



Wenham Town Department Profile: Hamilton-Wenham Recreation Department

Department Name: Hamilton-Wenham Recreation Department
Website: www.hwrecreation.com
Department Head: Sean Timmons, Recreation Director
No. of employees (FTE): 1 Full-time and 1 Part-time
General functions: Recreational programming, and playing field and facilities oversight
Contact Number: 978-468-2178
Annual budget: \$106,890

Who are you (past work experience, years of municipal service, time in Wenham, etc.) and what is your department (mission)?

This upcoming July will be my fifth year as Director in Hamilton and Wenham. It will mark my twelfth year in municipal service, as I was formally the Recreation Director for the Town of Wakefield. Our department strives to provide a wide variety of programs designed to improve the quality of life for residents by meeting physical and recreation needs. We promote lifelong lessons through play, education and community-wide events.

What are some of the most common tasks you assist the public with daily?

On a normal day, we are assisting the public with registration or answering programming questions. Our department also issues permits for all the fields and facilities in both towns, so we are in contact communication with all of the local youth sport organizations to ensure that the town fields can be maintained and prepared for our local sport leagues.

What are some of the more rewarding elements of the work your department carries out?

One of my favorite days of the year is our annual Pumpkin Fest event. We work closely with the HW Mothers Club, Community House, Gordon-Conwell Nursery School, Early Childhood Partners and the Hamilton Fire Department to offer an afternoon of pumpkin carving, arts and crafts, music, hayrides, and trick or treating through the downtown stores. It's a wonderful event that continues to grow each year.

During the summer, we see a lot of the same children come back year after year to our Summer Park Program; and watching them "move up the ranks" from camper to C.I.T and eventually to become counselors is something really unique to our department.

What are some common challenges?

Like many local Recreation Departments, we struggle at times with the amount of indoor space that we have to offer our programming, particularly our enrichment programs which can't necessarily operate out of a gym or outdoor playing fields. Community outreach can also be challenging at times. We are in the midst of developing an e-newsletter which we hope will be able to bridge some communication gaps between our department and the public.

In what ways do you work with other town departments daily?

Our Department will work most frequently with both the Hamilton and Wenham Department of Public Works on playing field and facility maintenance. We also work closely with the Library by sharing spaces and coordinating on activities.

What are some achievements made by the department recently?

Our programming has been as busy as ever. Over the last year, we have offered close to 200 programs, clinics, and events, with approximately 3,500 participants. The approval of the new pool facility will be a great benefit to both communities. We are looking forward to offering some new aquatic programming and using the pool as a resource to strengthen and solidify our summer parks program. Even without the pool, we were able to double our participation numbers in our Summer Park Program from the previous year.

Last summer, we teamed up with the Hamilton Wenham Community House for the Two Town Summer Block Party, and our department was instrumental in bringing fireworks to Patton Park, which was a huge success.

What are your goals for the department over the next year?

We will continue to look to offer new and exciting programs to the community. For example, this upcoming summer we will be offering our first ever Youth Police Academy, where children in both communities will be able to familiarize themselves with the local police department.

We've moved to weekly sessions in our Summer Park Program to allow more flexibility for parents and guardians and now offer field trips for participants between the ages of 9 and 12. Some of our weekly field trips include destinations such as Canobie Lake Park, Kimball Farms, Water Country, and the Franklin Park Zoo. All of the costs associated with these field trips are included in the registration fee. For our younger participants we offer "in-house" entertainment ranging from make your own sundaes to a visit from Curious Creatures. We are currently accepting registrations for our Summer Park Program as well as our other activities, which can all be found and registered for on our website, www.hwrecreation.com. Our Department is also focused on offering more program options for adults and teens as we move beyond the upcoming summer.

In addition to offering a wide variety of programs, the Recreation Committee is committed to finding solutions for our shortage in town playing fields. This past Annual Town Meeting, CPA money was approved by both towns for design services to potentially upgrade the High School Athletic Complex. The committee is looking forward to getting that process underway.

What's the best way for the public to give you feedback and to get the assistance they need from you?

Feel free to stop by our offices or contact me directly at 978-468-2178 or email stimmons@hamiltonma.gov.