

Parks & Recreation

Overview of me

- Coordinate the Recreation Access Funding program
- Assist with inclusion training/staff hiring in recreation programming
- Assist with running the Ready for Rec program (specialized program from children and youth with disabilities).
- Just beginning to work with Parks and other areas outside of recreation programming to assist with meeting (or exceeding) the provincial accessibility requirements.

Successes

Parks and Playgrounds

- Completed accessibility audits on 3 parks in HRM. Results will help to guide future projects.
- Several other outdoor recreation projects included accessible features
 - Pathways
 - Accessible bleachers
 - Playground components

Recreation Programming

Staffing

- Increased number of summer inclusion support staff
- Trained more day camp staff to work as inclusion staff on an as needed basis

Training

- Offered 5 inclusion trainings between January and May to program staff through a partnership with Learningo
- Offered inclusion training for all summer staff

Reducing Barriers to access

- Increased the capacity of the equipment loan program with a new GRIT chair
- Able to provide support to 170 children in HRM summer camps
- Had 11 youth attend a youth summer camp for youth with disabilities
- Provided 1:1 support to over 25 children in Fall/Winter/Spring programming.
- Provided inclusion swimming lessons to over 50 children.
- Dartmouth North Community Centre: Provided a ramp for easy access into the rink at the Gray Arena for a participant in a wheelchair for their roller skating.
- Powerhouse (youth specific program) expanded their use of sensory toys and equipment to help everyone participant fully. They worked directly with the youth on ways to support

youth that meets their needs. They also offered free programming that included access to food (Spaghetti Saturdays).

Barriers to access programs

- Affordable Access Program: municipality spent over \$700,00 on recreation funding access discounts in 2022/2023
- Free swimming lessons on beaches
- Over 500 Free Programs were attended in recreation programming
 - 37% of programs were for Youth Leadership
 - 94% of programs were for Child/Youth & Families

Partnership programs

- Easter seals partnership at LeBrun BMO (learn to sledge) and St. Andrews (learn to wheel)
- Lakeshore curling club partnership at Sackville Sports Stadium (wheelchair/stick curling)
- Power House Youth Centre and Youth Counsellor started to work with the Youth Project to coordinate monthly supports and education for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth attending drop-in programming.
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Challenges

Parks and Playground

- Developing a strategy to audit all outdoor municipal parks and playground to get a baseline of accessibility features- due the amount of Parks in HRM
- Sharing information with the public about the features in each park/playground
- Topography of Parks often make accessible grades difficult to construct
- Training/expertise of staff in accessible build environment

Recreation Programming

Staffing

- Ensuring that we hire enough staff with the proper training/education
- Year around inclusion staff (not enough hours to keep staff on consistent basis for non-aquatic programs)

Training

- Working on changing the training program to ensure that our staff are properly trained to understand how best to support participants.

Updates

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Report

- Approved by Council and a working group formed in 2024 to begin the pilot program.