



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2021.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: County of Fluvanna

Program Title: Parks and Recreation Response to COVID-19

Program Category: Parks and Recreation

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Kelly Belanger Harris and Tori Melton

Title: Assistant County Administrator (KBH) Management Analyst (TM)

Department: Admin and Finance


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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Eric M. Dahl

Title: County Administrator

Signature: 

The Problem: Disruption of services because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Goal: To maintain park services at Pleasant Grove Park, implement COVID-safe activities for youth and children, and respond to the needs of the senior community in Fluvanna.

Summary: The mission of the Fluvanna County Parks and Recreation Department is to, "...promote opportunities for all residents to pursue safe and enjoyable leisure activities in balance with the protection and conservation of Fluvanna's natural resources." The COVID-19 pandemic challenged Parks and Recreation to find creative ways to continue offering safe, quality programming, while complying with State mandates. Parks and Recreation staff responded swiftly, providing opportunities for residents of all ages throughout the pandemic.



The Challenges: Fluvanna County is a small, rural county approximately 20 miles southeast of Charlottesville, with a population of around 27,000. Many residents do not have affordable, reliable internet access. During this time of limited in-person gatherings, most County departments relied on electronic communication. Not only did lack of connectivity make communicating changes difficult, it also impacted the ability to offer meaningful virtual programming.



The Solutions:

Youth and Children Programming: It's important to note that when the County restricted all in-person meetings and programming, Parks and Recreation was one of the most impacted departments. In the early days of the pandemic, staff that would normally be involved with programming for children and youth, had unexpectedly empty schedules. In order to preserve employment and continue to operate the park, Parks and Recreation staff quickly pivoted and took on tasks not generally found in their job duties. Not only were Parks and Recreation employees assured of their employment, they kept the park open and ready for guests by mowing grass, maintaining trails, and tackling deferred maintenance.

When it became apparent the pandemic, and all its attendant restrictions, would require the cancellation of all in-person programming, Parks and Recreation staff jumped out of the box and go to work.

In 2020, the annual Easter Egg Hunt went virtual. Residents were encouraged to participate by sending an Easter- or Spring-Theme photo or selfie with their child's first name and age to be entered into a drawing for a chance to win an Easter Basket.





FLUVANNA PARKS & RECREATION CANCELLED/RESCHEDULED Spring Programs

Program	Date Rescheduled
Open Gym	Postponed, Date TBD
Kiddie T-Ball, April 4 - May 16	Cancelled
Teen Night at Bottoms Up, April 6	Postponed, Date TBD
Easter Event at Pleasant Grove Park, April 11	Cancelled
Hazardous Waste Collection, April 25	Postponed, Date TBD
Carnival, May 6 - 9	Cancelled

Information on Fluvanna County's response to COVID-19, can be found at:
<https://www.fluvannacounty.org/community/page/covid-19-2019-novel-coronavirus>
The County is encouraging residents to follow Health District guidance to stay home.
Residents may contact the County by:
Phone: 434-591-1910
Email: connect@fluvannacounty.org
My Two Cents: <https://www.fluvannacounty.org/bos/webform/my-two-cents>
www.fluvannacounty.org

Summer Camp 2020, likewise, looked different from previous years. During June, July, and August 2020, Parks and Recreation offered half-day camps instead of the normal full-day camps. To comply with physical distancing requirements, attendance was restricted and no activities requiring transportation were offered. Campers could kayak Mondays, Wednesdays, and

Fridays, trail hike on Tuesdays, and play disc golf on Thursdays. Summer crafts and sports skills helped to round out a summer of fun.

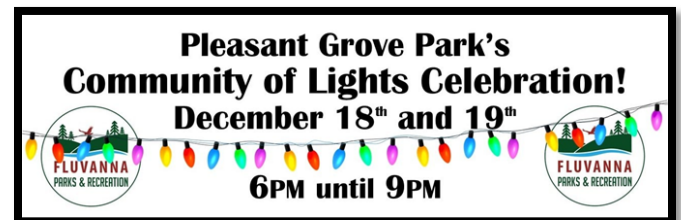


Fluvanna County Schools operated on a fully-virtual schedule for most of the fall 2020 semester. Even though students were able to continue their academic studies at home, many felt there needed to be an in-person physical education component. To fill the need, Parks and Recreation provided Youth Outdoor Gym class for grades 1-12 in September and October 2020. These small classes followed physical distancing and mask requirements while getting kids moving in outdoors. Additionally, in an effort to address not only the physical health of the children and youth, but also their academic well-being, Parks and Recreation operated five Learning Labs scattered throughout the County. Learning Labs provided free internet access for students that didn't have reliable, or any, internet at home to be able to use for school work. Family members could likewise take advantage of the internet while they waited with their children.

Like most other things in 2020, the annual Halloween event at Pleasant Grove was a little different. A Trunk-or-Treat village and a Semi-Scary Haunted Trail allowed families a bit of normalcy in a year that was anything but normal.

In December 2020, Parks and Recreation was looking for a way to involve the community in a shared holiday experience. The proposition? A drive-through Lights Celebration complete with Santa! Families and local businesses lined the drive of Pleasant Grove Park and community members slowly drove past, getting a little bit of communal holiday spirit.

As 2021 finally arrived, Parks and Recreation knew exactly how to offer fun, safe, COVID-compliant activities!



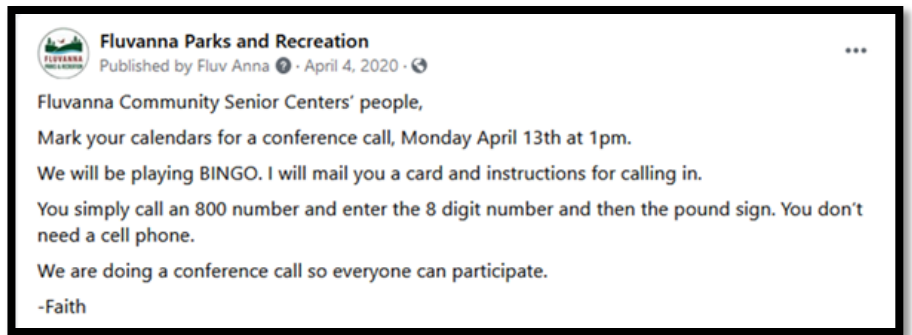
Family Events in 2021 included:

- The Annual Parent-Child Valentine Dance became the Valentine's Day Portrait Raffle! Children were asked to put on their Sunday best and take a photo or selfie with a parent, guardian, grandparent, aunt, uncle, pet, etc. with a Valentine Theme, and email it to Parks and Recreation, for entry into Valentine's Day-themed prizes.
- April 2021 – a return to an in-person annual Easter Egg Hunt, COVID restrictions in place
- April 2021 - Earth Day with hazardous waste and tire collection
- May 2021 – the County Carnival returned for a two week period. Attendance was restricted to current gathering limits.

Active Older Adult Programming: Fluvanna County, in collaboration with the Jefferson Area Board for Aging (JABA) operates four weekly, drop-in Senior Centers. In a non-COVID year, residents will meet to socialize, share a meal, do crafts, take day-trips, play games, and more. The importance of this service goes well beyond

entertainment: the closing of churches, the cessation of in-person programming, and a scarcity of reliable internet in parts of the county was particularly concerning for this demographic. Faith Stuart, Active Seniors & Therapeutic Recreation Coordinator, went above and beyond in her efforts to make sure the seniors remained connected.

Faith kept tabs on the senior participants with regular phone calls, zoom meetings with those who had internet access and were tech savvy. These calls also helped Faith connect these residents with any other services that may have needed during this time, such as meals, medical care, and before COVID testing was available, food shopping. In July 2020, Faith started daily bingo – by phone! She has continued this practice even as COVID restrictions have lessened, calling the number three days a week. When the weather permitted, Faith provided activities outdoors, keeping distancing and masking guidelines in mind. In March 2021 as vaccine availability was on the rise, the seniors began to meet inside again.



Replicability: The Fluvanna County Public Schools help to get the word out for programming through their automated calls to all families with students enrolled in the school district. JABA helps run the Senior Centers and, during the pandemic, offered virtual programming, which was then shared by Fluvanna County.

Conclusion: 2020 will be remembered by history, hopefully, as the year we learned we could do hard things. As a year that we learned how to connect with each other in new ways, to offer programming that was unlike anything that had been done before. Fluvanna County Parks and Recreation demonstrated, time and again, that regardless of the obstacles, the needs and welfare of County residents was a priority. And more than that, they proved it by creating interesting and valuable ways to offer fun, safe, activities.

Fluvanna County Parks and Recreation Staff 2020-2021

Aaron Spitzer, Director of Parks and Recreation

Malinda Payne, Service Specialist

Eric Armentrout, Recreational Programs & Special Events Coordinator

Faith Stuart, Active Seniors & Therapeutic Recreation Coordinator

Dylan Morris, Athletics and Special Events Coordinator