



# 2021 Annual Report

## Creating Community Connections

### Mission Statement

The Liberty Parks & Rec Department seeks to **“Create Community Connections.”** Our department is powered by a team of dedicated professionals who are committed to community impact, improvement, and innovation. We believe that creating community connections by providing the highest quality parks, programs, services, and facilities is essential to a prosperous and healthy community.

The Park Board’s vision is for Liberty to be a Destination – Liberty Parks and Recreation desires to be a key player in the creation of a destination community that retains current and attracts new residents, businesses, and visitors to Liberty.

### Administration Division

*Department Overview*

### Services

#### Administration

- The **Administration Division** provides management support to the Parks Division (comprised of Parks and Natural Resources and Capitol Federal Sports Complex) and Recreation Division (comprised of all program areas, Liberty Community Center, and Community Services divisions). This division is responsible for: developing and managing the budget; increasing public input and awareness of Parks and Recreation; implementing the development of the Department's Parks and Open Space Master Plan; and working closely with the Parks and Recreation Board, City Council, Parks and Recreation Foundation Board, Tree Board, and the Cemetery Advisory Committee. Staff in the Administration Division attends annual training on a local, state and/or national level; administer the Cooperative Use Agreement with Liberty Public Schools; solicit partnerships, grants, and sponsorships; produce community-wide special events, and administer special projects.

### Parks & Natural Resources

- The **Parks & Natural Resources Division** maintains and improves facilities and grounds for all parks and trails, the Liberty Community Center, Capitol Federal Sports Complex, Frank Hughes Library, and City cemeteries; oversees the operation of multi-use softball/baseball fields, soccer fields, practice spaces, and concession stands; mows several acres of green space and assists with citywide snow removal; administers a citywide beautification program with flowerbeds in medians, bump-outs, roundabouts, and parks; coordinates planning for park and trail enhancement and expansion; works with Planning and Development to approve park dedications and landscaping plans for new developments; and coordinates a community forestry program, working closely with Tree Board and Heartland Tree Alliance to promote tree planting and maintenance, as well as planting, care, and removal of public trees.

## Recreation

- The **Recreation Division** is comprised of programs, facility and membership services, and community services. This division is responsible for designing, coordinating, and implementing a comprehensive public recreation program for the community. Monitoring trends in the community, in local participation, and in field of recreation are essential tasks for this division which offers a wide array of recreational and competitive programming at the Capitol Federal Sports Complex and Liberty area sports fields, Liberty Community Center, and Liberty Public Schools. The Division provides adult and youth leagues for teams and individuals, aerobics and fitness classes, a variety of aquatics programs, and instructional classes year-round for individuals of all ages and abilities. This Division also hosts multiple state and national tournaments each year as well as a variety of other tournaments and community special events.
- The **Liberty Community Center** provides the community with a one-stop shop for healthy and active living, housing a fitness center, natatorium, basketball court, and fitness facilities for membership use. This facility also provides citizens with opportunities to enrich their cultural experiences through the Liberty Community Center Performing Arts Theatre. The Community Center hosts the Liberty Silver Center weekdays from 9am to 2pm. Various facilities such as meeting rooms, theater, pools, and basketball court can be rented from the Liberty Community Center, offering the community venues for special events as well as generating revenue to support the overall function of the Liberty Community Center.
- The **Community Services Division**, although funded through the general fund, is also included in the Recreation Division. The Community Services division exists to enhance the quality of life for Liberty's senior adults and physically challenged citizens by providing transportation, home delivered meals, and programming which may enhance their spiritual, intellectual, physical, and social well-being.
- Services provided through the **Community Services Division** include:
  - **Administration**
    - This division provides administrative support to the Liberty Community Christmas Tree Commission which provides food and gifts for the disadvantaged and senior population of the community at the holidays. This division also provides administrative support to Meals on Wheels, a program that provides a hot and nutritious meal and daily personal contact to Liberty residents. This organization is governed by a Board of Directors, independent of the City of Liberty. This division also develops programming for the 50+ population and administers the department's volunteer program.
  - **Access Transportation Services**
    - The Access Transportation Services Division provides transportation for Liberty citizens aged 60+ as well as physically challenged adults.
  - **Silver Center**
    - The Liberty Silver Senior Center enhances the quality of life for Liberty's senior adults and physically challenged citizens by providing nutritional meals and a variety of activities for adults aged 60+.

## Administration Division

### The Team

BJ Staab, Parks & Rec Department Director

DK Taylor, Assistant Director – Recreation

Tom Garland, Assistant Director – Parks

Mallory Brown – Special Projects (arrived February; departed November 2021)

Evan Cloepfil, Recreation Coordinator – Marketing & Special Events

### Projects and Community Engagement

The Administration Team hosted the Park Board Retreat at the end of April. The retreat discussion included a celebration of projects and hard work over the last five years and planning for the future of Liberty Parks and Recreation.

The LPR Admin worked with David Stark of Scout Troop 374 and Alex Leeds (wife of Cameron) to complete Cameron's Trail of Trees. This amazing project is located in Stocksdale park along the trail. The project was dedicated in memory of Liberty Parks and Recreation's staff Cameron Leeds. Cameron was an Eagle Scout, an arborist and passionate about tree dedication; this project was a perfect fit for our park system and memorial to Cameron. David Stark worked very hard with all parties to bring this to fruition. He created a tree identification program along the paved trails at Stocksdale. When walking along the trails look for the QR codes on the trees.

The Parks and Recreation administration staff along with Mr. Dick Horton presented the Sports Feasibility report to City Council in July. The City Council agreed with the findings and recommendations within the report.

Parks staff helped plant corn, beans, melons, and pumpkins at the Ruth Moore Community Garden. Parks Maintenance staff also spread mulch around the fruit trees in the orchard.

Two sculptures currently located around the historic square were relocated to our parks. The Prairie Ship sculpture was moved to Stocksdale Park along the paved walking trail. The Tangerine Daydream sculpture was moved to Bennett Park near the northwest corner of Clayview Drive and Spruce Street.

The Liberty Parks and Recreation staff was involved in preparing and facilitating the Clay County African American Legacy, Inc. memorial ground breaking at the Fairview and New Hope Cemetery along with the Juneteenth celebration at Ruth Moore Park.

In November, the Department held a big celebration with the grand opening of City Park. The grand opening not only celebrated City Park, but also highlighted all the other Use Tax projects.

In December, the Parks staff installed three Feral Giraffes sculptures in Ruth Moore Park, donated by Mr. John Canuteson in memory of his son.

### Scout Projects

- The Northwyck bridge was completed as part of an Eagle Scout Project. This project had many moving parts and coordination between multiple partners. This is a very nice addition to Northwyck Park.
- A scout installed a GaGa ball pit at Jefferson/Cates Creek Park.
- A gravel parking lot was installed at Arthur's Hill Park.

## Liberty Parks & Rec Foundation

- Greg, Beth, and Laura Crowley of Crowley Furniture and Mattress served as the LPRF annual campaign chairs. The annual campaign kickoff was held on Wednesday, June 2, 2021, at the Capitol Federal Sports Complex.
- The highly successful annual golf tournament, under the supervision of Evan Cloepfil and Patrick Flora, was held on Friday, August 13, at Winterstone Golf Course, and raised \$11,723 for youth and family scholarships.
- The 2021 scholarship campaign raised \$72,753. This fundraising, in conjunction with the annual golf tournament, raised a total of \$84, 496.
- Provided scholarship assistance to 305 individuals for a total of \$31,328.25.
- As a part of the 2019 fundraising for implementation in 2020, the Foundation selected to support the purchase and installation of a We-Go-Round inclusive play piece at the new City Park Inclusive Play Park, installed in 2021 (a delay due to COVID19).

## Parks & Natural Resources Division

### The Team:

Nick Vassmer, Parks Manager  
Tom Shadid, Parks Crew Manager  
Brett Teel, Sports Complex Crew Manager  
Joel Falcone, Construction Crew Chief  
Devin Skillman, Horticulturist  
Curtis Renno, Mechanic  
Bryan Young, Parks Maintenance II  
Tiara Bovard, Parks Maintenance I  
Andrew Ford, Parks Maintenance I  
Sarah Lawson, Landscape Maintenance  
Tyler Clayborn, Athletic Fields Groundskeeper  
Vacancy, Athletic Fields Groundskeeper  
Vacancy, Parks Maintenance I

### Projects Completed (Parks)

- Installation of new historical markers at Ruth Moore Park
- Installation of new art sculptures of Feral Giraffes at Ruth Moore Park
- Reconstructed area for community garden adding new water line at Ruth Moore Park
- Completed new sidewalk at Clay Ridge Park (Use Tax)
- Installed three new memorial benches
- Reorganized two disc golf holes to better match the original design
- Repaired marble base for China Slaughter reading park
- Removed City Park maintenance building foundation
- Completed installation of new privacy fence for storage area at City Park
- Built the lean-to on Parks maintenance building
- Installed electrical line for City Park Restroom (Use Tax)
- Installed base rock for City Park parking lot (Use Tax)
- Final grade at City Park (Use Tax)
- Planted 30 trees at City Park
- Added new play piece to Northwyck Park (Use Tax)
- Added new pedestrian bridge to Northwyck Park (Scout Project)
- Completed City Park Renovation adding new shelters, playground, spray ground, and parking lots (Use Tax)
- New parking area for Arthurs Hill Park (Scout Project)
- New playground at Ruth Moore Park (Use Tax)

- Sports Complex team seeded City Park

## Projects Completed (Sports Complex)

- Installed a new irrigation zone on Memorial Field (baseball field) Infield Arc
- Parks assisted sports complex staff with installation of a 12' x 26' concrete pad to aid recreation deliveries; replaced door
- Painted recreation barn
- Replacement of 200' of privacy fence around shop yard
- Renovated Memorial Field bullpens with clay donated by KC Royals
- Converted 4-plex mulch beds to synthetic turf
- Removed dying trees from soccer area
- Renovated 4-plex common area irrigation system; first time its worked in five years
- Replaced seven limestone boulders that border property line on Old 210
- Painted sections of concession building exterior
- Replaced windows in 5-plex concessions stand
- Installation of Soccer Complex diagram and permanent field signs
- Removal of mulch beds behind dugouts in 4-plex and installed asphalt
- Seeded 4-plex overflow parking
- Installed new home plates on all fields
- Top-dressed all wear areas on turf fields with crumb rubber

## Projects Completed (Community-wide)

- Arts Commission – set sculptures
- Assisted with Hometown Holidays
- Christmas tree chipping
- Frank Hughes grounds maintenance
- Moved three art sculptures to parks and helped uninstall 11 sculptures.
- Installed five new sculptures around the downtown square
- Helped with Liberty Fest

## Parks & Natural Resources by the numbers

- 2000 hours of mowing in 13 parks April through October
- 3000 hours maintaining trees
- 100 planter beds maintained
- 16 miles of trails (multiuse and primitive)
- 517 acres of parkland
- 130 Street Trees Planted funded by the Tree Fund

## Recreation Division

### Sports Programming

#### The Team:

Brittany Johnston, Recreation Manager  
 Paula Ruf, Recreation Coordinator  
 Jessica Rawie, Recreation Coordinator

- Total Youth Participants: 4,484
- Total Volunteer Coaches: 419
- Total Annual Hours Volunteered: 5,866
- Total Number of Hours Worked (non-full time employees) 7,467

- Total Sports Complex Facility Contacts: 203,792
- Total Adult Participants: 1,850
- Total Youth Revenue: \$426,198
- Total Adult Revenue: \$130,950
- Partnered with KC Chiefs for Flag Football
- Partnered with Sporting KC for Soccer
- Record Number of Adult Softball Teams: 171 Teams
- Record Number of Youth Rec Basketball Participants: 820
- First Ever Baseball Camp: 70 participants
- Total Facility Rentals Revenue: \$133,907
- Total Concessions Revenue: \$280,351
- Total Number of Tournament Teams: 1,100
- Total Number of Winter Adult Softball Tournaments: 8
- Total Number of Soccer Tournaments: 3
- Record Number of Sponsorships at the Sports Complex
- Hosted William Jewell Softball/Baseball games and practices
- Hosted Liberty Public Schools Baseball/Softball Tryouts and games/practices
- Hosted Liberty Public Schools Fall Jamboree Tournament for Baseball/Softball

## Health & Wellness Division

### The Team:

Heather Borchardt, Recreation Manager

Victoria Jackson/Kathleen Villaneuva, Recreation Coordinator

Team of great part time instructors, trainers and wellness coaches

- The NRPA Remote Delivery Development grant of \$11,000 allowed staff to develop two remote options of Active Living Every Day. These programs were held in both a virtual platform and a telephonic program. Staff converted the current evidence –based curriculum by making modifications to allow delivery on remote platforms with careful attention to program fidelity by working directly with the program developers Human Kinetics and the NRPA. This grant funded instructor fees for two additional instructors, all program materials and marketing as well as staff compensation for time spent developing program. Part of the program was highlighted in NRPA Magazine [Parks & Rec: A Vital Community Based Solution to Support Healthy Aging](#) and Liberty Parks and Recreation's (LPR) best modifications will be included in the best practices guide still in development.
- LPR was awarded the AmeriCorps Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) grant for \$75,000 to establish a Clay County branch of their RSVP program. After months of compliance training this program kicked off April 1 and will expand the capacity of the current volunteer programs within LPR. The Health & Wellness, Community Services and Community Engagement staff is the program director and managers of this program. Staff will utilize MOW volunteers as well as Scout projects and Evidence Based Programs volunteers. Achieving target outcomes and outputs provides LPR additional funds for the next three years. Volunteer totals are included in the Community Services portion of this report. In 2021 staff met all initial goals for outcomes.
- Evidence in the community health action report from Clay County Health Department noted services for wellness options for seniors was an area for improvement in 2018; to meet this need LPR has developed multiple partners for seven evidence–based programs LPR currently offers. Once the stay at home orders happened staff had to quickly pivot all programming to virtual or with social distancing in mind. To adjust to these new normal standards 2021 continued to be a year of innovation in all aspects Health & Wellness and Evidence-based Programming (EBPs). All in-person EBP workshops were suspended through July and offered

virtually instead. Then outside options were available through these evidence-based and scientifically proven workshops to help older adults manage chronic conditions, age gracefully and maintain active and fulfilling lives. They are also funded in part by grants from MARC and LCHAT. Revenue from these reimbursements is \$7,862.71. This year staff launched a brand and webpage specifically developed for EBP. You can see that here » [Evidence-Based Programs](#).

- This year staff added Healthy Eating Every Day to the catalog of evidence-based programs. The pilot went well with 25 participants enrolled with an 80% completion rate. Staff is in the process of getting the program approved for the MA4 grant funding through MARC but programs are currently supported with the RSVP grant.
- The Health & Wellness policies and practices for virtual programming developed during COVID-19 became in high demand and staff was asked to collaborate with MARC, NCOA and MA4 to create the Missouri Virtual Workshop Checklist with best practices in virtual programming available here» [MO virtual program checklist](#). In May staff was asked to present findings and best practices at the Age Positive Conference. A recording of the presentation **Getting Back Together: CBOs working together to improve the health and well-being of our community** is available here » [Age Positive Presentation](#)
- Expanded the corporate wellness program at Liberty at Shoal Creek back in person while following CDC guidelines and now also have Nutrition presentations monthly for their residents. Revenue from 2021 Corporate Wellness programs is \$17,030.
- Whereas LPR has returned to classes in person the LPR Health & Wellness Facebook Group has continued to be a resource for many who have not been able to return to in person classes. This group allows members access to the resources taped in 2020. LPR currently has 260 members who are taking advantage of the 200 recorded classes. Staff also uses this group to market programs and sends updates about cancellations.
- Created, programmed and implemented a social distance safe version of the Speed and Agility (SAG) programs for youth sports conditioning. This program focused on helping young athletes maintain all around conditioning to be sports ready while taking necessary precautions for physical distancing.
- Personal training sales in 2021 were up \$10,000 over 2020 with total sales of \$26,532.06. Staff offered package sales four times throughout the year and had a tremendous improvement of retention. Staff has grown the number of Personal Trainer staff to meet these demands.
- Partnered with City of Liberty to provide employee wellness initiatives yielding 11 individual monthly wellness programs; participation in these programs has awarded the COL staff more than 228.5 vacation days that is twice as many as last year. These programs have grown from less than 8% of employees participating in 2017 our first year to more than 36% in 2021. The City of Liberty My Impact Incentive Employee Wellness programs are highlighted by Midwest Public Risk and all program information is available here » [Employee Wellness Website](#).
- Staff held board role and partnered with LCHAT to create a new online community platform that highlights three objectives of improved nutrition, increased physical activity and smoking cessation and the local businesses that support these initiatives.
- Staff held board role in partnership with Liberty Alliance for Youth (LAFY) to plan and educate parents/personnel on the harms of drug use and learn how to support mental health in the youth.

- Health and Wellness current programs:
  - a. LCC Classes
    - i. 55+ classes = 9/week
    - ii. Water classes = 21/week
    - iii. Cardio classes = 3/week
    - iv. Strength and Conditioning classes = 20/week
    - v. Mind/Body classes = 13/week
    - vi. Total number of class participants= 27,763
  - b. Evidence –based classes = 8 products
    - i. Active Living Every Day
    - ii. Aging Mastery Program
    - iii. Chronic Pain Self- Management Program
    - iv. Chronic Disease Self- Management Program
    - v. Diabetes Self- Management Program
    - vi. Fit and Strong!
    - vii. Walk With Ease
    - viii. Healthy Eating Every Day

*“The LCC has been a great resource for me for many years. I have used the facility, classes and evidence-based programs and believe all have helped me improve my health and mood, especially during the COVID pandemic. It is a great value and the staff have worked to maximize their resources in my opinion.” -Terry Buford*

*“I lost 7 pounds during HEED! I have more energy and stamina. My blood pressure has decreased by 20 points.” – Post survey for Healthy Eating Every Day*

## Aquatics Division

### The Team:

Charles Anderson, Recreation Manager - Aquatics  
 Hillary Schebo, Recreation Coordinator – Aquatics

- **Liberty Storm Swim Team** restructured its program format from three hours of morning practice with four groups of participants into 3 hours 45 minutes with five groups of participants. This allowed for better program spacing between participants and more individualized attention from the coaches. Late afternoon and evening practices still operated at their normal times, however, participation levels were decreased by almost 30% for similar reasons. Although programming was able to operate compared to summer 2020, participation levels suffered a significant 23% decrease from past years. As a result, a total of 163 participants were registered in 2021. (Prior to COVID, a total of 211 participants were registered in 2019.)
- **Storm Maintenance.** This program proved extremely successful during 2020 as an alternative program offering created as a result of COVID-19 for social distancing during the absence of Liberty Storm Swim Team. Unfortunately, program space did not allow for Storm Maintenance in 2021 once it was determined the league was returning for the summer season. This program concept may lead to future options if space allows or becomes readily available.
- **Intro to Swim Team** This program proved extremely successful during 2020 as an alternative program offering created as a result of COVID-19 for social distancing during the absence of Liberty Storm Swim Team. Unfortunately, program space did not allow for Intro to Swim Team in 2021 once it was determined the league was returning for the summer season. This program concept may lead to future options if space allows or becomes readily available.
- **Competitive Swim Programs** experienced several challenges during spring 2021. Program numbers operated at 50% capacity during January – March 2021 as a result of COVID-19 to allow for social distancing. Additionally, the main indoor pool heater failed on January 11, 2021 after 29 years of operation. As a result, the main indoor pool was not able to maintain



heat and programs were canceled until the end of February. As a result, Session (I) of Swim Team Basics and Swim Team Essential programs suffered major participation losses. Other competitive programs including Preseason Swim Team, Swim Team Competitive Prep, Stroke Clinic, Starts & Turns, Session (2-3) of Swim Team Basics, and Session (2-3) Swim Team Essentials did operate as scheduled with only slightly reduced class sizes. As a result, 291 participants were registered in 2021 vs. 392 swim participants in 2019. A total of 32 competitive swim programs were offered in 2021. (Staff utilizes 2019 participation levels as a bench mark because they are a better representation of programming prior to COVID-19.)

- **Group Swim Lessons** experienced only a slight challenge during spring 2021. Program numbers operated at 50% capacity during January – March 2021 as a result of COVID-19 to allow for social distancing. As a result, only 1174 participants were registered in 2021 vs. 1184 in 2019. Our progressive swim programs consist of Aqua Tot, Parent Tot, Novice, Advanced Novice, Intermediate, and Developmental Stroke. (Staff utilizes 2019 participation levels as a bench mark because they are a better representation of programming prior to COVID-19.)
- **Ellis & Associates Lifeguard Certification** experienced minimal impact from an employer/employee standpoint for the Liberty Community Center. A total of 66 participants, (36 original and 30 recertification), were certified in 2021 compared to 68 in 2019. Unfortunately, Oceans of Fun experienced major challenges in hiring and employing lifeguard staff which resulted in only 26 participants who certified preseason compared to 70 participants in 2019. The Liberty Community Center was fortunate to hire numerous 15-year-old participants who lived in surrounding neighborhoods and seeking their first job. Oceans of Fun continued to struggle during 2021 and ultimately closed the waterpark several days a week throughout the summer plus ended the season several weeks early.
- **Private & Semi Private Swim Lessons** experienced a slight loss due to COVID-19. A total of 716 participants were registered in private lessons and 88 participants in semi-private lessons compared to 822 participants in private lessons in 2019 plus 56 participants in semi-private programs.
- **Splash Camp** (winter break) operated as scheduled in 2021. The COVID-19 omicron variant surfaced in late 2021 which caused staff to reduce participation levels by 70% due to social distancing recommendations. As a result, a total of 30 participants were able to be accommodated daily on December 27, 28, 29, 30 & 31. In 2019, a total of 334 campers attended this program. In 2021, a total of 147 participants attended. Splash Camp is a supervised camp filled with activities including swimming, movies, games, and gym sports from 8:00 am – 4:00 pm.
- **Outdoor Swimming Pools** were open and operated from June 1 – Labor Day without any restrictions. Clay County Public Health Department did not set any guidelines specific for swimming pool venues therefore, the Liberty Community Center swimming pools operated as in years past prior to COVID-19.

## Community Programs:

### The Team:

Casey Gaines, Recreation Manager – Facilities

- Camps –
  - Summer Splash camp (274 registrations)
  - Average 27 children per day
  - Camps were also offered with partners of LPR
    - Playwell Technologies (23 registrations)
    - 4-H Summer Send of Camp (20 registrations)
- ActivStars Martial Arts and Cheerleading held at the Liberty Community Center averaged 108 participants per week offered
  - 4,921 ActivStars Martial Arts and Cheer

- Dog Obedience – 97 registrations
- Fastkick Martial Arts – 31 registrations
- Tippiie Toes Dance – 93 registrations

## Liberty Community Center Facility

### The Team:

Casey Gaines, Recreation Manager – Facility

Laura Bussard, Operations Coordinator – Customer Care Team

Jim Longbrake, Operations Coordinator – Maintenance

Paul Miller, Recreation Coordinator – Theater

Pam Young, Operations Coordinator – Membership Services

Liza Britt, Building Technician

- LCC by the numbers:
  - 4,239 annual average active memberships
  - 151,900 membership visits in 2021
  - 20,582 daily pass visits in 2021
  - As of January 2022, LCC has regained 50% of memberships lost during the pandemic.
- LPAT Highlights:
  - June 2021 - Hosted busiest rental month in LPAT's existence with all but four days reserved, earning approximately triple the average monthly revenue.
  - Designed and established new policy for lobby use and crowd control during LPAT events.
  - Booked event dates and created new relationships with 23 organizations which never used LPAT previously.
- LPAT by the numbers:
  - \$118,513 theater total revenue
  - 168 theater rehearsals
  - 114 theater attractions
  - 1,741 theater hours reserved
  - 46,789 theater estimated attendance (attendance continue to be limited due to COVID-19)
- Facility Rental Highlights:
  - Room Rental Space to hold community blood drives was donated to The Community Blood Center six times in 2021. At each of the blood drives, at least 20 units of blood were collected.
  - Several large events returned to the LCC in 2021 including: The Hillcrest Hope Benefit Thanksgiving Day 5K; The Huntington's Disease Walk, Silent Auction, and Pancake Breakfast; The Midwest Region Red Hat Society BINGO Luncheon; and several additional area company Holiday Gatherings. Events had been postponed in 2020 due to COVID-19.
  - LCC Meeting Rooms continue to serve as an Election Polling Location for Clay County in both General and Municipal Elections.
  - In 2021, the LCC began serving some area companies to host their in-person meetings, to allow for more social distancing than their on-site board/conference rooms. These companies include: Camp Bow Wow, Mid-American Wealth Advisory, and Vintage Estates.
- Facility Rentals by the numbers
  - \$48,200 total revenue
  - 15,000 estimated attendance
- Projects
  - Replaced water fountain with bottle filler in the Wellness Center
  - Replaced the sauna benches and hot tub stairs in the Natatorium.
  - Repaired the lock rod on the outdoor pool gate and installed a self-latching door

closure allowing guests to exit the facility from the outdoor pool deck during the summer months.

- Required VGB updates were made to the Hot Tub.
- Purchase and Installation of a new boiler for the main indoor pool.
- Purchase and installation of locker room HVAC RTU.
- Purchase and installation of Aging Services staff offices HVAC RTU.
- Purchase and installation of copy room and staff office HVAC RTU.
- Purchase and installation of a new operable wall for the LCC Red Room.
- Installation of new carpet squares behind the Welcome Desk.
- Rebuilds of outdoor pool filter and condenser booster pump motors.
- Replaced projection screen in the LCC Red Room.
- Purchase of new octane fitness machine,
- Repairs were made to several exterior doors in the facility including red room, natatorium, blue room and main entry doors.
- Completed annual resurfacing of the gymnasium floor.
- Landscape project was completed the back of the building around the outdoor fitness space.

## Community Services Division

### The Team:

Hailey Kellerstrass, Recreation Manager – Community Services  
Brigitte Thomas, Recreation Coordinator – Silver Center  
Angel Rose, Recreation Coordinator – Transportation  
Terrie Boyle, Full Time Bus Driver  
Curt Wiskirchen, Part Time Bus Driver  
Mike Haley/John Clapsaddle, Part Time Bus Driver  
Pat Thompson, Part Time Bus Driver  
Gina Mclean, Part Time Silver Center Tech  
Christopher Barragan, Part Time Silver Center Tech

### Liberty Silver Center

Liberty was named one of the "top places to retire in 2022" by Money Magazine and the article specifically mentions the great programs and activities at the Liberty Silver Center. You can read the full article here - <https://money.com/best-places-to-retire-2022/>

The Liberty Silver Center has been and will continue to provide a safe, welcoming place for seniors the community. For some of our community seniors, the Silver Center was their only form of socialization and a hot nutritious meal for the day. Being isolated from family and friends is took its toll.

*Rilda Lujan has been coming to the Liberty Silver Center for over 25 years. Like most if not all of our seniors, the shutdown took its toll on her mentally and physically. Rilda had lost at least 10 pounds, her hair was way longer than she ever wore it, and she was depressed. Through well-check phone calls from Gina and a lot of encouraging words from Angel and Terrie (Liberty Access), Rilda came back to the Silver Center. She started slow--working out, eating a healthy lunch, and playing cards. You could see the change, the sparkle came back to her eyes and she was standing taller with her walker plus had a little pep to her step. Walking into the Silver Center and seeing her laughing with friends, singing and dancing in her chair at the birthday celebration, or painting a sunflower in our art class does the heart good!*

During this time we have had seniors lose spouses, loved ones, and friends. We've been able to provide a Grief Workshop group, a Grief Support group, intergenerational interactions with Middle School Choir students, and most importantly a person (our staff) that will listen and care.

The Community Services Department as a whole provides valuable services such as transportation, MOW, senior programs, a friendly ear and so much more. Even though we have to keep our physical distance, our hearts reach more than 6 feet!

### What's Going On

- Wellness Wednesdays—all topics concentrated on different spokes of the Wellness Wheel.
- Natural Grocers held a six-week series on nutrition for our participants.
- Kansas City Medicine Cabinet conducted sight and hearing tests at our center; seniors were able to receive hearing aids and/or glasses at little-to-no cost.
- Evidence-Based classes included: Active Living Every Day, Aging Mastery Program (AMP), and Walk With Ease.
- We were thankful to partner with a new program Show Me Hope- Missouri's Crisis Program.
- The Liberty Silver Center started a Pen Pal program with Liberty Middle School students. An interview with Kellie from the Tribune was featured in the March 4, 2021 edition of the Liberty Tribune.
- Started two new classes: Beginners Line Dance with Donna and Learn to Play Bridge with Emily. These senior led classes are held weekly.

Our seniors considered the Silver Center a haven, a place of safety and security. A place to go to converse and make friends, fellowship, get a healthy lunch, work out, learn about the latest scams. But most importantly, take back some control of their lives that they lost during the COVIC shut-down.

## Liberty Access Bus

A total of 126 Liberty residents benefited from the Liberty Access Bus service in 2021. Of those 126 riders, 35 were new to our program. We provided 2,237 essential one-way trips, 923 essential one-way lift trips and 1,735 one-way trips to Senior Center for a grand total of 4,895 total trips. Liberty Access Bus also supports our Meals on Wheels program. Liberty Meals on Wheels delivered 21,047 meals during 2021.

Our skilled drivers drove over 22,345 miles with no accidents. That's enough miles to travel to Australia, back to the USA, then back to Australia! Our oldest rider is 94 and has ridden the Liberty Access bus for over 20 years. One client rode the bus 376 times in 2021 to the Silver Center, doctors' offices and grocery store. We traveled to and from Davita Dialysis 498 times.

Liberty Access was able to assist Operation Safe by transporting seniors from Excelsior Springs to the vaccine clinic in NKC. Liberty Community Services, along with Heart to Heart, hosted two vaccine clinics and provide transportation for those who needed it. When the booster shots became available we offered help to anyone needing assistance with signing up online.

Liberty Access distributed and collected our 2021 survey for Clay County Senior Services. We had a total of 51 responses this year and enjoyed reading a lot of positive comments from our seniors. One hundred percent of riders surveyed believe the drivers and dispatcher are professional and courteous. Of those who completed the survey, 100% also believe the buses are clean and well maintained. Everyone answered "YES" to the questions "would you recommend Liberty Access to family and friends?" Without Liberty Access, 86% of our riders would find it difficult to find transportation.

- Rosemary T. – “Have enjoyed being a part of the offers provided by the Liberty Silver Center. Everyone I've met has become a new friend- they are like a new family members. Thankful beyond words to be a part.”
- Glenda C. – “Wonderful friendly service, always on time, and I love it!”
- Beverly B. – “Transportation is perfect. We are lucky to have it. The buses saved my life.”
- Edna T. – “Perfect, perfect. It costs an arm and a leg for other transportation. Everyone is courteous and very kind to me.”

## Sustainability Efforts

- Liberty Access was awarded \$4,366.30 from The Missouri Elderly & Handicapped Transportation Assistance Program (MEHTAP) for the fiscal state year of 2022. The grant is designed to offset some of the cost for operating, vehicle maintenance, and insurance expenses for the Access Bus program so many of our seniors rely on. The program will pay per ride of both elderly and disabled persons who qualify to use the bus service for any trip we are able to provide.
- During 2020, Liberty Access applied and was approved for \$48,944 through the federal 5310 program. This money will be used to replace our 2010 Ford bus. We hope to have the bus in the Fall of 2022.
- MARC reimburses Liberty Access \$5.00 per one-way trip to and from the Silver Center. In 2021, the amount came to a total of \$8,675.00.
- Our Transportation Coordinator will continue to attend MAC (Mobile Advisory Committee) meetings to learn of new funding opportunities.
- Our new part time hire, John, is turning out to be an awesome member of the team. He volunteered to change a turn signal even though it entailed taking the whole headlamp assembly apart and crawling under the bus in hot weather conditions. He also reattached the exhaust when one of the brackets broke.
- The City of Liberty's Public Works Department will replace the springs on one of our busses in early 2022.
- Regular maintenance is key. Earlier this year our full time bus driver asked for the brakes to be checked. After taking it to the shop it was determined both the front and rear brakes needed replaced for a total cost of \$826.45. A few years ago a different brake replacement cost over \$1,500

## Volunteers

In April 2021, Liberty Parks & Rec (LPR) received an AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP grant from the AmeriCorps federal agency to support seventy-five RSVP volunteers serving in Clay County. The grant will allow LPR volunteers aged 55+ to become RSVP Volunteers.

With this funding, LPR will leverage the skills and experience of seniors in Clay County to support Meals on Wheels, Evidence-Based Wellness Programs, Environmental Stewardship projects and more. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers have an opportunity to serve their community in a wide range of projects designed to insure healthy futures for the citizens of the Liberty community.

AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers stay healthy and active through service, improving their own lives as they improve the lives of others. A growing body of research affirms the numerous mental and physical health benefits of volunteerism, including lower mortality rates, decreased rates of depression, and increased strength and energy.

Today, AmeriCorps Seniors engages approximately 195,000 older Americans in service at 29,800 locations across the United States and territories through its Foster Grandparent, Senior Companion, and RSVP programs. Established in 1971, RSVP engages Americans age 55 and older in service, responding to our nation's most pressing challenges.

### **Volunteer Count**

- RSVP – 52 new volunteers
- Meals on Wheels – 58 new volunteers, 130+ total volunteers
- Liberty Community Christmas Tree – 1,000 volunteers annually

## Meals on Wheels

- 2021 By the Numbers:
  - 21,047 meals delivered
  - 245 days
  - 86 meals per day
  - 63 new recipients
  - 163 total recipients
  - 58 new volunteers
- Fundraising:
  - \$19,451.54– donations from the community
  - \$7,115.00 - grants
  - \$26,566.54 – TOTAL
- The Meals on Wheels Loves Pets Too program served 1,200 lbs of food.
- Two Clean Up Days for our recipients.
- 2021 MOW Recipient Survey Findings
  - 52 responses
  - 96% of recipients enjoy the social interaction with the volunteer drivers
  - 96% of recipients say MOW helps them eat healthier
  - 100% would refer MOW to a friend
  - 100% answered either very happy or somewhat happy with the *MOW program overall*
  - 96% answered either very happy or somewhat happy with the *quality of the food*
  - 92% answered either very happy or somewhat happy with the *variety of food*
  - 92% answered either very happy or somewhat happy with *communication with volunteers*
  - 100% answered either very happy or somewhat happy with *communication with staff*

## Day Trips

- We took one Day Trip towards the end of the year to Union Station to see the Auschwitz Exhibit.

## Community Connections

- The Community Services Manager continues to be involved in the Liberty Sertoma Service Club as the Secretary and President. She also remained on the Age Positive Conference Committee and attended the virtual conference.
- The Silver Center Coordinator attended Clay County Senior Resource Fair.
- The Community Services Division is involved with: Northland Professionals in Aging, Mobility Advisory Committee, Northland Community Services Coalition (NCSC), and the Seniors Falls Prevention Coalition of Clay & Platte County (SFPC).
  
- In early 2021, we teamed up with Heart to Heart International and held a vaccination clinic at the Liberty Community Center. At the same time we helped hundreds of our seniors sign up to receive their COVID-19 vaccine. Transportation was provided for those who needed it.

## Liberty Community Christmas Tree Program

On Saturday, December 11 volunteers delivered three boxes of food (plus milk, eggs, and a frozen chicken) to 110 senior citizens across Liberty. Another three boxes of food (plus milk, eggs and a frozen turkey) were delivered to 350 families. Christmas presents purchased by volunteers using gift cards in the amount of \$60 per child (and in many cases their own money) were

delivered to 880 children. Hundreds of volunteers are called upon to assist in many aspects of the program and we want to thank them for dedicating their time, energy and resources! This year we raised over \$63,000.

**LCCT Words of Appreciation from a 2021 Program Participant-** *“My wife and I are both disabled military veterans who are no strangers to hardships. The pandemic brought us even more challenges when my wife lost her job as a Paramedic and we lost our only source of income. We have weathered most of the storm but some sacrifices were made, specifically, Christmas presents for our children. We are so thankful that the program was able to provide us with relief in the form of food for an actual holiday meal (and additional meals) as well as the gifts donated so that our kids can have a bit of normalcy amongst all of our struggles. Seeing presents under the tree has given all of us a little more hope and we are so thankful for everything.”*

**LCCT Words of Appreciation from a 2021 Program Volunteer-** *“Our six children were so excited to adopt three families this year; nine children in all. They chose children close to their own ages for whom to shop. Shopping was chaotic at first, but overall they had fun and we're proud of their choices. They learned the value of a gift, and all the thought that goes behind buying one. They learned how hard it can be choosing gifts for people they did not know personally, while still wanting to make them happy. Even wrapping was done with extra thought and care to make these gifts special. I think their own gratitude will be all the more this year! My children (ages 5-16) enjoyed delivery day. It left a profound impact on me as a parent; how hard it must be for these families on the receiving end to struggle to provide a Christmas for their family. My kids' eyes were opened to the face of poverty and struggle, and the importance of accepting others and valuing them as people, despite appearance or where they live. Encountering the gratitude of the adults in the homes where we delivered gifts was overwhelming. We met the toddlers we bought gifts for, which made my shoppers excited. It was really a gift to us to bless these families, and filled our hearts all the more with the spirit of Christmas. I really couldn't ask for a better Christmas gift than sharing this project with my family.”*