

2009 Guide to Winter and Spring Fun in Des Moines Parks

CITY OF **DES MOINES**
PARKS AND RECREATION

Family Adventures on Ice: Skate Safely in City Parks

Hit the ice with friends and perfect your triple-toe loop at Des Moines' city parks this winter. Visit one of many neighborhood parks for a day of outdoor activity.

Before you lace up your skates, be sure to check ice conditions by learning the Des Moines Parks safe-skating flag system. A red flag indicates that ice conditions are not suitable for skating. The ice might be too thin or rough for your safety. A green flag tells you that ice depth and conditions are safe for skating. If no flag is on the pole, skating is not available and conditions are unsafe for skating.

Bundle up the family for a lively game of broomball or enjoy a romantic leisurely skate at any of these neighborhood parks:

Greenwood Park Pond
45th and Grand Avenue

MacRae Park Lagoon
SW 9th Street and Davis Avenue

Grand View Golf Course Pond
Guthrie and East 31st Street

For updated ice conditions, check dmparks.org or tune in to city cable channel 7.

And don't forget, ice-skating is also offered downtown at Des Moines' Brenton Skating Plaza now through March, and maybe into April, weather permitting.

Don't Let A Little Snow Stop You

The City of Des Moines' trail system is beautiful year-round. And, all 37 paved miles of Des Moines trails are cleared within a day or so from when the snow stops. So, lace up your shoes or hop on your bike and enjoy the great outdoors this winter.

Game on! Team up with Sports Leagues

Whether you like to volley, catch or dribble, Des Moines Parks and Recreation has a league for you. Sports leagues for all ages and abilities are available year-round and are a great way to gather friends or make new ones.

The **Adult Coed Volleyball League** teams play three match sets on Sundays at Scott Four Mile Community Center. Adult leagues play in two sessions: October-December and January-March.

Step up to the plate with the **Adult Summer Softball League**. Registration for Recreational Softball Leagues is March 23 to April 24 with games beginning May 11. Men's Fast Pitch, Men's Slow Pitch and Coed Slow Pitch games are played at the Greater Des Moines Softball Complex and Savage Softball Complex.

This year's **Men's and Women's Basketball League** is well underway, but look for information later this year about play next season at Archie Brooks and Scott Four Mile Community Centers. Leagues play November-February each year.

Get your team ready for the upcoming high school softball season. Registration for **Spring Girl's Softball** is January 14 to March 18. League games are played at Savage Softball Complex, the Greater Des Moines Softball Complex and East or North High School fields. Players in 8th to 12th grade who are eligible to play on their high school team are eligible for this league. Season openers begin April 4th and play ends May 3rd.

Mark your calendar for registration dates and visit dmparks.org, or call the Leisure Sports Office at 515-248-6310 for more information about registration and fees.

Des Moines' Home Field Advantage

"Summer 08" was a winner for metro area softball players thanks to the amenities at Iowa's premier softball complexes – Greater Des Moines Softball Park and Savage Softball Park. Let's review the stats.

The Greater Des Moines Softball Complex has four fields with 300-foot fences. The turf is maintained at the same level as that at the city's golf courses and Cownie Soccer Park, and the infields all have rain-tolerant dirt and drainage, so rainouts are a rarity. In fact, a one-inch rain delays a game for only one hour! Tournament lighting makes play possible any time of day. Each field has a high-rise scorekeeping facility and Bose sound.

Spectators are also treated like all-stars. High-standard concessions, good-visibility bleachers, heated restrooms and completely concrete-encased walk areas all add to the quality of the facilities.

The Greater Des Moines Softball Complex is not the only all-star facility in the city. Savage Complex also has some pretty impressive stats, including two diamonds completely fenced in, 280-foot fences, tournament lighting, high-rise scorekeeping, full service concessions and restrooms – not to mention nearby shopping for your seventh inning stretch.

It's no wonder both facilities have been the site of many district, regional and state tournaments. Greater Des Moines Softball Park has hosted three national tournaments even though it has been in existence only four years. At last count, four adult men's fast pitch ASA state tournaments will be held at these complexes in 2009. Player surveys confirm that it's "the best facility we've played on." If you haven't played there yet, make sure to sign up for the 2009 season.

During spring/summer and fall play schedules, these two complexes host league and tournament play for over 400 teams each year. The leagues include numerous types of ball, including a spring girls' high school league as well as men's and women's adult recreation leagues. The level of play ranges from beginners, who might be a group of office co-workers looking for a social event, to highly-competitive teams that are on a quest for a state tournament championship.

Registration begins March 23 for the adult leagues – Coed, Slo-Pitch and Fast-Pitch play. Registration ends April 24 and play begins May 11. Both 7-game and 14-game schedules are offered, with the frequency of play being the teams' choice of once or twice weekly games on varying days . . . it's your preference as to the day of play.

For more information or to register, call the Des Moines Park and Recreation Leisure Sports Office at 515-248-6310. Or visit dmparks.org. BATTER UP!



Go Green by Giving Back Join the Friends of Des Moines Parks

Each year hundreds of thousands of Metro Des Moines citizens enjoy Des Moines' parks, facilities, and programs – whether hiking on the trails, taking swimming lessons at a pool or boating lessons at Gray's Lake, watching national soccer tournament play at Cownie Soccer Park, taking a child to swing at a playground or picnicking on the grounds. Now, you have the chance to give back to the parks and programs that have provided so much fun and fitness over the years.

When you join the "Friends of Des Moines Parks" you join other Des Moines-area citizens helping to preserve, protect, improve and promote the use of Des Moines parks, greenways and recreational programs for everyone.

You can make a real difference. In its inaugural year in 2008, the Friends of Des Moines Parks provided funds to underwrite the Parks Department Learn-to-Swim program, offering scholarships to qualifying families and ensuring a quality program for years to come. The organization presented a check in the amount of \$2,500 to Mayor Frank Cownie at the November 24, 2008 City Council meeting. In 2009, they have plans to continue the swimming lesson scholarships and add other initiatives to their agenda. The Friends group will be sponsoring the Family Nature Club program now under development to encourage families and friends to explore Des Moines Metro parks together.

You can be part of their future success and vision! Joining the effort is as easy as providing your name, address, phone number and email address. You'll receive a brief quarterly member update on current projects, an invitation to an annual picnic, a parks information packet and notifications about important issues that may benefit from citizen support. A minimum \$20 contribution covers the annual membership and the benefits. Visit friendsofdmparks.org to find out more and to fill out a membership form, or call Jane Hein, President

of the group, at 515-287-2700. Together, we can continue to provide extraordinary parks and recreational programs for our city.

*This article has been printed in the Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department newsletter brochure on behalf of Friends of Des Moines Parks, a 501 (c)(3) corporation.



Jane Hein President of the Board presents a check for \$2,500 to Mayor Frank Cownie.

'Tis the Season for Skating

Great prices have gotten even better! Family and college student rates and season passes have been introduced in the third season of Des Moines' only outdoor ice rink. New discounted rates mean that avid skaters and families save every time they skate in the romance of the city lights on the east bank of the Des Moines River downtown.

Also new this year are broomball leagues. Team up with friends and co-workers for some Sunday night fun. You don't need to be a pro skater for this sport. In fact you can leave your skates at home.

Make this the year for family and friends to take to the ice. Whether you just want skating skills that will keep you upright or want to become a dancing figure skater, Brenton Skating Plaza's lessons can get you to that level. No skates? No problem. Hundreds of pairs of skates in every possible size are available to rent for \$2.50 a pair. Go to brentonplaza.com for more information on prices, lessons, leagues, rentals, group rates and special events.



BRENTON SKATING PLAZA

Bundle Up and Hop on! Sled on Des Moines' Golf Courses



The wind in your hair, the chill in the air, the snow in your face – there's no better way to celebrate winter in Iowa than to zoom down a hillside on a sled. Generations of families have taken advantage of Des Moines Parks and Recreation on their offer of free public sledding at Grandview Golf course, located at 2401 E 29th Street, and Waveland Golf Course, at 4908 University Avenue.

Course conditions must have snow pack of a minimum of four inches to assure that sledding does not cause costly damage to the golf course turf. Often, sledding conditions can change in the course of a day. So, before you bundle up, go to dmparks.org to check the latest status of sledding on the links.

Drop in on Your Own Time to a Community Center near You

Come and stay on your own, with friends or family during open gym hours.

Archie Brooks Community Center is located at 2100 SE 5th Street and is open weekdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission for adults 19 to 59 is \$1. Youth 18 and under and seniors 60 and over attend free. \$12 monthly passes are also available.

Scott Four Mile Community Center is located at 3711 Easton Boulevard and is open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission for adults 18 to 54 is \$1. Youth 17 and under and seniors 55 and over attend free. \$12 monthly passes are also available.

The family that plays together . . .

Stay active, have fun and keep warm this winter with Family Nights at Archie Brooks Community Center.

You and your family can play basketball, volleyball, pool, table tennis, Foosball, billiards, air hockey and more. Come as many weeks with as many participants as you'd like; you can play for free!

Family Nights are the last Friday of every month between January and May from 6-8 p.m. Children 16 and under can attend, along with their parents or legal guardians, for free, no registration is required. Call 248-6316 for more information.

NATURALLY FUN Programs

Brought to You Through a Partnership with the Polk County Conservation Board

Run for the Egg!

Runners, walkers, families and outdoor enthusiasts are invited to "Run for the Egg" in a 5-mile cross-country run/walk that begins at the beach parking lot at Easter Lake Park on Easter weekend. Pre-registration by April 3, fee applies. Call 323-5300 for information.

April 11, 8-11:00 a.m.

Ewing and Easter Lake Parks

Endangered Species Program – at a Free Flick Movie Night

Come learn what causes animals to become an endangered species and what kinds of animals are endangered in Iowa. The movie Kung Fu Panda follows the program. FREE

May 8, 8:15-8:45 p.m.

Western Gateway Park

A Play Date

Join and meet families interested in getting their children outdoors for natural play and discovery with a Polk County naturalist. Children will explore, discover and play in the park. Be sure they bring their curiosity and wear appropriate clothes and shoes – they may be hiking, discovering life in a log or playing in the creek. FREE

June 17, 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Greenwood Park, Mary Miss Doublesite Pond

Nature's Story Hours

Pack your picnic lunch, blanket and bring your family for a free hour of nature stories and activities from noon-1 p.m. with a Polk County naturalist. FREE

June 17 – Animal Habitats

MacRae Park, upper shelter

June 24 – Wiggly Worms

Ashby Park, wading pool shelter

The Centers of Attention

Des Moines Parks and Recreation offers programming and fitness at two busy community centers that serve people of all ages year-round. Archie Brooks Community Center and Scott Four Mile Community Center are nearly always hopping with free and low-cost events, activities and programs for youths, adults, seniors and families. Yearly attendance at each of the facilities exceeds 110,000 – and here's why.

The centers have gymnasiums for games like volleyball and basketball, fitness and cardiovascular rooms with weights, treadmills and cross trainers, as well as game areas with air hockey, billiards, table tennis and other table games. For those who don't want to spend time in the gym, Four Mile Center has a Nintendo Wii, where you can play video games like basketball, bowling or tennis by yourself or with a friend or get a cardiovascular workout through yoga, Pilates or aerobics, all while in front of the TV screen. All this is available for open recreation and gym from morning to evening Monday-Friday, with some special times set aside for various age groups. Seniors and youth through late teens use these facilities free of charge and others pay just \$1/day.

Folks age 16 and over can log free time in the computer labs to work on school assignments, surf the web or just play some games. Multi-purpose meeting rooms are used not only for center programs and activities such as crafts and bingo, but are also available to rent for private functions... and so are the gymnasiums!

Cold winter and spring weather outside finds a park inside one of the gymnasiums at the Brooks Center for the Pre-school Park from 10 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. For \$1.50 a day, children 5 and under have fun crawling on, over, and through exercise mats, play equipment and a tunnel. They can even shoot some pint-size hoops or ride tyke trikes. A supervising adult must accompany all children.

Older folks get their day on the Four Mile Center's court weekday mornings any time from 8 to 11 a.m. Free and open to all ages, the Four Mile Walking Club got started over 10 years ago and has swelled to over 50 members. Walking at their own time, pace, and distance, many participants have formed friendships with others walking the same day or time. Walking is fit for all in year-round comfort - or just on those cold, hot and rainy days when you just can't make yourself go outside.

Basketball fever resonates throughout the gymnasiums Saturdays and Sundays every winter as nearly 1,000 youth on more than 80 teams of boys and girls 7 to 14 years old compete in the metro's biggest hoop program. The program has been made possible through a long-time sponsorship by *The Des Moines Register*. The Youth Basketball teams compete at the two centers, with nearly 2,000 players, officials, moms, dads, grandparents, friends and neighbors packing the bleachers every weekend of the 12-game season that begins in November. The games are continued with optional tournament play that follows the regular season.

Peewee kids start dribbling on the courts in January in two age groups: 3-4 and 5-6 years of age. Volunteer parent coaches teach the very basics of basketball one night a week in a fun, recreational atmosphere. A few weeks of practice lead up to games against the other teams. Children can register as individuals or teams in early October for the Youth and December through early January for the Peewee play; player shirts and all equipment is included with registration. Check with Leisure Sports staff at 248-6310 or at www.dmparks.org for more details regarding specifics of registration, dates and fees.

Children can also participate in youth Tae Kwon Do or indoor Peewee Soccer. For adults, there's table tennis club, basketball and volleyball leagues, indoor whiffle ball and aerobics. Bingo and crafts round out the offerings. Fees apply to some, with family discounts available for many of the programs. Days and times for most programs vary at the two centers, so check with each of them to attend the activities most convenient for your location and availability.

In addition to open and regularly-scheduled or league activities, both centers host school fun nights, Campfire day camps and meetings, community meetings, elections/caucuses and a number of holiday events for seniors and youth. These popular events are free or minimal in cost and attract from 100, 300 and sometimes 400 participants around Halloween, winter holidays, and spring egg hunting seasons.

For complete schedules and information about activities, classes, rentals and special events, visit dmparks.com or call Archie Brooks Community Center at 248-6316 and Scott Four Mile Community Center at 248-6310.

Did you know?

- Children 8 years old can identify 25% more Pokemon characters than wildlife species.
- Studies have shown that kids with ADHD improve their concentration after spending time outside in a park.

Learning to skate outdoors is a breeze.

If you don't know how to skate or want to improve your skills, classes are available for all ages and skill levels at Brenton Skating Plaza. Learn to Skate classes taught by experienced, professional skaters are available in four Monday night sessions from 6:15 p.m. to 7:25 p.m. for \$50. The U.S. Figure Skating Basic Skills program is used to stress a skating environment that is exciting, rewarding, safe and fun. Get all the details at brentonplaza.com.



Des Moines Winter Games 2008: Extreme Success!

We live in Iowa. It is going to be cold and snowy. The Des Moines Winter Games embraces that fact!

So it's no wonder that last year's first-ever Des Moines Winter Games was such a success.

Held the first February weekend in 2008, the games had more than 2,000 enthusiastic participants, along with nearly as many spectators to spur them on. Great activities and sports competitions were held all over Des Moines throughout the weekend.

The initial concept of a major winter event grew quickly, and so did the slate of events. Ideas were flying and soon the Des Moines Winter Games grew into 17 contests and events. Of course, the skiing and snowboarding competitions proved to be popular. The skill level of participants surprised first-year competitor Jonathan Nalevanko who said, "There was a lot of competition."

But there was much more going on for everyone, including the novices. "I think a lot of people came out because there was more than just snowboarding. I think anyone could find something they could enjoy, and be good at, or have fun trying," commented participant Trenton Breeden.

Many event registrations filled up quickly and participation exceeded all expectations. Registrations for some were maxed early. Team competitions such as broomball, softball and flag football had large numbers participating. Play for some had to start and continue into late nighttime hours so that all teams would have the opportunity to play. Pick up teams put together by coworkers were being outmatched by experienced teams that came from who knows where, creating a need for novice and experienced divisions in future years.

The weather was looking good, with a good base of snow, throughout the weeks leading up to the event. Then the melt came. Snowscape became greenscape. What, no snow on the ground? No problem for kids competing in the lineup of children's events. Manmade snow was trucked in from Sleepy Hollow Sports Park, an organizer of the festival, and the number of participants grew to far exceed expectations.

Fifty-six brave souls, many in costume, took part in the kick-off event. Those daring enough to participate in the Polar Plunge raced into the icy waters of the Sleepy Hollow lagoon.

Grand View University coordinated and managed the College Mascot Challenge, with local college teams sculpting designs from 10 ft. x 10 ft. blocks of snow in a sculpting contest.

By the end of the 2008 Des Moines Winter Games it had been determined that there would be a second. The word "annual" would be used to describe the new Iowa festival, for indeed there would be many more to follow. Ideas for new events were once again flying as the list of 2009 events grew before the snow sculptures had melted. Even warm days won't be able to melt the enthusiasm and likely success of this year's Des Moines Winter Games.



Children Dig Des Moines Winter Games Too

What child doesn't love to play in the snow? The 2nd Annual Des Moines Winter Games is designed to be fun for everyone – especially children.

You can encourage healthy winter activities and help your kids get some exercise by signing them up for the children's activities at the Games.

Bundle them up and pack their mittens Saturday, January 31, when children 12 and under will take part in snowshoe races, a snowman building contest and a Big Dig for prizes. The events begin at 10:00 a.m. at Brenton Skating Plaza.

Get all the details at www.dmwintergames.com.

Volunteer to Beat Cabin Fever

Get outside and enjoy Des Moines' Winter Games as a volunteer. You can help make this event an even bigger success by helping with set-up, teardown, registration and more. Or you can assist with adult events like downhill mountain biking, skiing/snowboarding competitions, the Polar Plunge, Extreme Cross Country 5K Run or a snowmobile race. See what events interest you and register to volunteer at www.dmwintergames.com or call 515-323-8907. We can't pull it off without you!

Winter Game Activities

Polar Plunge

Friday, January 30

Hang out with all of the participants starting at 5:00 p.m. before they take the plunge at 6:00 p.m. at Sleepy Hollow Sports Park. Corporate teams and costumes are encouraged. A warming tent will be available for everyone as well as changing areas for both men and women. Registration fee is a non-perishable food item.

Snow-Ball Softball Tournament

Saturday, January 31 & Sunday, February 1

Play begins around 8:00 a.m. at Savage Softball Complex and Carney Softball Fields. This is the 15th year Des Moines Parks and Recreation has hosted this great double-elimination tournament.

Snowball Flag Football Tournament

Saturday, January 31 & Sunday, February 1

Play begins around 8:00 a.m. at Cownie Soccer Complex for the double-elimination tournament.

Broomball Tournament

Friday, January 30 & Saturday, January 31

Play begins around 9:00 p.m. at Brenton Skating Plaza. Games last 45 minutes in the double-elimination tournament. Competitive and amateur divisions available.

Rail Jam

Saturday, January 31

"Under the lights" at 7:00 p.m. downtown at 3rd and Court Avenue. Showcase your grinding abilities. Live music throughout the evening.

Snocross Amateur Snowmobile Race

Saturday, January 31

Races beginning at 9:00 a.m. at Sleepy Hollow. Beginner, intermediate and advanced classes with three different engine classifications available. The Iowa State Snowmobiling Association is helping coordinate this event.

College Mascot Snow Sculpting Competition

Friday, January 30

24-hour event begins at 6:00 p.m. at Sleepy Hollow. Colleges and universities from across the state will replicate their school mascot in 10 ft. x 10 ft. blocks of snow.

Ski and Snowboard Competitions

Friday, January 30

Competition begins at 7:00 p.m. at Sleepy Hollow. Participants can compete in either or both the slope style and Big Air Best Trick. Men's and women's classes broken into 13 and older and 12 and under.

Ice Fishing Derby

Sunday, February 1

Inspections begin at 6:00 a.m. and fishing at 8:00 a.m. at Easter Lake. One- and two-person teams compete in a "Big Fish" format, measure and release event. Portable shelters allowed.



Xtreme XC Run **Sunday, February 1**

Race begins at 9:00 a.m., with registration beginning at 8:00 a.m. at Waveland Golf Course Clubhouse. Racers should be prepared for slick and EXTREME conditions!

Downhill Kayaking Competition **Saturday, January 31**

Start time is 5:00 p.m. at Sleepy Hollow for this head-to-head style Round-Robin format race. Participants can bring their own kayak or use those provided on site.

Downhill Ski Bike Competition **Friday, January 30**

Competition starts at 9:00 p.m. at Sleepy Hollow for this head-to-head style Round-Robin format race. Bikes for the race will be provided by Rasmussen Bike Shop, the sponsor of the event.

Crazy Cardboard Sled Race **Saturday, January 31**

Competitors start at 5:00 p.m. at Sleepy Hollow and are encouraged to be as "crazy" as they can be in creating a sled out of only cardboard and then racing it down the slopes.

Events for Children 12 and Under **Saturday, January 31**

Ice Skating Exhibition begins at 9:00 a.m., with other activities to follow at 10:00 a.m. at Brenton Skating Plaza and requires a registration "fee" of a non-perishable food item for events that include ice skating demonstrations and games, a "Big Dig" event in which children will be divided into groups based on their age to dig for buried prizes in large piles of snow, snowshoe races, and a snowman building contest.

GO TO

www.dmwintergames.com
NOW TO CHECK ON
REGISTRATION DEADLINES

Des Moines Winter Games 2009: Even Better the Second Time Around!

If you participated in or attended last year's inaugural Des Moines Winter Games, you know how much fun can be had in the Iowa outdoors. If you missed out, here's your chance to take part. If you don't want to compete or participate then get it on the calendar as a spectator event.

The Games are organized by Sleepy Hollow Sports Park and Des Moines Parks and Recreation and will take place January 30 through February 1, 2009. Events will take place at Sleepy Hollow Sports Park, Brenton Skating Plaza, downtown on Court Avenue, Waveland Golf Course, Easter Lake, Savage Softball Complex, Carney Softball Fields, and James Cownie Soccer Park.

Winter is a great time to be active and take advantage of all the facilities Des Moines has to offer. "Some people don't like winter, but part of it might be that they just don't know there are great activities for them to participate in, right here in Des Moines," said Max Kenkel, Marketing Coordinator for Sleepy Hollow.

"We are pleased and excited about all the events this year," said Brian Becker, a Des Moines Park and Recreation Department Superintendent and Winter Games organizer. "Our Polar Plunge, snow sculpting, flag football and Snow-Ball Softball events were huge events last year. This year we will have radio personalities hosting some of the events, and we have great sponsors on board for the 2009 Winter Games. Factoring in the new events we are adding this year, the 2009 event is ahead of the curve in terms of growth and involvement."

Kum & Go has signed on as the 2009 Winter Games presenting sponsor, and KCCI and Cityview have returned as the exclusive TV and print sponsors. Radio sponsor Citadel Communication is home to KGGO, KJJY, The Hawk, WOW-FM, and The Champ.

After the success of last year's games, some new events were added to round-out the list. "We've added a few new events this year, as well as improved several of last year's events," said Kenkel. "The new events are the big news for us." If nothing piqued your interest last year, now you also have the option to compete in the Snocross Amateur Snowmobile Races, Ice Fishing Derby, and Rail Jam. Kenkel added, "These are premier events that we hope will continue to grow and be a part of the Winter Games for years to come."

Among the organizers of individual events are Brenton Skating Plaza, Grand View University, Fitness Sports and Rasmussen Bike Shop. All events will take place regardless of weather or snow cover thanks to the snow- and ice-making capabilities of Sleepy Hollow Sports Park and Brenton Skating Plaza.

More than 20 events are staggered throughout the weekend so opportunities abound to participate in or watch as many as possible. You can embrace winter and enjoy the outdoors by making and racing your own sled, participating in the downhill mountain bike race or entering your child in the snowman building contest. Last year over 4,000 people took part as either competitors or spectators. Organizers are hoping to double that number this year.

There is a \$15 registration fee for several individual contests and more for team events, but many are free or require only a non-perishable food donation, which will be donated to the DMARC food pantry. Five dollars will get you an official winter games long-sleeved T-shirt. Nearly all events are free to attend, so spectators can come and go as they please. 2008 participant Thomas Breeden recommends taking part, "It's worth the money." For a complete description of events, times, rules, team and individual event fees, waiver and registration forms, visit www.dmwintergames.com or call 515-248-6310 to speak to event organizers.



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**Sleepy Hollow
Sports Park**



Splash and Save: Early Bird Swim Passes on Sale Soon

Cool off in the summer heat with early bird savings on swimming pool and aquatic center passes. Early bird rates are available to the public April 1-30. The 2009 swim season begins June 3 and concludes for four of our facilities on August 16. Birdland Pool will remain open through Labor Day weekend when the Des Moines Public Schools are not in session. Resident and non-resident single and family passes are available at the City Hall Information Center, 400 Robert D. Ray Drive. Call 237-1386 for more information.

Compare the Prices and Save on Early Bird Swim Passes

	Early Bird Rates	Regular Rates
Resident Season Pass		
Single	\$ 40.00	\$ 45.00
Family		
First two in family	75.00	80.00
Each additional family member	25.00	30.00
Family maximum	120.00	140.00
Daily Admission		
Less than 3 years of age	Free	
3 – 20 years old	\$2.00*	
21 years of age and over	\$4.00*	



*Note price of admission is 1/2 of this rate after 5:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday

Tiny Teams. Big Life Lessons. Register Now for Peewee Basketball

Register your child for Peewee Basketball at Brooks Community Center and Four Mile Community Center and they'll learn lessons for life. Teams for ages 3-4 and 5-6 will spend one evening a week learning basketball basics,

teamwork and social skills. Cost is \$40 per child and includes all practice equipment and a shirt for games. The program is sponsored by *The Des Moines Register*. Call Leisure Sports at 515-248-6310 for information.

Register by mid-January!



Lessons for Life Swim Lessons Available Through Des Moines Parks

Des Moines Parks and Recreation is committed to providing the highest quality swimming programs and facilities to our children at affordable rates. The Learn-to-Swim program helps accomplish this mission. Plan to make water fun forever safe by enrolling your child for summer swimming instruction by Des Moines Parks' American Red Cross Water Safety Instruction-certified staff. Five levels of instruction will be offered in several June and July sessions. Watch for more information after April 1 on City Channel 7, at dmparks.org and by calling 237-1386.

Fun is the Goal in Peewee Soccer



Help your child learn the basics of soccer in a fun, recreational atmosphere. Enroll your child 3 to 6 years of age in Peewee Soccer and they'll spend one evening a week for six weeks getting their kicks. Volunteer coaches teach the basics of the sport, with four game nights following two weeks of practice.

Jack Smith, who participated last year at age 3 said, "It's fun. Snacks are good. I want to play more."

The fall program is held indoors in October and November in the gymnasiums at both Archie Brooks and Scott Four Mile Community Centers. The spring program is normally held at the James W. Cownie Soccer Park, home to the 2006 U.S. Youth Soccer National Championships, Drake University Men's and Women's Soccer home games and the Iowa High School Boys Athletic Union Soccer Championships.

"The quality of this tournament-level soccer park provides a unique experience to young soccer players being introduced to the sport. Many of them have watched a high school match or an older sibling play at Cownie and are wowed by the opportunity to play at this complex," stated Doug Romig, Recreation Manager.

Romig goes on to state, however, that due to last summer's flooding at this complex, and necessary field repairs and reseeding in process since then, there is a possibility that the spring 2009 Peewee Soccer season may be held at the Archie Brooks Community Center's outside park facilities. Only Mother Nature knows what spring weather will bring to the location status of the program come April, but one thing is for sure, the goals will be in place somewhere in a Des Moines Parks and Recreation facility.

Spring program registration runs March 9-April 3, and practice begins April 13. The Park and Recreation Department will provide equipment, including a free jersey for scrimmages. Visit dmparks.org or call 248-6312 for more information about registration and fees. Don't forget to check again this summer for fall Peewee Soccer info.

Keep an Eagle Eye Out for Birds

Can you spy a Northern Flicker? A Golden Crowned Kinglet? A Barred Owl? Bird watching and feeding is a treat year-round in Des Moines parks. Two places you'll want to be sure to visit during the cold winter months are Gray's Lake Park to try to spy the bald eagles feeding, and Glendale Cemetery to catch an appearance of the rare Merlins that pick this as their only place to stop over in Iowa. Of course when the first blooms of spring pop up, there are several species of beautiful birds that you'll want to be on the lookout for.

Visit dmparks.org for a list of birds commonly found in Des Moines' major parks and when you can expect to see them.

Des Moines' Rivers Home to Bald Eagles Lunch and Learn More at Scott Street Dam

Keep your head up and your eyes peeled for majestic bald eagles along Des Moines' rivers this winter. As you take a leisurely walk around Gray's Lake, or when you're fishing on the bridge at the Scott Street Dam, make sure to keep your eyes to the skies to spot them soaring overhead in search of a meal. And don't forget to scan the trees to spy their enormous nests too!

Migrating from nesting areas to our north, the eagles call Iowa home until mid-March. A year ago, several people reported seeing up to as many as a dozen eagles within one trip around Gray's Lake. And, in their 2007 nest census, the DNR reported at least 200 active eyries (nests) in Iowa.

In honor of our winged visitors, the Des Moines Park and Recreation Department invites you to come spy on our national symbol, the bald eagle, at a lunch and learn on Friday, February 20, from 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. The program will provide interesting facts about eagles and offer participants an opportunity for an up close view of a replica eagle nest.

Bring your lunch or simply enjoy the complimentary hot beverages at the Scott Street Dam as you view the bald eagles. Come when you can and stay as long as you like. Educational 15-minute presentations by Wildlife Diversity Specialist Pat Schlarbaum with the Iowa DNR begin at noon and 1:00 p.m. View the eagles at your leisure; scopes and binoculars will be provided.

Bald eagles may be the ones to get the local winter celebrity billing, however, bird watchers will find that this time of year provides a wide variety of birds in the Des Moines area. Walking the Gray's Lake Kruidenier Trail, the Meredith Trail or along the river, one will find juncos, pine siskins and songbirds, such as chickadees, nuthatches, cardinals, tufted titmice and Harris sparrows.

Contact Teva Dawson at 323-8907 or email tdawson@dmgov.org for more information about the program. Visit dmparks.org for a list of birds you can spot in Des Moines' parks.



Eagles Make their Winter Home at the Library

Listen to the Eagles' Message

In anticipation of the "Eagle Sightings on the River" noon hour presentation and viewing at the Scott Street Dam on Friday, February 20, the library is partnering with Des Moines Parks and Recreation and the Department of Natural Resources to present several free captivating eagle programs for all ages.

Get up close to a huge replica eagle nest and gaze in wonder at the life-sized carved adult eagles, eggs and, of course, a little hatchling. Kids and adults alike will be amazed at the size and shape of the magnificent creation. The nest will be on display in the main lobby at Central Library, February 3-19.

Drop by Central Library downtown for several special events on Wednesday, February 11. Learn about our area's "Eagles and their Feathered Friends." Little tykes ages 3-5 will enjoy these story times, where they'll hear stories about eagles and other intriguing birds. This free entertaining program is open to daycares at 10:15 a.m. and to families during the 10:45 a.m. Family Story Time.

"Eagles Up Close" is an after-school program where children ages 5 and up will be able to talk to an eagle expert from the DNR and see a real, live eagle. Children will also participate in crafts and enjoy a light snack.

The learning doesn't stop with the kids! Bring your whole family to the library for a fascinating free screening of "American Eagle" at 6:00 p.m. You'll learn about our national symbol and the great work being done by environmentalists to protect them. Then, talk to an eagle rehabilitator and find out how the experts care for injured eagles.

Spread your wings and soar to the library for this fun learning experience. And, don't forget to mark your calendar for Lunch with the Eagles, sponsored by the City of Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Friday, February 20 at the Scott Street Dam. Visit dmparks.org or pldminfo.org for details on all of these educational programs.



Spring Activities Grow

As blustery winds blow and snow falls, it's the perfect time to think about spring! The Park and Recreation Department has been busily working to create programs and opportunities for you to enjoy the outdoors when temperatures begin to rise.

Free Flicks: The Sequel

Mother Nature's theatre opens for business again this spring and summer as Free Flicks returns to a Des Moines park or swimming pool near you. Pack some lawn chairs or a blanket and bring along some popcorn to enjoy a big screen movie under the stars with your family. Or, purchase sweet treats, buttery hot popcorn and your favorite fizzy drinks right in the park. The spring movies start at sunset on May Friday nights at Western Gateway Park. Visit dmparks.org throughout spring and summer to see a listing of upcoming feature presentations and locations.

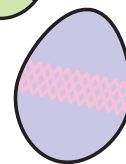
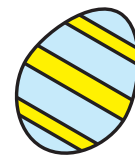
Eggstravaganza Spring Egg Hunt

Ready, set, search! See your children spring into action at 10 a.m., April 4 at Des Moines Parks and Recreation's Eggstravaganzas, free for children age 2 through the 5th grade at both Archie Brooks and Scott Four Mile Community Centers. Come and see how many candy-filled eggs they can find and put into their basket or bag they bring. Each child must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.



Run for the Egg

Rise and shine and *Run for the Egg*, April 11. Des Moines Parks and Recreation partners with Polk County Conservation to present the 5-mile run/walk at Easter Lake Park beginning at 8:00 a.m. Challenge yourself or your running group on this spectacular cross-country, multi-surface trail. Prizes will be awarded. Visit leadingyouroutdoors.org or call 515-323-5359 for more information.



Hooping at the Dome

Take it to the hoop May 2 as Des Moines Parks and Recreation partners with the Iowa Games for this famous 3-on-3 half-court basketball tournament. Temporary hoops are put in place on the Iowa State Capitol grounds for this annual spring event. There are youth and adult divisions, male and female divisions, and a coed division. Trophies will be awarded and the winners in each division will advance to the Summer Iowa Games' 3-on-3 tournament. Visit dmparks.org for more information and to register.

Winter Time Means Quality Time Annual Father Daughter Dance Scheduled

A daughter's smile always lights up her father's face. And nothing lights up a little girl's face like getting a new dress. In recognition of the special bond between fathers and daughters, the Park and Recreation Department hosts the 8th annual Father Daughter Dance two evenings at Blank Park Zoo: Thursday, February 12 from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. and Friday, February 13 from 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. Held around Valentine's Day each year, this is the perfect opportunity for fathers to spend quality time with their daughters.

Every year, dads and daughters look forward to the annual event as a night for dressing up, dancing, and of course, getting a carnation and chocolates. Dance-going father Gregg Mooers comments, "We have been to the Father Daughter Dance the past four years; it has become a tradition we both look forward to each year." Emma Mooers agrees, "I like the dance because I get to dress up and go out to dinner, and then go dancing with my dad. And I get a flower."

Fathers enjoy spending one-on-one time pampering their daughters. In fact, many dads say it is an opportunity to set an example for their daughter as to how she should expect to be treated and respected on a date. Daughters love the attention they get on their special night too.

Tickets are limited and due to the high popularity of the event, will more than likely be sold out long before the dance nights. So, purchase tickets now at the City Hall Information Center, 400 Robert D. Ray Drive. And, treat your daughter to a night of dancing and appreciation.



TRANSPLANTING *in the* TROPICS Spring Comes Early for Volunteers!

Looking to beat those winter blues with a tropical getaway? Look no further than 2501 SE Maury. Leave your sun block at home and fly over to the City of Des Moines' Parks and Recreation Greenhouse for a rendezvous with the tropics!

Have you ever wondered where those spectacular flowers and plants that beautify downtown, neighborhoods and parks get their start? While it's freezing cold outside they are snug and warm growing in the city's greenhouse. But before spring arrives, we need your help to transplant the little beauties into bigger and bigger containers to prepare them for a heartier spring planting in the ground.

It's the perfect volunteer opportunity for individuals, groups or corporate volunteers. Many volunteers will be needed, either for a one-time only day in the sun-filled greenhouse or a routine shift maybe once or twice a week. No experience is necessary, as all volunteers are trained for their green thumb on-site. Volunteers must be able to walk unassisted, stand for short periods, do light physical work and possibly bend over while transplanting.

Transplanting begins March 2 and continues through May 15 when the young plants begin making their way into pots and plots around the city parks and byways. Shifts include: Monday - Friday, 8-11:00 a.m. and 1-3:00 p.m.; Saturdays 8-11:00 a.m. and Sundays 1-3:00 p.m. We're flexible, choose what suits you best.

Interested but need to know more? Visit dmparks.org or join us February 17, 2009, between 4 and 6:00 p.m. for our Transplanting in the Tropics Open House!

2009 Ice Bowl A Benefit for the Food Bank of Central Iowa

"No wimps, no whiners," is the rallying cry of the Ice Bowl Disc Golf Tournament, a benefit for the Food Bank of Central Iowa hosted by the Des Moines Disc Golf Club. Dress in layers and join the fun, January 24th at Des Moines Grandview Park's 18-hole Disc Golf Course, 3230 Easton Boulevard.

Last year, 98 players warmed their hearts and chilled their hands braving -10°F wind chills to have a great time for charity. During the course of the day, more than \$300 and 1,850 pounds of canned food were donated to the Food Bank of Central Iowa.

Come snow, sleet or sunshine, two rounds of disc golf will begin at 10:00 a.m. and a free chili lunch will be served between rounds. The cost for the tournament is \$15 plus three cans of food. Visit www.dmparks.org or go to www.discgolfdesmoines.org for more information.

The Mayor's Annual Ride for Trails

Your body may tell you it's the middle of winter. However, the first official ride for the biking season is fast approaching. Riders will again convene at City Hall, located at 400 Robert D. Ray Drive, on the east bank of the Des Moines River, for the 2009 Mayor's Annual Ride for Trails (MAR) at 10:00 a.m. Saturday, April 18. Clip on your shoes, grab your mittens, and bring your family and friends for a fun spring ride that has become a proud Des Moines tradition.

Started in 1987 by then-Mayor John Pat Dorrian, this 20- and 30-mile ride along streets and trails attracts more than 1,000 riders annually.

Avid cyclist Carl Voss describes the event. "All of my cycling friends look forward to the third Saturday in April because the cycling season officially starts with the Mayor's Annual Ride for Trails. A lot of people arrive early for the MAR because it is a good social event. We enjoy riding with all our biking friends and supporting Des Moines trails by riding our bikes. It is a wonderful event for family and friends because the MAR shows off many of the great things about Des Moines."

Proceeds from the event help maintain the city's trail system and contribute to new trail projects. Some of the projects completed in 2008 with funds from MAR included a connection from Gray's Lake and the Meredith Trail under Fleur Drive to the Bill Riley Trail and the final segment of the Walnut Creek Trail.

Planned projects for 2009 include the Waveland Trail, uniform trail signage along the city's trails, and renovation of the John Pat Dorrian Trail.

Mayor Frank Cownie says, "This event is a tradition among avid bicyclists here in Des Moines. It is a great way to kick off Des Moines' biking season and an excellent way for citizens to stay healthy. Biking is an activity that is enjoyed by people of all ages and is a wonderful way for families to spend time together and be active."

Registration forms and online registrations are available for MAR XXII beginning March 3. The cost is \$20 before March 31 and \$25 after. To learn more visit dmparks.org or call 237-1386 and get ready to ride for a good cause.

