



## Recreation Committee

Meeting Agenda

February 10, 2026

7:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes
3. Public Comment
4. Lake Katherine Report
5. Parks and Recreation Report
  - a. Recreation Update
  - b. 2025 Annual Report: Parks and Recreation Department
6. New Business
  - a. Motion to approve hiring J&M Displays Fireworks in the amount of \$28,000.00 for the July 3, 2026 Independence Day Celebration.
  
  - b. Motion to approve FP United Landscaping proposal in the amount of \$16,560.00 for spring and fall clean up at parks, the swimming pool, and recreation center. This includes weekly maintenance visits to the Recreation Center and monthly maintenance visits to Orchard Park, Walsh-Westgate Park and bi-weekly for Dream Big park.
7. Old Business
8. Adjournment

### Information Items

- a. Rec. Committee Minutes 12/09/25
- b. Recreation Report January 2025
- c. Fitness Membership Sales Report
- d. Fitness Membership Cancellations
- e. Facility Revenue Report
- f. Fitness Center Report
- g. Cal-Sag Trail Report
- h. 2025 Annual Report: Parks and Recreation Department
- i. July 3rd Fireworks memo
- j. FP United Landscaping Proposal

a.



City of Palos Heights  
Recreation Committee  
Tuesday, December 9, 2025  
Minutes

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Key called the regular meeting of the Recreation Committee to order at 7:11 p.m. at the Palos Heights City Hall, 7607 W. College Drive. In attendance were Alderman Key, Alderman Begley, Alderman Basso and Alderman Brennan. Also present were Director of Parks and Recreation Matt Fairbanks, Lake Katherine Director Gareth Blakesley, City Administrator Adam Jasinski, Recording Secretary Morgan Pukula and 1 guest.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chairman Key motioned to approve the minutes of the October 14, 2025, seconded by Alderman Begley. On a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**LAKE KATHERINE REPORT**

Lake Katherine Director Gareth Blakesley gave the Lake Katherine report for October and November:

- We are in the process of getting Master Site Plans. The last time we updated the master plan was in 2012.
- We became a member of ANCA (Association of Nature Center Administrators). We attended our first meeting and gave tours of the Lake Katherine grounds to Partners for Environmental Stewardship. We attended two online classes with ANCA: succession planning and nature center liabilities.
- Our Green Team meeting was held with a recap of pumpkin smash and a look at next year's green film event.
- We completed our accessibility audit and received many practical suggestions on how to make Lake Katherine Nature Center site more accessible. We have 7-9 years to be compliant. The rear walkway to the clubhouse was already replaced thanks to Public Works.
- We had a wreath making program which had 23 people in attendance. Our holiday hayride was cancelled due to the rain.
- Programs and Events:
  - He held 16 field trips, 5 scout programs and 3 animal care club sessions.
  - We tabled at Touch a Truck, Kid Rec 5k and Grand Prairie Family Night. Staff has done shows for Channel 4 on sustainability of the new parking lot and the animals in the nature center.
  - Our Halloween night hike had approximately 60 people in attendance and our Fall in the Forest had around 80 people in attendance.
  - The Pumpkin Smash event had a total of 6,000 pounds composted and diverted from landfills, thanks to the Recreation Department's smashing device.
  - Our Christmas tree disposal is to come after the holidays, where we coordinate with Public Works.

**PARKS AND RECREATION REPORT**

Director of Parks and Recreation Matt Fairbanks gave the Parks and Recreation report:

- **Recreation Update:** On Thursday, November 20 and Friday, November 21, preschool

classes had their Friendsgiving party. Students made friendship mix, turkey headbands, friendship bracelets and ended with a Thanksgiving parade.

Miss Angie's Mighty Music Makers and Rockin Tots class started on Wednesday, November 5<sup>th</sup>. There are 27 people enrolled. Little Crafters & Me Story Time started on October 22<sup>nd</sup> and concluded November 12<sup>th</sup>. This was a new class for participants 1 ½ to 3 years old with their parents or guardians; 7 participants were enrolled.

Sparks musical theatre had performances on November 21<sup>st</sup> at 7pm and a second performance on November 22<sup>nd</sup> at 1pm in the Orchard Room. There were 24 participants enrolled from 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grade.

The Turkey Shoot was held on November 21<sup>st</sup> and was a success, drawing 19 participants for a fun and competitive evening. Families enjoyed the friendly atmosphere and feedback was positive regarding the structure and experience.

Our Happy Fitsgiving group exercise class was held on Thanksgiving morning. This year, a gentle yoga class was also offered. Participation is free in the classes if you bring a non-perishable food item to donate. We had 12 people attend the gentle yoga class and 9 people attend the group exercise.

The Kris Kringle Market was last weekend on December 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. There were 52 vendors, 3 food vendors, a Kids Korner, and Adult Corner. By the end of the 2 days, there was around 4,000 attending the market.

The current estimate for revenue for the event was \$13,953.00 and \$10,250.00 in sponsorships, for a total of \$24,203.00.

- **Staff Update:** Joe Smith was promoted to interim Public Works Director. We are happy for him and we have been making arrangements for his departure. It will be nice to have him still around in the City.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

- a) Alderman Begley motioned to approve the purchase of the QSC KC12S sound system from Audio Visual Solutions in the amount of \$6,322.18, seconded by Alderman Brennan. On a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.
- b) Alderman Key motioned to approve annual payment to Vermont Systems in the amount of \$20,125.49 for recreation registration software and cloud storage, seconded by Alderman Begley. On a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.
- c) Alderman Key motioned to draft and adopt an ordinance declaring the following vehicle as surplus and to sell on i-Bid VIN: 1GCGG25C291141071, seconded by Alderman. On a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.
- d) Alderman Key motioned to approve the PBO purchase of map signs and shade structures, in Community Park, seconded by Alderman Begley. On a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

Piano in the park

Director Fairbanks and staff brainstormed ways to get a piano in the park. The Art Garden was decided it would be the best location if we decided to buy one. The concerns include: noise, vandalism, weather exposure and tuning. It was also decided by staff that it would be best to build a structure to protect the piano but it would come at an additional cost. The estimated total for the construction of a gazebo or structure, along with the purchase of a piano, would be \$26,900.00 - \$55,650.00.

Chairman Key requested the committee table this project due to the cost at this time as well as the weather.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chairman Key moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Alderman Begley. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Morgan Pukula, Recording Secretary

**b.**

## **Recreation Report January 2026**

Rachel Bauer, Superintendent of Recreation

Kara Hansen, Recreation Program Manager

Maddie Landis, Recreation and Aquatics Manager

### **Classes and Events**

**Preschool** – Little Learners Preschool and Little Sprouts were on winter break from December 17 to January 2. Little Learners Preschool returned on Monday, January 5 and Tuesday, January 6. Little Sprouts returned on Tuesday, January 13.

Early Registration for Little Learners Preschool was from Tuesday, January 20, until Sunday, February 8. This is a dedicated time for those current enrolled in the program to register. Resident registration begins Monday, February 9 and open registration starts Tuesday, February 10 at 8:30 am.

**Little Sprouts:** Little Sprouts session started back up on Tuesday, January 13, and will continue until Thursday, May 7. There are eight students enrolled in the first class, and seven enrolled in the second class.

**Musical Theater** - My Time To Shine auditions began Tuesday, January 27 to Thursday, January 29 for Sparks (Grades 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>) and Stars (Grades 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>). In the Twinkles, division there are 27 participants, Sparks there are 34 participants, and Stars there are 36 participants.

**Early Childhood** – Miss. Angie’s classes started on Wednesday, January 14, with all three of the classes running. There is a total of thirty-three participants enrolled in these classes.

Book and Cook was held on Tuesday, January 20 at the Palos Heights Parks and Recreation Department from 4:30-5:30pm. Participants read a snowman themed book, created a snowman food crafts, and made a snowman craft out of paper.

**Dance-** Dance recital programs starts the first week of February. With our dance recital classes, we have 55 participants enrolled in classes.

**Birthday Parties-** There were 3 birthday parties reserved in the month of January. These parties consisted of Paint, Inflatable, Sports, and Nerf themes.

**Youth Athletic Programs-** These programs will begin in April 2026 after our youth basketball program concludes.

**Men’s Basketball League** – This league will begin on February 1. Twelve teams are currently registered. It will consist of a 7-week league and 2 weeks of playoffs.

**Birthday Parties-** There were 3 birthday parties reserved in the month of January. These parties can choose between Paint, Inflatable, Sports, and Nerf themes.

**Basketball League**-The Youth Basketball League began with the first week of practices January 19-23. The first games took place on Saturday, January 31. 509 Participants are playing this season. The 2025 program had 524 participants. 2024 was record year for us with 543 participants. The last games of the youth basketball league are on Saturday, March 21.

Program Name	Enrolled
Kindergarten Basketball League	85
Boys 1st-2nd Grade Basketball League	111
Boys 3rd-4th Grade Basketball League	60
Boys 5th-8th Grade Basketball League	72
Girls 1st-2nd Grade Basketball League	80
Girls 3rd-4th Grade Basketball League	62
Girls 5th-8th Grade Basketball League	39

**Cancelled Classes:**

Mini Candy Cane Hunt	Magical Fairy Tale Day	Calling All Creature Collectors
Chess Scholars	Let’s Code It	I Speak Spanish
Vamanos Spanish Club for Kids	Steam	Smart Start Art
Young Rembrandts Preschool Drawing	Young Rembrandts Elementary Drawing	

**Marketing:**

- The Waddles Rec Express Newsletter was emailed through the School Districts as well as Constant Contacts.

**Facebook Statistics** – as of 2/3/26 over the last 28 days

- 11 new followers for 7,631 total
- 139 interactions
- 50,143 views

**Instagram Statistics** – as of 1/2/26 over the last 30 days

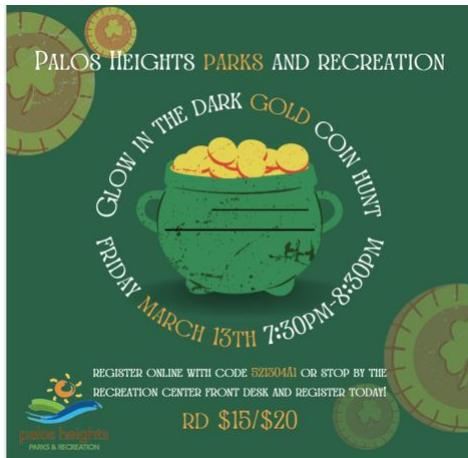
- 7 new followers for 1,317 total
- 140 interactions
- 9,799 views

**FlipHTML5 (Online Playbook)** – as of 1/2/26 over the last 30 days

- 968 views
- 871 readers
- 3 downloads

## Sneak Peek at Upcoming Events and Programs:

- Kids Night Out: Winter Wonderland Bash! – Friday, February 20, 6:30-8:30pm
- Trivia Night for 21+ Friday, February 27 7-9pm
- Friday Night Lights with Mom – Friday, March 6<sup>th</sup> 6:30-8pm
- Glow in the Dark Gold Coin Hunt – Friday, March 13<sup>th</sup> 7:30-8:30pm





d.

Palos Heights Recreation Department - 2026 Monthly Fitness Member Cancellations



Date	Res Couple	Res Senior	Res Student	Res Individual	Res Family	NR Couple	NR Senior	NR Student	NR Individual	NR Family	SS/RA	Cancelled/ Delinquent Accounts	Total Membership
January	1	3	3	3	4	2	2	0	2	0	0		20
February	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
March	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
April	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1		0
May	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
June	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
July	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
August	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
September	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
October	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
November	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
December	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		1
Totals	1	3	3	3	4	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	0

e.

Facility Income to date

Class	Location	Facility	Description	Dep Amt	Dep Paid	Fee Amt	Disc Amt	Fees Paid	Misc Amt	Profit/Loss	Refunds
BANQ	REC	BANQ	Orchard Room	0.00	0.00	4,390.00	0.00	3,970.00	0.00	3,970.00	1,250.00
ROOM	REC	R1046	Double Room 104/106	0.00	0.00	845.00	0.00	845.00	0.00	845.00	145.00
ROOM	REC	RM102	Room 102	100.00	100.00	375.00	0.00	340.00	0.00	340.00	100.00
ROOM	REC	RM104	Room 104	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
ROOM	REC	RM106	Room 106	0.00	0.00	210.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
ROOM	REC	RM107	Room 107	0.00	0.00	150.00	0.00	115.00	0.00	115.00	0.00
ROOM	REC	RM109	Dance Room (109)	0.00	0.00	225.00	0.00	225.00	0.00	225.00	0.00
ROOM	REC	RM110	Fitness Studio (110)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Report Grand Totals</b>				<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>6,195.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>5,495.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>5,495.00</b>	<b>1,495.00</b>

Report Summary Totals

Facility Location	Location Profit/Loss
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REC	5,495.00
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**Total Facilities:** 8  
**Total Deposits Still Due For These Facilities:** 0.00  
**Total Fees Still Due For These Facilities:** 700.00

f.

**2026 Palos Heights Fitness Center Usage**

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	Septemb	October	November	December	Total
Fitness Center	4469												
Track Visits	1712												
Revenue	\$12,809.50												
Medicare Rev	\$2,367.00												
Monthly Rev	\$13,959.80												
Memberships	1043												

**2025 Palos Heights Fitness Center Usage**

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	Septemb	October	November	December	Total
Fitness Center	4,481	4,020	4,088	3,784	3,085	3,122	3,304	2,854	2,660	3,208	3,297	3,818	37,903
Track Visits	1,745	1,569	1,255	1,156	885	766	973	771	622	787	1,060	1,348	11,589
Revenue	\$ 12,117.93	\$ 12,382.78	\$ 12,999.64	\$ 13,293.62	\$ 13,916.00	\$ 12,955.50	\$ 12,569.39	\$ 11,454.78	\$ 11,668.70	\$ 11,860.37	\$ 12,045.15	\$12,809.85	\$ 137,263.86
Medicare Rev	\$ 3,247.50	\$ 3,165.50	\$ 3,060.00	\$ 2,970.00	\$ 2,895.00	\$ 2,886.00	\$ 2,786.00	\$ 2,522.00	\$ 2,382.00	\$ 3,074.00	\$2,762.00		\$ 28,988.00
Monthly Rev	\$ 15,365.43	\$ 15,548.28	\$ 16,059.64	\$ 16,263.62	\$ 16,811.00	\$ 15,841.50	\$ 15,355.39	\$ 13,976.78	\$ 14,050.70	\$ 14,934.37	\$	\$12,809.85	\$ 166,251.86
Memberships	1,016	1,002	1,014	1,019									N/A

**2024 Palos Heights Fitness Center Usage**

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	Septemb	October	November	December	Total
Fitness Center	3,737	3,354	3,425	3,308	2,847	2,780	2,912	2,735	2,497	2,939	3,523	3,760	37,817
Track Visits	1,591	1,252	1,059	960	588	748	798	777	605	703	940	1,422	11,443
Revenue	\$ 12,662.41	\$ 11,720.82	\$ 11,984.45	\$ 13,823.79	\$ 13,141.32	\$ 11,810.00	\$ 12,919.60	\$ 12,765.18	\$ 11,661.73	\$ 11,730.03	\$ 11,935.86	\$ 12,469.60	\$ 148,624.79
Medicare Rev	\$ 2,130.00	\$ 2,137.50	\$ 2,225.00	\$ 2,590.00	\$ 2,635.00	\$ 2,020.00	\$ 2,375.00	\$ 2,212.00	\$ 2,040.00	\$ 1,872.50	\$ 2,027.50	\$ 2,662.50	\$ 26,927.00
Monthly Rev	\$ 14,792.41	\$ 13,858.32	\$ 14,209.45	\$ 16,413.79	\$ 15,776.32	\$ 13,830.00	\$ 15,294.60	\$ 14,977.18	\$ 13,701.73	\$ 13,602.53	\$ 13,963.36	\$ 15,132.10	\$ 175,551.79
Memberships	838	872	906	927	945	953	978		1,000	1,010			N/A

**2023 Palos Heights Fitness Center Usage**

	January	February	March	April	May	June	August	Septemb	October	November	December	Total	
Fitness Center	3,365	3,133	3,601	2,831	2,542	2,417	2,132	2,289	2,074	2,494	2,681	3,064	32,623
Track Visits	1,604	1,412	1,300	884	813	737	704	798	749	819	977	1,128	11,925
Revenue	\$ 12,795.24	\$ 11,312.23	\$ 11,431.06	\$ 11,513.69	\$ 11,389.16	\$ 11,303.40	\$ 10,324.77	\$ 10,356.81	\$ 12,458.35	\$ 11,638.68	\$ 12,196.00	\$ 12,196.93	\$ 138,916.32
Medicare Rev													\$ 17,920.00
Memberships	661	689	711	719	729	737	746	749	765	785	796		N/A

g.

**2023 Cal-Sag Trail Monthly Totals - East Trail Counter**

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	TOTAL
2,814	4,643	4,631	7,856	15,337	12,705	11,730	12,677	10,720	7,535	5,518	3,719	99,885

**2023 Cal-Sag Trail Monthly Totals - West Trail Counter**

2023 Combined Total 203,626

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	TOTAL
2,900	7,248	4,234	6,794	12,024	14,758	13,084	15,563	12,826	6,987	4,313	3,010	103,741

**2024 Cal-Sag Trail Monthly Totals - West Trail Counter**

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	TOTAL
1,712	7,782	5,880	8,266	12,199	11,518	14,609	11,719	9,723	7,950	5,251	2,265	98,874

**2024 Cal-Sag Trail Monthly Totals - East Trail Counter**

2024 Combined Total 200,321

January	February	March	April*	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	TOTAL
1,708	6,144	6,371	5,188	12,284	13,519	15,898	11,593	10,002	9,777	5,989	2,974	101,447

Trail counter was vandazlied

**2025 Cal-Sag Trail Monthly Totals - West Trail Counter**

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	TOTAL
1,703	2,561	5,815	7,987	8,285	8,869	7,017	9,150	8,871	6,328	3,691	2,426	72,703

\*avg of last 3 years

**2025 Cal-Sag Trail Monthly Totals - East Trail Counter**

2025 Combined Total 153,787

January	February	March	April*	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	TOTAL
2,069	1,963	6,243	6,985	10,236	10,941	7,957	10,825	10,526	6,293	3,999	3,047	81,084

\*avg of last 3 years

**2026 Cal-Sag Trail Monthly Totals - West Trail Counter**

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	TOTAL
1,489												1,489

**2026 Cal-Sag Trail Monthly Totals - East Trail Counter**

2026 Combined Total 2,961

January	February	March	April*	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	TOTAL
1,472												1,472

\*January count started on 1/7/26

**h.**



# palos heights

## PARKS & RECREATION

# Annual Report

2025

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Prepared by

**Matt Fairbanks, MS, CPRP, Director of Park and Recreation**

**Joe Smith, CPRE, CPO, CPSI, Interim Director of Public Works**

**Rachel Bauer, CPRP, Superintendent of Recreation**

**Maddie Landis, CPO, LGI, Recreation and Aquatics Program Manager**

**Kara Hansen, Recreation Program Manager**

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# PARKS AND RECREATION ANNUAL REVIEW - 2025

## RECREATION COMMITTEE

ALDERMAN JEFFREY M. KEY, CHAIR

ALDERWOMAN HEATHER BEGLEY

ALDERMAN ROBERT BASSO

ALDERMAN DAN BRENNAN

## RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

ANGIE POPE, CHAIR

PAUL HUNT, VICE CHAIR

GAYLE GREENWALD, MA, MS, NBPTS

LISA PESAVENTO, PHD, CPRP

CRAIG MOORE

KRISTIN RESTIVO

MEGAN O'MALLEY

## PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT STAFF

CITY ADMINISTRATOR,  
ADAM JASINSKI, P.E.

ASST. CITY ADMINISTRATOR,  
AIMEE INGALLS

DIRECTOR OF PARKS AND RECREATION,  
MATT FAIRBANKS, MS, CPRP

ASST. DIRECTOR OF PARKS AND  
RECREATION  
VACANT

SUPERINTENDENT OF RECREATION,  
RACHEL BAUER, CPRP

RECREATION AND AQUATICS MANAGER,  
MADDIE LANDIS, CPO, LGI

RECREATION AND PROGRAM MANAGER,  
KARA CASE

ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT SUPERVISOR,  
CLAUDIA LOWISZ

FACILITY TECHNICIAN,  
ROBERT POMICHOWSKI, CPO

CUSTODIAN,  
SCOTT CWWIK

## **Mission**

To create memorable experiences through people, innovative programs, parks and partnerships

## **Vision**

To create a healthy, connected community through play

## **Values**

- Exceptional Internal and External Guest Services
- Innovation
- Partnerships
- Physical, Environmental and Fiscal Sustainability
- Proactive Communication (External and Internal)

## DIRECTOR'S LETTER

As we conclude another productive year, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight several key accomplishments and ongoing initiatives within the Parks and Recreation Department. Foremost among these was the successful completion of the OSLAD backed Palos Pool improvement project, a significant investment that has already enhanced the experience for residents and visitors alike. The upgraded amenities to the bathhouse, lockers, slide, dry play area, as well as, overall improvements have positioned the pool for long-term success. In addition, work on the pool decking continued throughout the year, with a focus on safety, durability, and accessibility, ensuring the facility remains both functional and welcoming.

Park improvements across the City also remained a priority. Veterans Park continued to see updates aimed at maintaining it as a well-utilized playground and community space. At Crawford Park, new signage was installed to improve park identity and wayfinding. Orchard Park benefited from the addition of paver blocks, enhancing the overall appearance of the park. Additionally, a split-level fence was installed at Passarelli Park, improving safety and aesthetics while better defining park areas for users of all ages.

Partnerships played a vital role in advancing many of this year's projects. Our continued collaboration with School District 128 resulted in the installation of a new fence at Passarelli Park, improving safety for both students and park patrons. We also finalized an intergovernmental agreement with the Worth Park District, strengthening cooperation and creating efficiencies that benefit both agencies. In addition, a new agreement between the City and the Palos Baseball Organization (PBO) was established to provide updated signage at Community Park and additional shade structures for baseball, enhancing the experience for players, families, and spectators.

Finally, the department took important steps to guide future planning and ensure inclusivity. An ADA accessibility review of City parks and facilities was completed by ACT Services, providing valuable recommendations to improve access for all residents. In addition, a community-wide survey was conducted at the beginning of the year to gather feedback on programs and events. The insights gained from this survey will help shape future offerings and ensure that our services continue to reflect the needs and interests of the community.

Thank you for your continued support, leadership, and commitment to the Parks and Recreation Department. Through innovation and fiscal responsibility, the team within the Parks and Recreation department continues to provide top events and experiences for our residents. Our dedicated staff look forward to working together in the coming year as we continue to enhance our parks, facilities, and programs for the benefit of the community.

Regards,



**Matthew Fairbanks, MS, CPRP**  
**Director of Parks and Recreation**

## Recreation Programming Review

The Palos Heights Parks and Recreation Department continues its mission in 2025 by providing a wide variety of programs, leagues, and special events for residents of all ages. These offerings are intentionally designed to create meaningful experiences, encourage lifelong participation, and foster strong community connections. Highlighted below are some of the key programs and events that made 2025 an engaging and memorable year for the department.

### ATHLETICS

*Throughout 2025, the Palos Heights Parks & Recreation Department offered a wide range of youth athletic opportunities focused on skill development, teamwork, and fun. Across the calendar year, more than 20 distinct youth athletic programs and leagues were offered, spanning seasonal leagues, instructional classes, clinics, and camps. These programs collectively served well over 600 youth registrations.*

**Tee Ball and Coach Pitch Leagues:** The league is designed to create a fun and welcoming environment while introducing participants to the fundamentals of baseball, including game rules, sportsmanship, and teamwork. Teams met for one practice and one game each week, with practices beginning the week of July 28 and games starting the week of August 9. The program offered three divisions: My First Tee Ball for 3-year-olds, Tee Ball for ages 4–5, and Coach Pitch for ages 5–7. In 2025, the league served 152 participants and provided a positive and rewarding experience for all involved. Registration levels remained consistent with 2024, which had 153 participants.

**Indoor Soccer League:** The Youth Indoor Soccer League began on October 19 with the following enrollment: Ages 3–4 has 52 participants, Ages 5–6 has 48 participants and Ages 7–10 has 16 participants. Due to enrollment size, the 7–10 division transitioned into a soccer skills clinic format. The first week of clinic programming was a success, with strong engagement, high energy, and positive feedback from both participants and parents. Coaches reported excellent enthusiasm, setting a positive tone for the remainder of the season.

**Youth Basketball League:** The Youth Basketball League remained the largest youth athletic program of the year, with approximately 525 participants enrolled across kindergarten through 8th grade divisions. Games and practices ran from January through March, continuing to be one of the department's most popular offerings. For comparison, 2024 had 543 participants, 2023 had 475 participants and 389 in 2022.

## PARKS AND RECREATION ANNUAL REVIEW - 2025

**Youth Volleyball League:** This ran from April 27 to June 15, with Cityside Volleyball Club receiving positive feedback for the clinic-style format. The 2024 season marked the beginning of our partnership with Cityside Volleyball, bringing in experienced coaches and staff to lead the league. While we maintained the same clinic-style approach in 2025, participation numbers were lower, with a total of 41 athletes taking part.

**Instructional Sports Classes:** Palos Heights Parks and Recreation Department once again contracted with Skyhawks Sports to provide Youth Sport instruction. These classes spanned multiple sports and instructional formats, helping meet the diverse interests of the community. Across all youth athletic offerings, there were 732 total enrollments throughout the year with a total of 23 classes being offered. The strong participation numbers reflect continued community demand and engagement in youth athletics programming. Overall, youth athletics remained a well-utilized and impactful component of the department's 2025 programming efforts. During the Spring and Summer, Tennis, Mini Hawk camp were offered. Fall programming included Soccer, Flag Football, Pickleball, Multi-Sport Tots, Hoopster Tots, and Basketball.



### YOUTH PROGRAMS

*The Youth Programs category includes Summer Camp, Power Play Before and After School, Musical Theater, Dance, Voice and Guitar lessons, and a variety of contracted programs such as art, chess, Spanish, and STEAM. The Recreation Department aims to provide fun, safe and engaging opportunities for children to learn new skills and build friendships.*

**Power Play Before and After School Program:** This program is offered in partnership with Palos Heights School District 128. Beginning in the 2025–26 school year, the program was relocated to the Recreation Center, with District 128 providing transportation. This change has been well received and has expanded opportunities for Power Play participants to enroll in Recreation Center classes offered during program hours, with staff escorting participants directly to their instructors. In 2025, the program served 152 participants.

# PARKS AND RECREATION ANNUAL REVIEW - 2025

**Summer Camp:** Summer camp continues to set participation records! As with previous summers, Camp ran for a total of nine weeks from June 9 to August 8<sup>th</sup>. The summer is broken up into three 3-week sessions. This year a total of 588 campers had a blast with us! For comparison, there were 562 campers in 2024, 554 in 2023 and 425 in 2022. Campers went on field trips to Oak Lawn Gymnastics, Oak Lawn Children’s Museum, In the Game in Crestwood, Palos Pool, Ragin Waves, Beverly Arts Center and had a Science show come to the Recreation Center.



**Musical Theater:** In 2025, each age group performed two different shows plus a summer camp program. Each one was very successful and well attended. The total number of participants for 2025 was 193.

Twinkles (4-1<sup>st</sup> Grade) performed ARF!, Disney Review, and Squirm! Sparks (2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> Grade) performed Journey of the Knoble Gnarble, Disney Revue, and Leap Day. Starts (5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade) performed Honk Jr., Broadway Stars Revue and The Grunch.



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**Dance:** The 2025 Dance Studio 127 saw 73 total participants in the Winter/Spring program that includes a recital. The May recital theme was “Once Upon a Time” and had 14 dance numbers given to a crowd of approximately 350. The Fall session offered six non recital classes with a total participation of 27 students.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD

*In 2025, the Early Childhood program offered a variety of engaging and appropriate classes designed to encourage creativity, curiosity, and social interaction for young children. Throughout the year, thirty-five Early Childhood classes were offered, serving a total of 234 participants.*

**One Day and Weekly Classes:** Many of our traditional multi-week classes continued to be strong and consistent offerings. Programs such as Messy Mondays, Little Lab Explorers, and Mini Mad Scientist were typically held once a week over a four to five-week session and focused on hands-on learning and social skills.

In 2025, we also introduced a brand-new class, Little Crafters and Story Time, which was geared toward children ages 1.5 to 3 years old and included parent participation. This class provided a welcoming environment for both children and caregivers, allowing the instructor to guide families through a themed craft followed by a story. Each craft was directly connected to the story being read, helping reinforce early literacy skills while fostering creativity and parent-child engagement.

Additionally, several one-day specialty programs were offered throughout the year. Returning favorites included Book & Cook, Pot O’ Gold & Rainbows, Grandparents Day, and Bluey’s Birthday Bash, which provided fun, themed experiences for children and families. New one-day programs introduced in 2025 such as Dinosaur Day, Monster Mash & Dash, and Space Adventure were well attended with great feedback.



## PARKS AND RECREATION ANNUAL REVIEW - 2025

**Little Learners Preschool:** The preschool program focuses on social, emotional and creative development. The ultimate goal is to prepare students to enter Kindergarten. The 2025-2026 school year started on Tuesday, September 2 for the 3's and Wednesday, September 3 for the 4's. For this school year, our 4's full day has fifteen students, 4's half-day has two students, 3's half-day morning has ten students, and 3's half-day afternoon has eight students. There have been many exciting visitors and special celebrations at Little Learners so far this school year. Students had visitors from Palos Heights Library and the Palos Heights Fire Department. Special celebrations included Friendsgiving and a Holiday Party with family and friends.



**Little Sprouts:** This program is designed for 2.5 to 3 year olds that are not quite ready for preschool. It offers simple craft projects, stories, and activities. They meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from either 9am-10:30am or 10:45am-12:15pm. For the first session of the year, September 16<sup>th</sup> to December 11<sup>th</sup>, there were seven students enrolled in the 9am class and six in the 10:45am class.

# PARKS AND RECREATION ANNUAL REVIEW - 2025

## SPECIAL EVENTS

*The Parks and Recreation Department continues to meet our mission by offering special events that create memorable experiences. A mixture of events that are free to the public and those that you have to register for were offered.*

**Kids Night Out** is designed for children aged 5-10 to have a night out on their own. Each event has a theme and involves a craft, pizza, games and activities. February 21<sup>st</sup> was the Glow in the Dark with 18 participants, March 21 was Slumber Party at the Rec with 20 participants and October was Spooktacular Pajama Party with 24 participants.



**Daddy Daughter Dance:** On Thursday, February 6 and Friday, February 7, the Daddy Daughter Dance: Under the Sea took place from 6:30pm-8:30pm. There were forty participants enrolled for Thursday night and forty enrolled for Friday night. At the dance, there was a D.J., photographer, snacks, and crafts.



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**Mother-Son Night:** On Friday, March 7, Mother-Son Night: Jurassic Parks & Recreation themed occurred at the Palos Heights Parks and Recreation Center from 6:30 -8:30 pm. Thirty-eight participants were enrolled. There was an ice cream bar, juice, water, snacks, safari craft, dinosaur craft, and a dinosaur show.



**Pancakes with Peter Rabbit:** On Saturday, April 12, Pancakes with Peter Rabbit took place at the Palos Heights Parks and Recreation Center from 9:00 am-10:15 am. This event had thirteen out of fifteen tables filled, around 105 people were in attendance. The participants could take pictures with the bunny, eat their breakfast, participate in crafts, and dance with the bunny.



**Egg Hunts:** The Sensory Friendly Egg Hunt was held on Friday, April 11<sup>th</sup> from 5:30pm-6:30pm. There were 30 participants registered. This is a free event with the goal of providing a quieter, less busy egg hunting experience for those with special needs. Saturday, April 12<sup>th</sup> was the big day. This year, the event was moved to Trinity Christian College's field that is

## PARKS AND RECREATION ANNUAL REVIEW - 2025

north of Ozinga Chapel. This allowed more open space to use for the hunting areas. It is estimated there were 300 to 400 egg hunters. There were two different times, 0-4 was at 10:45am, 5-12 was at 11am.



**Chocolate Chase 5K:** The 2025 Chocolate Chase 5K, held on April 19th, was a tremendous success for the Palos Heights Parks and Recreation Department. Participation grew significantly from the previous year, with 255 runners registered compared to 169 in 2024. Despite a cool and misty morning, the energy from the runners and the support from the community created a vibrant and enthusiastic atmosphere.

The event was made possible through the efforts of dedicated Parks and Recreation staff and the Palos Heights Police Department, who worked seamlessly together to ensure a safe and enjoyable race for all participants. Their coordination and presence along the course were essential to the event's smooth execution.

We were pleased to have \$1,250 in local sponsorships supporting the event, helping us enhance the race experience and post-race celebration. A highlight of this year's Chocolate Chase was the participation of State Senator Bill Cunningham, who not only ran the race but also greeted residents at a post-race table alongside State Representative Mary Gill. Both officials engaged with many constituents and expressed appreciation for the invitation. They were genuinely impressed by the turnout and community spirit, and both showed interest in attending again in the future.

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The 2025 Chocolate Chase was not only a fun and well-run event—it also strengthened community ties, encouraged healthy activity, and showcased the City of Palos Heights as a welcoming and active community. We look forward to building on this momentum in 2026.



**Ice Cream Socials:** Recreation Department staff were in three different parks on designated days throughout the summer. Their goal was to give away free ice cream to the first 100 people who were in the Park.

**Movies and Concerts in the Park:** The Summer was packed with tunes and movies. Unfortunately, due to weather concerns, the second June and July concerts were moved to August. This year's bands were Rosie & The Rivets, Zydeco Voo Doo, Nashville Electric, and The Chicago Experience. Each concert had giveaways, Lake Katherine selling adult beverages, Aurelio's selling pizza, Kiwanis selling popcorn and candy, as well as our sponsor CNB Bank, who held a free raffle each day.

Three movies were shown this summer, *Under The Boardwalk* (shown July 31), *Inside Out 2* (shown after the Block Party on August 15), and *Wicked* (shown on September 5). *Wicked* was moved inside to the Orchard Room due to the weather conditions.

**Independence Day Celebration and Best Week Ever:** This is a yearly event where the Recreation Department hosts an activity each day the week of July 4<sup>th</sup>.

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Monday, June 30 was National Bomb Pop Day all around Palos Heights. From 11 am-1 pm, full-time staff was driving around in the Palos Heights Parks and Recreation van, going to all the parks in Palos Heights and handing out popsicles.

On Tuesday, July 1, the Recreation Department hosted a Family Trivia Night. We had three families participate and provided light snacks. Pictured here are our winners!

Wednesday, July 2, was the Pool's turn. They hosted the Beach Bash Party from 1-3pm. It was well received by all in attendance.

Thursday, July 3 was the start of the Independence Day Celebration. There were inflatables and Games in the morning from 10am-1pm with the DJ, the band Soda, food vendors, beer tent, and of course FIREWORKS! For the morning, 211 wristbands were sold. It is estimated between 2500-3000 people came to Memorial Park for the evening.

Friday, July 4 was the Parade down Harlem at Noon. The Case family organized a wonderful event with 53 entries. The streets were filled with patrons anxious to receive the candy and necklaces we gave away



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**Block Party:** Another successful Block Party was held on Friday, August 15 from 6-8:30pm. We blocked off Independence Drive and utilized Orchard Park. Aurelio's kept everyone happy with pizza, the kids had a blast on the inflatable slide and in the foam, and the DJ kept the energy high with crowd favorites. The Splash Pad was filled, yard games were a hit with families, and Lake Katherine reported a successful evening serving libations to the 21+ crowd.



**Touch a Truck and Treat** was held on Thursday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> from 5-8pm (5-5:45pm was sensory friendly). There were 20 vendors, which included emergency vehicles, a tow truck, garbage trucks, public works equipment, a crane and more. In addition to the Touch-A-Truck equipment, the DJ entertained the crowd, Aurelios sold pizza, Dough Guys sold sweet treats, and we had a pumpkin patch where participants could purchase a pumpkin to take home. There was an estimated 1500-1750 people in attendance.



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**Farmer's Market:** On Wednesday mornings from May 7 to October 8, the Municipal Parking lot was full of vendors and patrons attending the Farmers Market. The average attendance per week was 275. There were 39 different vendors that came this year, nine of which were new. During the summer months, the scavenger hunt for the kids remained popular. For Farmers Market week on August 6<sup>th</sup>, Palos Heights celebrated by having special live music by Madman Solo and Dave Rudolf, Lake Katherine brought a snake and a turtle, and Palos Heights Public Library offered two different story times. The Market concluded on October 8<sup>th</sup> with a thank you breakfast for the vendors of bagels, pastries, muffins, coffee and juice.

The **Turkey Shoot** event on November 21 was a success, drawing 19 enthusiastic participants for a fun and competitive evening. Families enjoyed the friendly atmosphere, and feedback was positive regarding the structure and experience. This was a basketball free throw shooting contest where children competed with their parents to win a Thanksgiving turkey. Participants were divided by age groups; 4 year olds, 5-6 year olds, 7-8 year olds, 9-10 year olds, and 11-12 year olds. 27 children participated in 2024. There were 28 participants registered in 2023.

**Palos Holiday Express:** This was a brand new event. On Friday, December 12<sup>th</sup>, Kara picked up participants at their houses in the Recreation Department Van. After everyone was picked up and they looked at lights and went back to the Recreation Center to enjoy the Polar Express, a special visit from Santa, and pizza. There were nine participants enrolled.



## PARKS AND RECREATION ANNUAL REVIEW - 2025

The **Kris Kringle Market** was held on December 5 and 6. There were 3 food vendors, an Adult Korner with alcohol, Kids Korner with letters to Santa and a craft, and Santa himself. Fifty- three different vendors selling a variety of items were inside the tent as well as 11 different raffle baskets. The contents of the baskets were donated by local businesses. The estimated attendance was 4,000, which is down from 2024 but still a great turnout.



**Noon Year's Eve:** The Recreation Department rang in the New Year early with our Noon Year's Eve Celebration on Wednesday, December 31, from 10:00 AM–12:00 PM—and it was a huge hit! A total of 204 participants joined the celebration, dancing to a live DJ, striking poses at the photo booth, bouncing around in the bounce house, and enjoying a variety of crafts and games. Pizza was available for purchase, keeping everyone fueled for the fun. The event wrapped up with an exciting balloon drop in the gym, creating a countdown moment that had kids cheering and families smiling as they welcomed the New Year—no bedtime required!



## ADULT PROGRAMS

*Adult programs continue to play an important role in bringing our community together. The Palos Heights Parks and Recreation Department offers programs that encourage adults to stay active, try something new, and connect with others. From fitness and wellness classes to social and recreational opportunities, these programs are designed to fit a wide range of interests and lifestyles.*

**Group Fitness:** In 2025, the Recreation Department offered 91 total classes with a total registration of 611 participants. Classes included: Tone Zone, Express Kettlebell, Fitness is Golden, Step N Sculpt, Time 4 Workout, Zumba, Chair Yoga, Peaceful Yoga, Feeling Fit at 4, Pedal and Pump, and Forever Fit.

The **Men's Basketball League** regular season ran from February 2 to March 23<sup>rd</sup> and ended with a playoff tournament. Fourteen teams participated this season. The first and second place teams in the regular season, as well as, first and second place in the tournament will receive a cash prize.

**Trivia Night:** The Recreation Department worked with Baig of Tricks Entertainment to host another trivia night on Friday, April 18<sup>th</sup> with 40 participants registered. The top two teams won prizes generously sponsored by local Palos Heights businesses.

**Trips:** On October 16<sup>th</sup>, the Department was able to take a group to the Lincoln Park Zoo in downtown Chicago.



# PARKS AND RECREATION ANNUAL REVIEW - 2025

## RECREATION DEPARTMENT BY THE NUMBERS

### Budget information:

Line Item	Revenue 2025	Revenue 2024	Revenue 2023	Revenue 2022	Revenue 2021
Adult Programs	\$52,150.45	\$46,989.03	\$62,447.56	\$45,881.29	\$33,687.14
Youth Programs	\$577,724.87	\$482,978.24	\$656,577.34	\$591,916.24	\$418,416.13
Early Childhood	\$118,066.90	\$70,041.35	\$109,534.95	\$83,435.30	\$67,492.33
Special Events	\$48,120.36	\$37,551.75	\$42,978.51	\$40,496.12	\$29,049.25
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$796,062.58</b>	<b>\$673,557.37</b>	<b>\$871,538.36</b>	<b>\$761,728.95</b>	<b>\$548,644.85</b>

Line Item	Supplies 2025	Supplies 2024	Supplies 2023	Supplies 2022	Supplies 2021
Adult Programs	\$6,546.21	\$7,762	\$12,027.42	\$2,787.94	\$22,827.04
Youth Programs	\$110,489.39	\$112,910.59	\$137,519.06	\$126,027.43	\$183,799.15
Early Childhood	\$19,201.64	\$15,020.36	\$45,720.00	\$17,581.92	\$46,286.79
Special Events	\$47,268.95	\$69,588.17	\$63,407.94	\$48,634.76	\$5,235.76
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$183,506.19</b>	<b>\$205,281.12</b>	<b>\$258,674.42</b>	<b>\$195,032.05</b>	<b>\$258,148.74</b>

Line Item	Wages 2025	Wages 2024	Wages 2023	Wages 2022	Wages 2021
Adult Programs	\$19,725.84	\$21,059.83	\$27,050.96	\$27,050.15	\$2,625.52
Youth Programs	\$244,322.25	\$227,793.22	\$239,725.76	\$202,731.19	\$78,229.26
Early Childhood	\$60,796.29	\$47,592.93	\$45,937.50	\$43,440.15	\$9,779.51
Special Events	\$13,052.03	\$11,306.10	\$8,546.82	\$7,300.50	\$64,277.51
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$337,896.41</b>	<b>\$307,752.08</b>	<b>\$321,231.04</b>	<b>\$280,521.99</b>	<b>\$154,911.80</b>

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	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Surplus/Deficit	\$274,659.98	\$160,524.17	\$231,632.90	\$286,174.91	\$135,584.31

**\*\*Starting in 2023:**

- **\*Adult Programs includes Fitness**
  - **\*Youth Programs includes all Camp Programs, Youth Programs (line item 800) and Youth Athletics**
  - **\*Early Childhood includes Preschool and Early Childhood Programs (line item 300)**
  - **\*Special Events includes Kris Kringle, Chocolate Chase, and Special Events (line item 600).**  
It does not include Independence Day Celebration revenue and expenses.
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**Sponsorship Information:**

This year, the sponsorship program successfully raised **\$19,000** with the Kris Kringle Market contributing \$10,250 of the total. Other sponsored events included the Chocolate Chase 5K, Concerts and Movies, Easter events, the Farmers Market.

Our leading sponsors, Palos Pediatric Dentistry and CNB Bank and Trust, continue to show incredible support.

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**Program Information:**

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
<i>Programs Offered</i>	679	791	602	440	433
<i>Participants in Programs</i>	4031	4,715	5,489	4,826	3,756
<i>Cancelled Programs</i>	128	126	147	125	160
<i>Cancellation Rate</i>	19%	16%	24%	28%	36%

**\*\*Starting in 2023 numbers include all sections of a program (i.e. a class that is offered with a choice of Mondays or Fridays, would count as 2 programs)**

**\*\*Starting in 2024, the count does not include drop-in Power Play.**

## **CONCLUSION:**

In 2025, the Palos Heights Parks and Recreation Department continued to build strong connections with the community while offering a wide range of programs and events for all ages. Our communication efforts remained a key focus, with social media, digital newsletters, and the Playbook helping residents stay informed and engaged. Growth in followers, views, and interactions shows that these tools are effectively reaching and resonating with our audience.

From a financial standpoint, the department remained in a strong position. Careful budgeting and thoughtful planning allowed us to manage expenses while continuing to deliver high-quality programs. Youth and early childhood programs once again played a major role in overall participation and revenue, highlighting the importance of these offerings to local families. Program cancellations continued to trend downward, reflecting improved scheduling and program planning.

Overall, 2025 was a productive year marked by steady growth, strong community involvement, and a continued commitment to providing meaningful recreation opportunities for Palos Heights residents

## Fitness Center Review

The Palos Heights Fitness Center continues to align with the Recreation Department's mission by providing residents with a modern, well-maintained facility where they can pursue their health and wellness goals. We strive to create meaningful experiences for our members through excellent customer service, high-quality equipment, and a strong sense of community.

### OPERATIONAL STATEMENT

*The Palos Heights Fitness Center remains committed to serving the recreational, social, and fitness needs of both Palos Heights residents and neighboring communities. Our facility is designed to promote health and wellness through resistance training, cardiovascular conditioning, and community engagement. Our staff takes pride in maintaining a welcoming environment and ensuring that our equipment remains in top condition.*



### Executive Summary

The fitness industry has continued its post-pandemic resurgence, and our membership base reflects that growth. Programs such as **SilverSneakers** and **Renew Active** have contributed to the

# PARKS AND RECREATION ANNUAL REVIEW - 2025

increasing number of members utilizing the facility. The dedication and respect of our fitness community make the Palos Heights Fitness Center more than just a gym—it is a place where members feel valued and supported in their fitness journey.

In 2023, both the fitness center and the City invested in upgraded cardio equipment, incorporating state-of-the-art technology to enhance user experience. These improvements were well received, and membership continued to rise throughout the year, positioning the fitness center for further success in 2025.

## Palos Heights Fitness Center Memberships

Membership growth has been steady, with more individuals returning to in-person workouts. At the end of 2025, the fitness center supported over **1,000 memberships**, with a total member base exceeding **1,600 individuals**.

## Revenue

Revenue for 2024 saw a continued increase, largely due to expanding membership numbers. The adoption of **SilverSneakers** and **Renew Active** contributed positively to financial performance, though the billing structure differs from traditional membership fees. Instead of fixed monthly fees, we receive compensation based on member visits, which has positively impacted revenue.

### REVENUE

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*
\$98,805.39	\$134,226.97	\$157,250.00	\$167,247.99	\$182,250

\*Estimate as we wait final months' revenue

## Monthly Visits:

Our members continue to use the fitness center on a more frequent basis. Fitness Center usage grew over the past year, and trends continue to show signs of progress. Visits are based off full fitness members and track users.

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## VISITS

2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
16,984	25,889	35,828	44,548	49,260	53,500

## Personal Training

The personal training program saw a strong increase in 2025. Trainer **Tracey Rosenthal** continued to build a solid reputation, leading to increased participation. The program is expected to maintain its growth momentum into 2026 as Tracy looks to add more certifications to his resume.

## Personal Training Revenue

2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
\$12,325	\$11,844	\$6,493	\$9,588	\$14,055	\$17,602

## Personal Training Sessions

2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
565	635	311	506	722	962





## Aquatics Review

### Description of Operations

*During the 2025 season, the Palos Pool was managed on a daily basis by Maddie Landis, ensuring consistent and efficient operations throughout the season. Maddie supervised a large seasonal staff that included four pool managers, 35 lifeguards, and approximately 40 additional employees assigned to concessions and the box office. The staff roster consisted of 25 new hires alongside a strong group of experienced returning employees. As in previous years, hiring priority was given to applicants demonstrating strong academic performance and involvement in extracurricular activities, with particular preference given to residents of Palos Heights.*

*The daily management team brought a high level of experience and leadership, playing a critical role in mentoring and supporting younger staff members. The aquatic facility features a 450,000-gallon main pool, an open flume slide, an enclosed flume slide, a drop slide, a diving board, and a 5,000-gallon wading pool, allowing for a wide range of recreational opportunities for patrons.*

*A typical daily staffing complement consists of one manager, one crew leader (head lifeguard), seven lifeguards, five to six pool staff members, and one front desk attendant. During peak times, additional staff are brought in through an on-call system, and during slower periods, managers can adjust staffing levels while maintaining safe operations.*



## **Revenue**

The pool experienced a very successful revenue year in 2025, driven by strong sales of pool passes, increased daily admissions, and high participation in swim lessons. A major contributing factor to this success was the completion of the 2025 pool renovation. The upgraded facilities, including improved locker rooms, a remodeled office, new water slide, and added shade amenities, significantly enhanced the guest experience. These improvements increased comfort, functionality, and overall appeal, helping attract new users, encourage repeat visits, and support expanded programming. The renovation positioned the pool as a modern, welcoming facility and directly contributed to increased usage and revenue across multiple categories.

## **Expenses**

Pool operating expenses increased in 2025 primarily due to the final incremental minimum wage increase, which impacted seasonal staffing and overall payroll costs. These increases were anticipated and incorporated into the annual budget. In addition, the City intentionally planned for higher operational capital expenses to support and continue the benefits of the recent pool renovation. Capital investments focused on painting and ongoing maintenance of the flume slide, new office furniture to accommodate the remodeled space, and equipment upgrades necessary to support the facility changes. These expenditures helped ensure the

# PARKS AND RECREATION ANNUAL REVIEW - 2025

renovated amenities remained functional, safe, and visually appealing, while supporting efficient daily operations and a positive guest experience.

## **PASS SALES AND ADMISSION REVENUE**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total</b>
2023	\$258,196.08
2024	\$271,739.11
2025	\$337,446.59

### **Daily Admission**

Daily admission prices in 2025 were \$9 for Residents and \$17 for Non-Residents. Daily admission saw a steady increase this year due to renovation and hot weather.

## **ANNUAL ATTENDANCE**

<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
26,652	27,625	27,172	30,658

### **Facility Updates**

In 2025, the pool underwent its largest renovation to date, made possible through a combination of an OSLAD grant and City funding. The project included a fully remodeled office space, upgraded locker room facilities, the addition of a new water slide, and enhanced shade amenities. These improvements modernized the facility, enhanced guest comfort and safety, and significantly improved the overall experience for residents and visitors.

# PARKS AND RECREATION ANNUAL REVIEW - 2025

## 2025 Pool Highlights by the numbers

### Pool Revenue

Season Pass Fees	\$145,294.54
General Admission	\$192,152.05
Swim Lessons	\$34,616.25
Concessions	\$59,719.39
Rentals	\$18,579.50
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$450,369.73</b>

### Pool Expenses

Salary and Wages	\$231,451.99
Utilities	\$17,116.47
Concession Supplies	\$38,082.41
Supplies	\$41,125.00
Capital	\$74,208.05
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$401,983.92</b>

**Pool Surplus 2025: \$48,385.81; Pool Surplus 2024: \$53,440.03; Pool Surplus 2023: \$33,136.12**



## Marketing and Communication

*Marketing and communication continue to be key in keeping our community informed and connected. The Palos Heights Parks and Recreation Department uses a mix of digital and print tools to share program information, event updates, and important news throughout the year. From our seasonal Playbook and monthly newsletters to social media and our website, these efforts help ensure residents know what's happening and how to get involved. We continue to adapt and explore new ways to reach our audience and make information easy to access and engaging.*

The *Playbook* remains the primary communication tool for sharing all programs, events, and services offered by the Palos Heights Parks and Recreation Department. The publication is released three times annually—Summer, Fall, and Winter/Spring—and is available online through FlipHTML, providing an interactive, brochure-style viewing experience rather than a traditional PDF. Printed copies are available at the Front Desk and are mailed to residents upon request.

*Waddles Rec Express* is a monthly digital newsletter distributed to School Districts 128 and 118. It features flyers highlighting upcoming programs and special events and is also emailed to participant families through Constant Contact. The mailing list is generated from program registration contacts, and the newsletter is sent at the beginning of each month.

Facebook and Instagram continue to serve as essential communication platforms. Staff utilize the scheduling tool *Buffer* to efficiently plan and manage posts. These platforms are used to share event photos, highlight participant experiences, and provide timely updates regarding schedule changes, weather-related cancellations, or other unforeseen circumstances.

Direct marketing emails are also sent through RecTrac's email system, RecConnect. With this tool, targeted emails are able to be sent based on what the family had registered for in the past. It is a great for registration reminders.

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<i>Facebook Statistics</i>	<i>January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<i>Followers</i>	<i>7,620</i>	<i>Increase of 564 in 2025</i>
<i>Views</i>	<i>1,005,049</i>	<i>Views are every time our content appears on a screen</i>
<i>Interactions</i>	<i>6,668</i>	<i>Interactions are engagements with the content (likes, shares, comments)</i>
<i>Instagram Statistics</i>	<i>January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<i>Followers</i>	<i>1,310</i>	<i>Increase of 157 in 2025</i>
<i>Views</i>	<i>138,618</i>	
<i>Interactions</i>	<i>2,064</i>	
<i>Flip HTML Statistics (website brochure viewer)</i>	<i>January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<i>Views</i>	<i>11,369</i>	<i>Views are how many times the link was opened</i>
<i>Readers</i>	<i>10,220</i>	<i>Readers is the number of unique individuals who accessed the link</i>

## Looking Forward: 2026 – Upcoming Events and Projects

As we look ahead to 2026, the Palos Heights Parks and Recreation Department is preparing for an exciting and transformative year. Building on the momentum of recent improvements and community feedback, the department will focus on strategic planning, long-term facility development, and program innovation to ensure we continue meeting the evolving needs of our residents.

### Master Plan Redevelopment

One of the most significant initiatives planned for 2026 is the redevelopment of the department's comprehensive Master Plan. This process will evaluate existing parks, facilities, and programming while identifying future needs and opportunities. Community input plays a vital role through recent surveys, meetings, and stakeholder engagement to ensure the plan reflects resident priorities. The updated Master Plan will serve as a guiding document for capital improvements, land acquisition, facility upgrades, and service enhancements over the next several years, positioning the department for sustainable growth.

### New Recreation Program Plan

In conjunction with the Master Plan, staff will begin developing a new Recreation Program Plan. This initiative will analyze current program offerings, participation trends, and emerging recreational interests. The goal is to expand programming diversity, improve accessibility, and introduce new opportunities for all age groups. Special attention will be given to wellness programming, inclusive recreation, and innovative special events that strengthen community connections. This plan will help guide future program development and ensure offerings remain relevant, engaging, and financially sustainable.

### Strategic Plan Development

The department will also embark on the development of a new Strategic Plan in 2026. This comprehensive effort will define the department's vision, goals, and performance benchmarks for the next three to five years. Staff, advisory boards, elected officials, and community members will collaborate to establish priorities in areas such as customer service, partnerships, financial sustainability, staffing, and facility management. The Strategic Plan will provide clear direction and accountability while aligning departmental efforts with the City's broader objectives.

## **Orchard Park Barn Redevelopment**

A major capital project set to begin in 2026 is the redevelopment of the Orchard Park barn. This structure will be reimagined to serve as a multi-purpose facility for maintenance, storage and community gatherings. Planning and design work will focus on preserving the character of the barn while incorporating modern amenities and accessibility improvements. Once completed, the facility will expand opportunities and enhance Orchard Park as a year-round destination for residents.

## **Pool Project – Phase 2 Planning and Financing**

Following the success of recent pool improvements, staff will begin planning and securing financing for Phase 2 of the Palos Pool project. This phase will focus on additional enhancements designed to improve user experience, safety, and long-term sustainability. Preliminary planning will include concept development, cost estimates, grant opportunities, and funding strategies. Continued investment in aquatic facilities reflects the department's commitment to providing premier summer amenities and maintaining strong cost recovery.

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The year 2026 will be a pivotal time for growth and strategic direction within the Palos Heights Parks and Recreation Department. Through thoughtful planning, community collaboration, and responsible investment, the department remains dedicated to creating memorable experiences and fostering a healthy, connected community. We look forward to sharing progress updates and celebrating milestones as these exciting initiatives move forward.

Our staff thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to making 2026 a year filled with memorable experiences for Palos Heights.

i.

**Palos Heights Parks and  
Recreation**

# Memo

**To:** Matt Fairbanks, Director of Parks and Recreation  
**From:** Rachel Bauer, Superintendent of Recreation  
**Date:** 2/2/2026  
**Re:** July 3rd Fireworks Proposal

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The Recreation Department contacted three different companies in regards to putting on our fireworks show on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026. In honor of the USA's 250<sup>th</sup> birthday, the Department requested a quote for a bigger show in the 20-minute time frame.

Pyrotechnico and Acepyro are not available for a July 3<sup>rd</sup> date. J and M Fireworks responded with two options.

- **Quote 1:** A show equivalent to previous years, with 782 shots, for **\$22,000**.
- **Quote 2:** An enhanced show featuring 832 shots for **\$28,000**.

The Recreation Department recommends **Quote 2**, which provides a 20-minute, expanded fireworks display to celebrate the milestone 250th anniversary.

J&M Fireworks has been a reliable partner for many years, consistently delivering high-quality displays that delight our community. They are also absorbing approximately half of the tariff fees currently placed on fireworks. In addition, as a long-standing customer, the City of Palos Heights receives a **15% product bonus**, plus an **8% bonus** for payment made 70 days in advance.



## J&M Displays Proposal for: City of Palos Heights 20 minute

This proposal includes an extension of our \$10,000,000.00 spectator liability insurance, and workers compensation on our shoot team.

Total Price of Show: **\$22,000.00**

Total Shot Count: 782

Packing Check: 465

Date of Display: 07/03/26

Customer Number: 13557

### Please Note the Following Comments:

The data in this proposal is confidential, and is to be accorded confidential treatment and shall not be disclosed other than to the official representative of the organization listed on the cover, and only then when in the evaluation of this proposal. Any reproduction of the contents of this proposal, whether in whole or in part, is expressly forbidden. J&M Displays, Inc. requests that all information be safeguarded from release pursuant to any request under the Freedom of Information Law of this state or any other state or jurisdiction; as it may cause competitive disadvantage to our company. The enclosed concepts and materials are the sole and exclusive property of J&M Displays, Inc. We reserve the right to make substitutions of equal or greater value. Prices and specifications are subject to change without notice. For choreographed displays the quantity and sizes of product may change based on the music selected; however, the dollar value of the product will remain the same.

Diameter	Quantity	Shots	Racks
<b>Shells</b>			
3"	40	130	13
4"	27	100	13
5"	23	65	13
Shells Shot Ct: 295			
<b>Finales</b>			
3"	18	180	18
4"	9	72	9
5"	1	5	1
Finales Qty: 28 Shot Ct: 257			
<b>Multi-shell Barrage Units</b>			
2.5"	5	180	
3"	2	50	
Multi-shell Barrage Units Qty: 7 Shot Ct: 230			
<b>Igniters Needed: 330</b>			



## J&M Displays Proposal for: City of Palos Heights 20 minute

This proposal includes an extension of our \$10,000,000.00 spectator liability insurance, and workers compensation on our shoot team.

Total Price of Show: **\$28,000.00**

Total Shot Count: 832

Packing Check: 520

Date of Display: 07/03/26

Customer Number: 13557

### Please Note the Following Comments:

The data in this proposal is confidential, and is to be accorded confidential treatment and shall not be disclosed other than to the official representative of the organization listed on the cover, and only then when in the evaluation of this proposal. Any reproduction of the contents of this proposal, whether in whole or in part, is expressly forbidden. J&M Displays, Inc. requests that all information be safeguarded from release pursuant to any request under the Freedom of Information Law of this state or any other state or jurisdiction; as it may cause competitive disadvantage to our company. The enclosed concepts and materials are the sole and exclusive property of J&M Displays, Inc. We reserve the right to make substitutions of equal or greater value. Prices and specifications are subject to change without notice. For choreographed displays the quantity and sizes of product may change based on the music selected; however, the dollar value of the product will remain the same.

Diameter	Quantity	Shots	Racks
<b>Shells</b>			
3"	40	130	13
4"	27	100	13
5"	23	65	13
6"	10	50	13
Shells Shot Ct: 345			
<b>Finales</b>			
3"	18	180	18
4"	9	72	9
5"	1	5	1
Finales Qty: 28 Shot Ct: 257			
<b>Multi-shell Barrage Units</b>			
2.5"	5	180	
3"	2	50	
Multi-shell Barrage Units Qty: 7 Shot Ct: 230			
<b>Igniters Needed: 380</b>			

**From:** [Todd Coffin](#)  
**To:** [Rachel Bauer](#)  
**Subject:** Request for Proposal  
**Date:** Sunday, January 11, 2026 2:18:11 PM

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CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Rachel:

I am responding to your recent request for a proposal form that you submitted via [ACEPyro.com](#)

We shoot many shows in your area (Homer Glen, Channahon, Morris, etc.) and would love the opportunity to work with you on your show, however, the date you are requesting conflicts with any availability that we might have to do your show on July 3rd. AS you know, this is the 250th Anniversary of the USA and this season is very loaded with shows right around the 4th and we have been contacted by many inquiries from those that use other vendors that are completely booked as well and have no availability due to the demand.

That being said, if you have any date flexibility and are willing look at any dates other than the 3rd or 4th of July, we could accommodate.

My contact information is listed below, feel free to call me anytime (including today) as I am working at my desk doing scheduling, etc.

Sincerely,  
Todd Coffin  
Lead Technician, Choreographer, and Sales  
todd@acepyro.com  
219-510-2791  
[www.acepyro.com](#)

**From:** Riley Pakosz [mailto:[rpakosz@pyrotecnico.com](mailto:rpakosz@pyrotecnico.com)]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 8, 2026 2:50 PM  
**To:** Rachel Bauer <[RBauer@palosheights.org](mailto:RBauer@palosheights.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: Palos Heights Fireworks Quote

Hi Rachel,

I appreciate you reaching out, and I hope the holidays were great for you and yours! Just to be transparent I do currently have a couple of proposals out for bid and am waiting on feedback. That feedback will pretty much determine if I have any availability left on the 3rd.

Were you still looking for around a 20 minute show? If so, the starting price would still be \$25k depending on whether the show is on land or not as I know you mentioned it was at Lake Katherine. I am sure you are probably familiar with fireworks processes but that includes all the permitting, labor, materials, choreography, and soundtrack creation if you were looking at a pyromusical.

Depending on the budget you are working with, anything more than that I would recommend keeping the same duration as the more product in a smaller timeframe just makes for a stronger show overall. Many municipalities I work with and have spoken to have looked at changing their current displays up a bit as this year marks the 250th anniversary of the USA. This has led to slight or drastic changes in the show, so I wanted to mention this in case you were looking into it as well.

Was the Lake Katherine site on land and did you have a budget in mind you were trying to stick to?

Thanks,

**Riley Pakosz,**  
**Account Executive**  
PYROTECNICO  
[rpakosz@pyrotecnico.com](mailto:rpakosz@pyrotecnico.com)  
(m) 219.393.9082  
(o) 219.393.9082  
[pyrotecnico.com](http://pyrotecnico.com)

j.

**Palos Heights Parks and  
Recreation**

# Memo

**To:** Recreation Committee  
**From:** Matt Fairbanks  
**cc:**  
**Date:** 2/5/2026  
**Re:** 2026 Lawn care and landscaping

---

I am recommending that we continue working with FP United Landscaping for park landscape maintenance services in 2026. In 2025, they provided excellent service for the following properties:

- Recreation Center
- Walsh-Westgate
- Veterans Playlot
- Pool/Community Park
- Big Dream Park
- Orchard Park

Their work was consistently high-quality, with timely service and a commitment to going above and beyond our expectations. Given their proven reliability and performance, I propose we renew our contract with them for 2026.

The cost structure will remain the same as in 2025. The monthly cost will be \$2,070, with services provided from April through November.

Based on their excellent performance and the minimal cost adjustment, I recommend moving forward with FP United Landscaping for 2026.



PO Box 394, Orland Park, IL 60462 708-271-5229 fpunitedlandscaping@gmail.com

## **PROPOSAL**

**02/04/2026**

Matt Fairbanks  
 Palos Heights Park District  
 Palos Heights, IL

Proposal for discussed work below. Work performed from April to November 2026.  
 Additional services available upon request.

Service Address	Services Included			Monthly Prorated Fee
<b>Rec Center</b> 6601 W 127 <sup>th</sup> St	Weekly Lawn Maintenance	Trimming Bushes	Spring and Fall Cleanup	\$680.00
<b>Walsh-Westgate Park</b> Ridgeland and Shadow Creek Drive	Monthly Maintenance	Trimming Bushes		\$320.00
<b>Veterans Play Lot</b> 12378 Natchez	Spring and Fall Cleanup			\$220.00
<b>Pool/Community Park</b> 7607 W College Drive	Spring and Fall Cleanup			\$380.00
<b>Big Dream Park</b> 13259 Misty Meadow Drive	Biweekly Lawn Maintenance	Spring and Fall Cleanup		\$290.00
<b>Recreation Center Eastside Park</b> 6597 W 127th St	Monthly Maintenance			\$180.00

*Any questions please contact Francisco at 708-271-5229.  
 We look forward to working with you.*