The mission of Manatee County Parks and Recreation Department is to create lifelong memories for you by offering diverse leisure activities in a safe and beautiful environment that will enhance your quality of life in Manatee County.
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Welcome to our Team

The purpose of the Manatee County Parks and Recreation Volunteer Manual is to provide volunteers (YOU!) with a guide to the Manatee County Parks and Recreation Volunteer Program.

We also want to take this time to say thank you for volunteering. We know that you are engaged in this activity to make a difference and to ensure that we preserve our parks and provide recreational programs to all our residents. Thank you for the assistance you provide.

It Starts In Parks…
All About Manatee’s Parks.......

The Manatee County Parks and Recreation Department recognizes the importance of improving the quality of life through parks and recreation services. With 43 parks, 2 golf courses, and 2.6 miles of beaches to choose from, we have something to offer everyone. Other amenities include, dog parks, boat ramps, tennis and racquetball courts, playgrounds, skate parks, multi-use trails, driving ranges, splash parks, swimming, athletic fields, and horseshoe courts. We want everyone that uses our parks to choose to do what they wish, take time to unwind, enjoy their family, and be active. Manatee County provides some of the best recreational activities and facilities in the state. We want everyone to take advantage of them. We are dedicated to providing leisure and recreational opportunities that contribute to the health and well-being of the entire community.

The Athletics Division offers a variety of athletic opportunities to enrich the lives of both youth and adults alike. The full court gymnasium is home to both drop-in play, as well as home to several of our athletic leagues. Drop-in activities include: basketball, volleyball, bean bag toss, and table tennis. The Athletics Division offers a basketball league for youth ages 5 through 17 years old, and 4-on-4 flag football, 7-on-7 flag football, co-ed kickball, open softball, and co-ed softball for adults.

In addition the Athletics staff also maintains and operates a fitness center that includes cardiovascular and strength training machines, as well as a full range of free weights; manages 66 athletic fields which can be rented out for any of your practices, games, camps, clinics, or tournament needs, and serves as the county liaison to several youth and adult sports organizations in Manatee County to facilitate the coordination of practices, games, tournaments, clinics, and camps for lacrosse, baseball, soccer, softball, or football.

The Aquatic’s Division consists of three facilities. One located at each of the following parks: G.T. Bray Park, East Bradenton Park, and Pride Park.

The G.T. Bray Aquatic Center has a heated outdoor 50 m pool, opened year round, with an adjacent diving well and a splash park that is opened during the warmer months. We offer swimming lessons, pool rentals, and recreational swimming for all ages.

The East Bradenton Aquatic Center is opened seasonally and has a recreation swimming pool, a kiddie pool and a splash park. This pool is available to rent for private parties and offers swimming lessons during the summer months.

The Pride Splash Park is the newest splash park addition to the Aquatics Division. You are guaranteed to get wet at this facility as you splash through the silly serpent, one of the two water cannons, and dodge tumble buckets. This splash park is approximately 5,000 square feet.

The Youth Camps Division offers an After School Program as well as a Summer Camp Program. The After School program has been offered for more than twenty (20) years and provides structured activities for ages five (5) to fourteen (14) years old. Participants are
transported from fourteen (14) area schools and participate in swimming, sports, games, arts, crafts, movies, special events, gym sports, and homework assistance.

During the summer, two camps are offered that include Adventure Camp and Summer Blast Camp at Lakewood Ranch and G.T. Bray. **Adventure Camp** is offered for four (4) weeks and it is the perfect summer experience for children ages 10 through 15 years old. Participants meet daily at either departure site and embark on a variety of exciting adventures and field trips to places such as Disney Quest, Adventure Island, Magic Kingdom, Blizzard Beach, Fun Spot, Universal Orlando, and Islands of Adventure. Other adventures include canoeing, skating baseball games, beaches and other cool stuff!

The **Summer Blast Camp** is a structured recreational day camp for children ages 5 to 14. Your child will have the opportunity to enjoy a variety of exciting games and activities such as swimming, cooperative sports, arts and crafts, special events, movies and fun-filled field trips such as Chuck E. Cheese, Florida Wheels, Adventure Island, and camp carnivals.

The **C.V. Walton Racquet Center**, which serves 45,000 people annually, is located within G.T. Bray Park. The center is named for one of the original benefactors to the facility, C.V. Walton. Out of an appreciation for the sport of tennis, C.V. Walton donated the funds to build the first six clay courts. Today, the racquet center offers plentiful opportunities to come out and play tennis and racquetball with its eight Har-Tru clay courts, eight hard courts, eight racquetball courts, and a practice wall. The facility hosts in-house leagues as well as USTA, Tri City, and SCSMTL leagues which encourage people to play on a consistent basis. Participants of the racquet center can take advantage of drop-in tennis as well as a player’s bank enabling them to always have a network of people to pick up a game.

**Special Events**
There are three (3) signature events that are offered: The Goblin Gathering, A Night before Christmas and the Easter Egg Hunt.

**Pavilion Rentals**
The Manatee County Parks and Recreation Department provides access to 25 pavilions in our parks as well as our beaches. Park users are able to enjoy a family gathering, cookout, birthday party, beach party or just looking for a place to have some fun in a beautiful outdoor setting,

**Volunteering in Manatee’s Parks…..**
A volunteer is a person who performs work for the Manatee County Parks and Recreation Department under a current, signed Volunteer Application and Volunteer Service Agreement, and provides this service free of charge.

The Parks and Recreation Department provides volunteers an opportunity to work in areas such as Grounds Keeping, Beach Clean-Ups, Special Events, Customer Service, Maintenance and Administration. As team members, volunteers assist and provide services that could not be otherwise accomplished. The objective of volunteer service is to expand our ability to provide quality service, professionalism, support, and stewardship.
Responsibilities and General Expectation

- Professionalism is expected. It is essential that volunteers follow the mission of Manatee County Parks and Recreation in providing positive and friendly customer service.

- Manatee County Parks and Recreation welcomes and encourages all ages to participate in a variety of volunteer opportunities. Youth volunteers under the age of 18 must obtain parental permission before volunteering.

- Volunteer work hours, duties and responsibilities will be clearly communicated by the Manatee County Parks and Recreation staff. It is important that as a volunteer, you arrive on the days and times agreed. If you cannot arrive at the scheduled time, you need to call in advance so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Customer Service Expectations

- Respect every customer in an effort to exceed their expectations
- Provide customers with comfort, understanding and satisfaction
- Let customers know you are approachable
- Ask a Customer, “How can I help you?”
- SMILE
- Use the customer’s last name (unless the customer indicates otherwise)
- Maintain eye contact with the customer
- Report Unsafe Conditions to Recreation Supervisor
- Know your Park: events, programs, parking, amenities
- Be eager to serve customers
- Treat customers as you would like to be treated
- Treat every customer as a special individual
- Always empathize with the customer, “I can appreciate how you feel.”
- Show the customer that you’re taking immediate action to find a remedy for their situation
Remember – from the customer’s perspective, the volunteer he or she is talking to is the organization

Customer Complaint Guidelines

- Listen to the entire complaint without interrupting
- If the customer is angry do not get angry.
- Clarify the complaint
- Respond in a positive, helpful way
- Solve the problem if you can. If you can’t, contact the Recreation Supervisor and stay with the customer until the Supervisor arrives. **Do not send the customer to the supervisor**

Remember – Customers expect pleasantness and courtesy when they deal with you, but they also expect results

Annual Volunteer Recognition
Manatee County recognizes its volunteers annually, i.e. tickets to a Ray’s game. Details will be provided to volunteers well in advance of the event.

Volunteer Time Records
Every volunteer will be required to complete a Volunteer Time Record on a monthly basis. Accounting for volunteer contributed time helps the Parks and Recreation Department determine personnel costs for maintaining parks and recreation programs.

Uniform Standards for Volunteers
Volunteers working a special event will be provided with a T-shirt to be worn with trousers or shorts during the event. At other times, neat casual attire is required. When a volunteer is working every week for a period of time, they will be provided with a uniform T-shirt and nameplate.

Volunteer Background Checks
Background checks will be conducted on individual volunteers participating in athletic activities, administrative functions and working with children. Background checks will not be conducted on group volunteers who include those that volunteer for a few hours for a special event of park/beach cleanup.

Training
When a volunteer comes on board, they will be trained in the responsibilities of the job.