



## SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: Tuesday, April 7, 2026.** Please include this submission form as the first page of your electronic entry. Contact [Gage Harter](#) with any questions.

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Montgomery County

Program Title: From First Slide to Family Tradition: A 50th Anniversary Parks and Recreation Story

Program Category: Education & Parks and Recreation Category

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Jennifer T. Harris

Title: Public Relations and Community Engagement Director

Department: Public Relations and Community Engagement

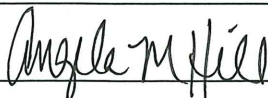
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### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Angela M. Hill

Title: County Administrator

Signature: 

## **VACo Award Submission | Montgomery County**

### **Award Category: Education, Parks and Recreation**

#### **From First Slide to Family Tradition: A 50th Anniversary Parks and Recreation Story**

##### **Executive Summary**

In celebration of the 50th anniversary of Montgomery County's Parks and Recreation Department, staff launched a community storytelling initiative to highlight the lasting impact of local recreational programs. Through archival research, staff uncovered a 1996 newspaper feature on the opening of the Frog Pond Swimming Pool, including a photo of the first child to ride the iconic frog slide.

By a unique coincidence, that child—now an adult and local citizen—was identified and invited to participate in a video recreating the moment nearly 30 years later, alongside his own children. The resulting story captured the generational impact of Parks and Recreation programs and the role these spaces play in building lifelong community connections.

The video was shared on social media, generating strong engagement and positive community response. With minimal cost and collaboration between Parks and Recreation and Public Relations and Community Engagement staff, the program demonstrates how local governments can use storytelling, historical archives, and community partnerships to celebrate milestones, strengthen civic pride, and connect past and present experiences.

## **Problem / Challenge**

Milestone anniversaries present an opportunity for local governments to reflect on their history and engage the community. However, effectively communicating the long-term value of parks and recreation services can be challenging. Traditional approaches—such as timelines, statistics, or event listings—may not fully capture the personal and generational impact these programs have on citizens.

As Montgomery County's Parks and Recreation Department approached its 50th anniversary in 2025, staff sought a more meaningful way to tell their story—one that would resonate emotionally with citizens and highlight the department's lasting influence across generations.

The challenge was to move beyond standard commemorative efforts and create a compelling narrative that demonstrated how Parks and Recreation programs contribute to community identity, family traditions, and quality of life over time.

## **Program Implementation (Including Innovation, Collaboration, and Outreach)**

To address this challenge, Parks and Recreation staff partnered with the County's Public Relations and Community Engagement team to develop a storytelling-based approach to the 50th anniversary celebration.

The initiative began with extensive archival research, including the review and digitization of historical materials such as newspaper clippings, flyers and photographs. During this process, staff discovered a front-page newspaper feature from 1996, documenting the opening of the Frog Pond Swimming Pool, which included a photo of a 12-year-old boy identified as the first child to ride the pool's signature frog slide.

In a unique and unexpected development, a member of the Public Relations and Community Engagement team recognized the name and confirmed that the individual—now an adult citizen—still resided in Montgomery County. Staff reached out to gauge his interest in participating in a video highlighting this full-circle moment. He enthusiastically agreed and contributed ideas, including recreating the original photo with his own children.

Coordinating the video presented several logistical challenges, including scheduling conflicts, limited pool operating hours, and weather-related delays. Despite these obstacles, staff successfully filmed the video on August 8, near the end of the pool season.

The final video combined archival imagery, personal storytelling, and contemporary footage to illustrate the generational impact of Parks and Recreation programs. It was shared on the County's social media platforms on August 21, targeting citizens with past and present connections to the Frog Pond and other recreational offerings.

### **Financing and Staffing**

The program was implemented with no dedicated budget, relying entirely on existing staff and resources. Parks and Recreation staff conducted archival research, while the Public Relations and Community Engagement team managed content development, video production and distribution.

The use of in-house expertise and existing materials allowed the County to produce high-quality, impactful content without additional financial investment. Staff time represented the primary resource commitment.

### **Results and Impact**

The storytelling initiative successfully engaged the community and highlighted the long-term value of Montgomery County's Parks and Recreation programs.

The video received more than 5,200 views, nearly 240 reactions, and multiple shares on social media. Engagement was particularly strong among citizens with personal connections to the featured individual, as well as those with memories of the Frog Pond Swimming Pool.

Beyond quantitative metrics, the program generated meaningful qualitative impact. The story resonated with viewers by illustrating how Parks and Recreation experiences can span generations, creating lasting memories and family traditions.

The initiative also strengthened community relationships, as the featured participant and his family expressed enthusiasm for the project and a willingness to remain involved in future milestone celebrations, including the pool's upcoming 30th anniversary.

Overall, the program demonstrated the power of storytelling to connect citizens to their shared history, reinforce community identity, and celebrate the enduring impact of public recreation services.

## Frog Pond Video Link and Stats

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/179te2M595/>

### Facebook Post Text:

We're celebrating Montgomery County Parks and Recreation's 50th anniversary! Paul King was the first kid to enjoy the iconic frog 🐸 slide in 1996! 💧 Now, as a parent, he continues having fun at the pool with his sons.

Did you know? In 1979, the new L-shaped 🏊‍♂️ swimming pool made quite a splash. When it needed significant repair in 1994, the pool closed for 2 seasons and re-opened as the Frog Pond.

Reminder: this time of year, the Frog Pond Swimming Pool is open on Saturdays and Sundays only and will close for the season on Labor Day.

#MCP50

### Overview

📈 This post received more views compared to your recent Facebook posts.

Views 📈 5,233	Reach 📈 4,307	3-second views 📈 2,137	1-minute views 📈 246	Watch time 📈 13h 48m	Reactions, comments 📈 237
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From followers: 100%  
From non-followers: 0%

Viewers 📈  
3,998

### Feed preview

Montgomery County, VA  
Published by Montgomery Virginia · August 21 ·

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Boost