosted more than 700 participants.
- Fairy House Festival at Latta Plantation Nature Preserve hosted 1,022 participants.
- Nature preserves staff provided 1,994 nature-based programs for more than 32,000 participants.
- Four new after-school programs were created in recreation centers through partnerships.
- \$45,000 provided in youth sports scholarships through sponsorship of Blue Cross Blue Shield
- Little Sugar Creek Greenway Scavenger Hunt.
- “Marking The Thread” Celebration – unveiled new Carolina Thread Trail signage and began an environmental art project led by McColl Center for Visual Arts in partnership with Park and Recreation and Charlotte Nature Museum.
- Federal stimulus projects: Toby Creek Greenway near UNC-Charlotte received \$1.25 million, and West Branch Rocky River Greenway in Davidson received \$1.1 million in construction funding.
- Youth Basketball program grew to more than 2,700 participants.



- Leisure and Learn (senior citizen program) had 180 in two sessions.
- Charter Properties donated \$188,000 through Partners for Parks for Long Creek Greenway.
- McDowell Creek Greenway had grand opening.
- Completed upfitting for all Park and Recreation aquatic drains to meet new federal safety standards
- Worked with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities Department to use reclaimed water to irrigate athletic fields at Mallard Creek Park
- Implemented recycling in all Park and Recreation regions. New blue recycling trash can lids distributed with collection containers in a joint initiative with LUESA.
- Expanded Reedy Creek community gardens.
- Created a new community garden in Fred Alexander Park called The Male's Place, for at-risk males ages 10-24.
- Dads and Kids Kickball Program hosted for eight weeks at Park Road Park on Saturdays. Red Moon Marketing and Coca-Cola were sponsors, assisting with promotion and supplies.
- Expanded Quick Start tennis program for youth, ages 10 and under, at five sites. Quick Start tennis is a format of USTA Junior Team Tennis.
- Continued partnership with Charlotte Senior Sports for a women's senior softball league at Park Road Park.
- Catawba Wildflower Glen invasive plants removal day. Partnered with Catawba Nature Conservancy.
- Invasive Plants Removal Day at Little Sugar Creek Greenway in Freedom Park. Partnered with contractors and volunteers. Our staff led the event as part of Invasive Species' Task Force.
- Dedication of garden honoring 9/11 heroes and Hands on Charlotte-Freedom Park.
- Water Garden built with contractor at Reedy Creek Nature Center
- Leader in Cordelia Butterfly Garden design-and-build project with Villa Heights Neighborhood Association.
- Participant in Presbyterian Hospital donation to Our Children's Memorial Garden.
- N.C. Champion Tree (largest in state) designation for sourwood tree at Sherman Branch Recreation Area.
- Leader in Adopt-A-Tree Volunteer Day at Briar Creek Greenway.
- Leader in design and installation of Native Plant Garden at Freedom Park, with Boy Scouts.
- Leader in Eagle Scout Reforestation Project, Little Sugar Creek Greenway.
- Started Keeping Kids in Motion, a new youth fitness program in partnership with Coca-Cola and Red Moon Marketing to promote healthy lifestyles and use of greenways.
- National Night Out Events. Involved with partners in five events for more than 1,000 people.
- New summer day camp program at Thomasboro School Recreation Site.
- Leader in volunteer day with Bank of America to restore large trees at Nevin Park.
- Major role in "Green Invaders' Day" at Nature Museum.
- Hosted 9/11 memorial event at Our Children's Memorial Walkway.
- Aquatic Center became a sanctioned Arthritis Foundation class location to teach Arthritis Foundation water exercise.
- Aquatic Center hosted three triathlon clinics to help train participants.

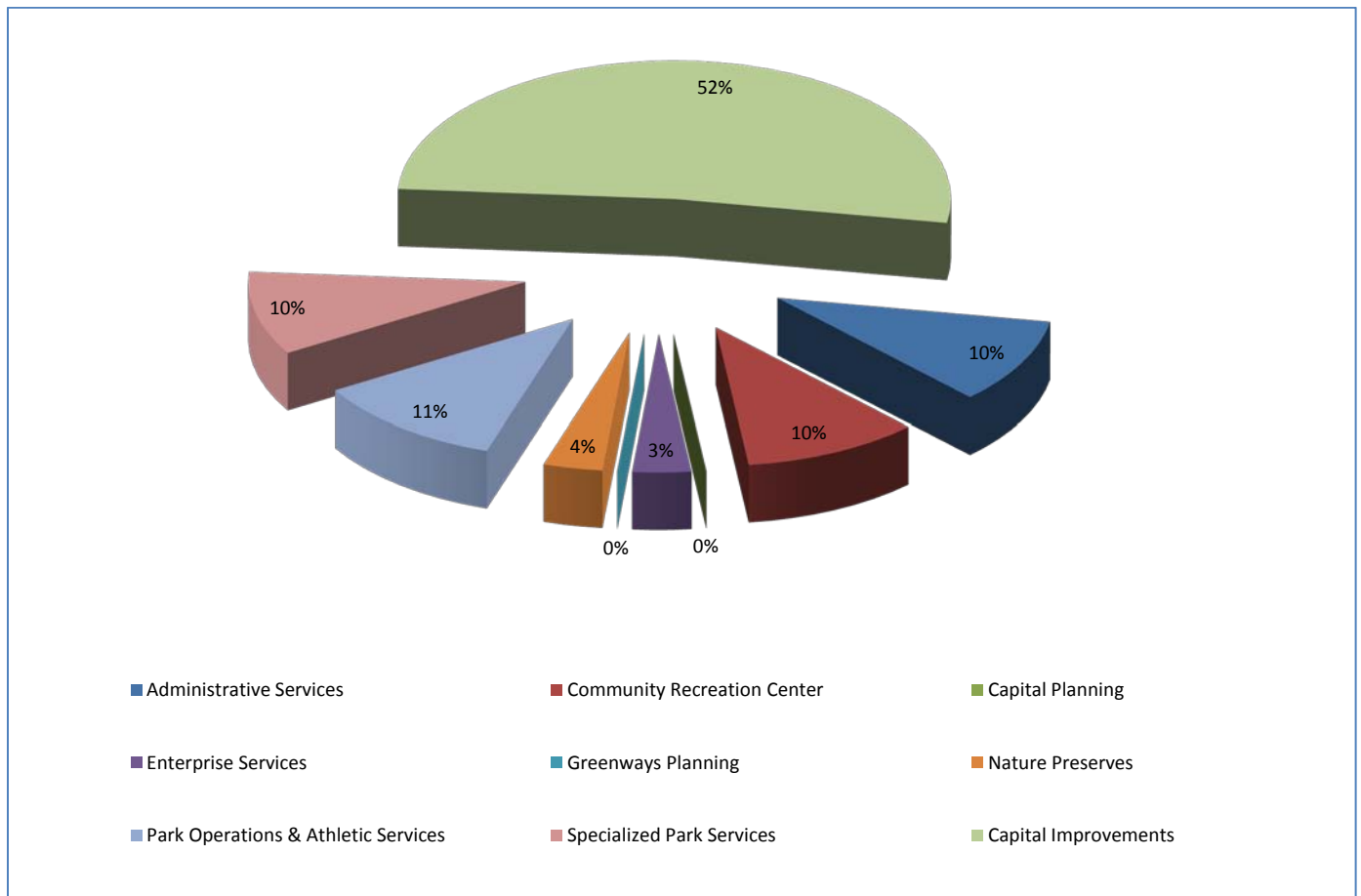


- Grady Cole Center partnered with DSS to host the 2009 Celebrate Living Seniors Event attended by 449 seniors.
- Grady Cole/Memorial Stadium partnered with Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and Jordan Gross (Carolina Panthers) to host the 2009 Kick CF Fundraiser.
- Ray's Splash Planet hosted about 600 families at "Movies on the Lawn."
- Ray's Splash Planet partnered with Irwin Elementary to present the American Red Cross water course for 474 students in PE sessions.
- Charles T. Myers Golf Course opened Impact Performance Golf Learning Center, an indoor practice facility with computerized swing analysis.
- Latta Equestrian Center hosted the 2009 Charlotte Charity Show featuring saddle-bred horses valued at \$100,000 to \$1 million.
- Partnered with Mecklenburg County Veterans Services and the Mecklenburg County Vietnam Veterans Association to host the 20th anniversary ceremony of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Historic St. Mary's Chapel and Thompson Park.
- Survivor: Copperhead Island was offered for the third year, a partnership program with CMPD focusing on gang at-risk youth.
- \$50,000 raised and plans developed for the first natural play area next to Reedy Creek Nature Center. To open in spring 2010.
- Natural Resources staff discovered one of the largest populations of Georgia Aster at Gateway Nature Preserve. The population is estimated at 1,200 plants. Staff also discovered a new plant species for the county, native buttercup *Ranunculus sceleratus*.
- Development SEALS – After-school program for elementary school children who are blind or visually impaired and read Braille.
- Development of TRACES – Day program for adults with developmental disabilities residing in group homes or supervised living situations.
- Teen Summits – Conducted six teen summits addressing recreation opportunities teens wanted and providing information on resources and programs to them
- New 4-H summer day camps in motor sports, bio-technology, fitness and GIS/GPS.
- New 4-H STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) curriculum training – 4H staff provided 12 STEM-based curriculum training sessions to 385 after school staff representing 74 different youth programs.
- New program in partnership with N.C. Dance Theatre through a grant providing free dance/fitness lessons for at-risk youth in four recreation centers.
- Teen iFit Program initiated – Cross training fitness program conducted at all recreation centers.





FY-2009 OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGETS
TOTAL EXPENSES \$85,569,459



NATIONAL ACCREDITATION CERTIFIES PARK AND RECREATION'S DEDICATION TO QUALITY AND COMMITMENT TO IMPROVEMENT



Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation was formally awarded national accreditation in 2009 by the [Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies](#) (CAPRA), sponsored by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).

“We are very proud to be one of only 88 agencies in the country to be so accredited,” said Park and Recreation Director Jim Garges. “Congratulations to all our staff for their hard work to make this happen. This affirms that we are using the best practices in the profession to provide excellent services to our citizens.”

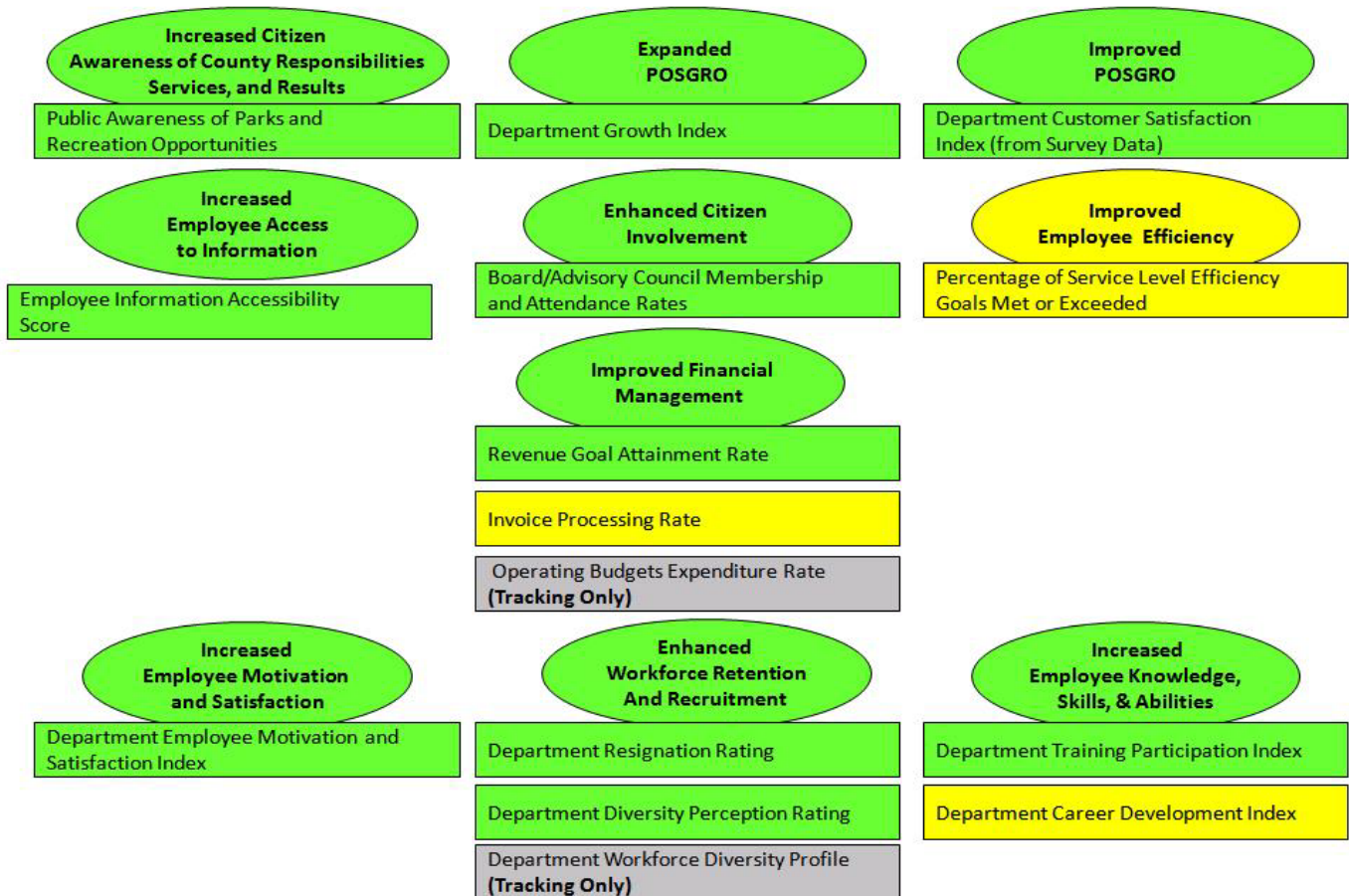
Accreditation caps a year long process in which all aspects of Park and Recreation -- operations, facilities, administration, programs and procedures -- were carefully examined by professionals in the field and were measured against more than 155 national standards. Accreditation certifies our commitment to quality recreation.

FY-2009 BALANCED SCORECARD RESULTS

Green = Positive Performance

Yellow = Mixed Results

Red = Reason for Concern



AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department won the following awards and recognitions during 2009:

- **2009 Barb King Award for Environmental Stewardship**, presented by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)
- **2009 NACo Achievement Awards** for innovative programs, presented by the National Association of Counties for the following programs:
 1. **Accessible Mountain Bike Trail**, entered by Stephanie Frisbee and Joyce Figueroa: Building and opening a mountain bike trail at Jetton Park, accessible to people with disabilities using hand-powered cycles, as well as to traditional mountain bike users
 2. **Go Get Them and They Will Come**, entered by James Alsop: A special variety of sports programs targeted to at-risk youth to help steer them away from gang activity
 3. **MeckTeen Chefs**, entered by Tari Grinnell: A program to teach at-risk youth about culinary arts in a program that features cooking, meal planning, kitchen safety and sanitation.
 4. **Natural Enhancements Service/Learning Partnership**, entered by Staci Clark: A partnership with Central Piedmont Community College for students in marketing, design, landscaping, welding and horticulture to use their skills to enhance nature preserves
 5. **Physical Education Teacher In-Service: Outdoor Recreation Alternatives**: entered by Christopher Horrigan and Deb Kaclik: A partnership with CMS to introduce physical education teachers to nontraditional ways of teaching various subjects with hands-on activities in Park and Recreation facilities
 6. **SEALS**, entered by Angela Conti: An after-school program for elementary-age children with visual impairments or who are blind. The acronym SEALS summarizes the program's goals: Socialization, Empowerment, and Life Skills
 7. **Solar GEM**, entered by Gary Marshall: Adaptation of a commercially produced electric vehicle to charge its batteries using solar power, to create a Park and Recreation maintenance vehicle that is pollution free, uses no fossil fuels and runs essentially for free!
- **2009 Distinguished Therapeutic Recreation Professional**, presented by the North Carolina Park and Recreation Association–Therapeutic Recreation Section, to Peggy Walker
- **2009 Meritorious Service Award in Athletics**, presented by the North Carolina Park and Recreation, to Ken Koonce for longstanding contributions to athletics
- **Southern Region Winner for Innovative 4-H programs** presented by the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents to Robert Furr for developing NC 4-H Volunteer Performance Appraisal System
- **WorkGreen Award** (May 2009) from Mecklenburg County, presented to Cara Helfer for environmental leadership
- **Charlotte Parent Magazine's 2009 Best Pool/Spray Park/Family Favorite** as voted by readers - Ray's Splash Planet (third consecutive year)
- **National Softball Association Citation for "Outstanding Park"** – Nevin, Hornet's Nest, and Renaissance
- **2009 Mecklenburg County Customer Service Hero for Courtesy and Respect** – Jackie Rogers, recreation assistant at Ray's Splash Planet. Jackie is the first temporary employee to win this award.



MECKLENBURG COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION PARTNERSHIPS

Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation partners with many groups, organizations, businesses, schools and agencies to present recreation programs and facilities. We especially want to acknowledge the assistance and support of Partners for Parks, the nonprofit group that raises funds and contributes to enhance our parks, greenways, open space and recreation all over Mecklenburg County. Other partners we'd like to acknowledge:

107.9 The Link	Carolina Thread Trail	Country Time Carriages
21st Century Comm. Learning Ctr.	Carolina Youth Rugby	County IST
AARP	Carolinas Asian Chamber Of Commerce	Central Piedmont Community College
Abandoned Romania	Carolinas Healthcare System	Crop Walk
Accuquest	Carolinas Rehabilitation	CVAN
Action Plus	Catawba Valley Scottish Society	Dell Curry Foundation
Adaptive Sports/Adventure Program	Catholic Social Services – Refugee Relocation Program	Dick’s Sporting Goods
All in Play	CATS-Charlotte Transit	Dilworth Little League
Allegro Foundation	Charlotte Area Lacrosse Club	Do the Right Thing
American Diabetes	Char. Badminton/Table Tennis Club	Dr. Leland McLaughlin
American Heart	Charlotte Bobcats	Drug & Alcohol Prevention Services
American Marching Assoc.	Charlotte Boxing Academy	Dept. of Social Services (Mecklenburg Co.)
American Red Cross	Charlotte Bridge Association	East Meck Lacrosse Club
American Youth Soccer Association	Charlotte Catholic/Holy Trinity	Eastfield Christian Church
AMF Bowling	Charlotte Center City Partners	Election Central
Animal Fund	Charlotte Country Day School	Elizabeth Neighborhood Assoc.
Anitagood Design	Charlotte Disc Golf Club	First Ward Community Fund
Armin's Catering	Charlotte Emergency Housing	Food Lion/Pedigree
Arts & Science Council	Charlotte Flights	Friends of Fourth Ward Neighborhood Association
ASA Charlotte	Charlotte Hornets Beepball	Friendship Baptist Church
ASA Softball	Charlotte Jewish Preschool	Gaston Christian
Asian Chamber of Commerce	Charlotte Junior Soccer	Greater Enrichment Program
Athletes United 4 Youth	Charlotte Mecklenburg Utilities Dept.	Harris Teeter
Autism Foundation of NC	Charlotte Montessori	Hilton
Autism Society	Charlotte Optimist Club	Historic Latta Plantation
Avon Walk for Breast Cancer	Charlotte Regional Ctr. for Deaf/HH	Hands On Charlotte
Awards Express	Charlotte Soccer Academy	Hornet's Nest BMX
Balfour Beatty	Charlotte Sports Connection	Hotel Tourism Alliance
Bank of America	Charlotte Sports Cycling	International Facility Mgmt Assn
Beacon Partners	Charlotte Stream Water	Inter-American Soccer Org.
BEGINNINGS, Inc.	Charlotte Symphony	Interlink
Best Buy	Charlotte United Futbol Club	IRI Golf Group
Blumenthal Performing Arts Center	Charlotte Women Soccer League	Irwin Ave. Open School
Blythe Development	Charlotte Woodcarvers Club	Irwin Ave. Parents Night
BMX Racing	Charlotte Youth Lacrosse	Irwin BED
Bojangles’	Chesterbrook Academy	Jazzercise
Bookin' It Mobile Bookstore	Childcare Resources	Johnson C. Smith University
Boy Scouts of America	Christ Church School	JWU
Breakfast Club	Christ Episcopal Church	Kidz Biz
Brixx Pizza	City of Matthews	Kofi Mawougbe Tennis
Broomers Carwash and Tan	City Tavern Rest.	Lake Norman Marine Commission
Bruegger Bagels	City/County Golf Tourney	Lakewood Community
Budokan Charlotte	Clark Nexsen	Latin Soccer League
Burke Soil & Water Conservation	Charlotte-MecklenburgPolice Dept.	Legends Summer Camp
California Pizza Kitchen	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
Caribou Coffee	Cooloak Athletic Assoc.	Little Sugar Creek Westfield
Carolina Clowns	Coke Bottling Co/ Red Moon Mrkt.	LUESA/Solid Waste (Mecklenburg Co.)
Carolina Crash Quad Rugby Team	Communities in Schools	M.A.D.E. Cheer and Dance
Carolina Panthers		Mallard Creek Optimist Club

Mallard Creek Optimist Club	Police Activities League	Thompson Orphanage Alumni Assoc.
Mallard Creek Presby. Preschool.	Premier Group	Tora Kempa Academy
Marie G. Davis Middle School	Progressive Baptist Church	Town of Cornelius
Master Gardner Volunteer Program	Public Defender's Office	Town of Davidson
MatchMaker Tennis	Queen City Dolphins Minority Swim Team	Town of Huntersville
Matthews Athletic & Rec Assoc	Queen City Prep	Turkey Trot Road Race
Matthews Soccer Club	Queens University	UCP Easter Seals
Mecklenburg Union Futbol Club	Queens University Softball	Univ. City United Methodist Church
McKinney Care	Ramblewood Soccer Inc.	UNC-Charlotte
Mecklenburg Youth Lacrosse	Ranson Middle	UNCC Circle K
Metro School	Ratcliffe Golf Services	UNCC Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority
Midwood Neighbors	Reedy Creek	UNC-Greensboro
Midwood Tennis Academy	River Hills Community Church	United Methodist Church
Mt. Gallant Elementary	Safe Halloween	United Way
Myers Park Baptist	Safe Kids Campaign	Unlimited Engraving
Myers Park Trinity Little League	Second Harvest Bank	Uptown Men's Shelter
N. Alexander Elementary	Senior Games	Urban Ministry Center
National Softball Association	Shad's Landing	Urban Restoration Ministries
Nations Baseball	Shamrock Neighbors	U.S. Olympic Comm.-US Paralympics
Nat. Resources Conservation Service	Shiloh Elementary	U.S. Specialty Sports Association
NC Dance Outreach Program	Show Pros Inc.	U.S. Tennis Association/Charlotte
NC Wildlife Reserves Commission	South Charlotte Soccer Association	Visit Charlotte
Nevins Inc	South Park Youth Association	Wachovia
New Second Ward Park	Special Olympics	Wal-Mart
North Carolina Amateur Sports	St. Mary's Chapel	Watershed
Nothing But Noodles	St. Matthews Catholic	WedShops.com
Old Providence Recreation Assoc.	Starbucks, Inc.	Wendy's
Open Door School	Steele Creek Athletic Association	West Enterprises
Our Children's Memorial Garden	Sticks with US	Wing Haven Gardens
Ovens Auditorium	Swim Mac	WJZY- CW46
Panera Bread	Target	World Crown Gymnastics
Park Sharon Athletic Association	Tarheel Trailblazers	WPEG/CBS Radio
Partners for Parks	Team Heidi Costume Contest	Winston-Salem State University
Philharmonic's Masquerade Ball	Tennis Academy of N.C.	Youth Family Services
Physical Disabled Adults Inc.	Tennis Education Endowment	YMCA of Greater Charlotte
Piedmont Charter School	Texas Land & Cattle	YWCA
Piedmont Open Middle	The First Tee of Charlotte	
Plaza Youth Athletic Association		

THANKS TO ALL OUR WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS!

Volunteers are a tremendous help to Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department. Last year about 17,000 volunteers helped at our events, programs and facilities. Volunteers provided more than 112,000 hours of service valued at more than \$2.2 million.

PHOTOGRAPHERS CAPTURE BEAUTY OF PARK AND RECREATION

Forty-five photographers submitted entries in the Partners for Parks and Carolinas' Nature Photographers Association's 2008-2009 "The Nature of Mecklenburg" Photography Contest and juried exhibition. Photos were taken in parks, nature preserves, playgrounds and greenways. Four outstanding entries appear below.

