

Getting Ready For Summer

I spent last week in a retirement community in Lake Wales, FL where I helped my Dad get through chemo treatments. Our family is fighting a battle that I know we share with so many of our Durham neighbors and our thoughts are with you all. The summerlike weather and flowers in bloom in Florida made me think of all the preparation that is underway for our summer enjoyment in Durham.

We are so fortunate that we have dedicated town employees and volunteers that spend a great deal of time getting our park, fields and programs ready for the good weather and all the activities that it brings. Residents of all ages will enjoy some of the improvements and programs being designed for Allyn Brook Park and beyond.

Parents and children will enjoy a new playscape at Allyn Brook Park this summer. The Recreation Committee, led by Kate McLaughlin, has negotiated with resident Wes Lee and his company Childscapes, Inc. to install a playscape that is designed to be fun and physically challenging for our youngsters. The Board of Finance accelerated the funding so that the work can be done before the summer begins; a pleasant surprise for the Recreation Committee. The Public Works Department altered their busy schedule and removed the old swings and prepared the site. They will continue to clean and maintain the park throughout the summer.

Last January, at the joint board and commission meeting, I challenged each department to create a new program or service for our residents. Sherry Hill and the Recreation Department have stepped up to the plate. There are two new additions to the summer recreation schedule. "Teen Nite Under the Stars" will be held at Camp Farnam for youth entering grades 8,9,10 for a camp fire, swimming, food, basketball, music and special events. What a great partnership to use a resource right here in our town. There will also be a Family Movie Night at Allyn Brook Park; like a drive-in movie without the car.

Opening day for Little League is April 29th. Many coaches, parents, contractors, RSD13 personnel and Town of Durham staff have been working to get the baseball and softball fields ready for play. This is an exciting year because lights will be installed at the major boys field. No more games called because of darkness!

Another group of volunteers from the Falcons Football club is working to get the football field ready for August practice. Lights will also be installed there to extend practice schedules into the fall.

Hundreds of children are involved in Little League, Falcons Football, Falcons Cheerleading and summer park and rec programs. Many children will benefit from their experience, but it goes beyond that. Parents, grandparents and siblings will enjoy the games and perhaps forge lifelong friendships with others in the stands or on the sidelines.

So, this summer, come on down to Pickett Lane and Allyn Brook Park, have a hot dog, watch a game or take a walk. We're getting it ready for you!