

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

OTTAWA RECREATION COMMISSION



WELCOME!

Thank you for taking the time to read the Ottawa Recreation Commission's 2023 Annual Report!

Over the past year, your ORC has experienced significant growth and progress within the community. This report will help celebrate and highlight all of the great things that have happened over the past year!

Before we dive in, we would like to thank YOU! Our ability to provide quality recreation programs and facilities would not be possible without the dedication of ORC Staff and support of our community.

We hope you enjoy this summary of another great year for the ORC!

Connect with us!

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About Us

The Ottawa Recreation Commission was established in 1947 through a mutual resolution between the City of Ottawa and USD 290 School District.

Both agencies agreed to create the ORC under the mission to improve the overall quality of life through well designed, inclusive recreation programs and facilities. That mission is fulfilled in partnership with the support of USD 290 and City of Ottawa.

Our Vision

Our vision is to provide quality experiences through inspiring recreation programs that improve the overall wellbeing for the Ottawa community, one program and person at a time.

We strive to provide high quality facilities, services, and events that are accessible and affordable while still meeting the expressed needs of our local community.

Did you know? Kansas is the only state that has Recreation "Commissions". All other states only have a Parks and Recreation Department structured within their local municipality. Kansas is unique in allowing school districts to establish recreation commissions; however, once established, recreation commissions are self-governing.

Typically, large cities in Kansas utilize the Parks and Recreation Department model within their municipal government structure. For reference, the City of Ottawa Government has a Parks Department, while the Ottawa Recreation Commission is an independent agency. The ORC does work closely with the City of Ottawa Parks Department to provide quality facilities and services.



Youth Sports

One of the key pillars for the ORC are our youth sports leagues. Our goal is to have an enjoyable experience, that promotes lifelong participation in sports, while teaching basic fundamentals and skills. We believe youth participation in youth sports improves overall mental, physical, emotional, and social health.

None of this would be possible without the nearly 200 volunteer coaches who give their time to provide an enjoyable experience.

| 2022 | |
|---------------|--------------|
| Soccer | 576 |
| Basketball | 264 |
| Flag Football | 91 |
| Volleyball | 69 |
| Cheer | 43 |
| Baseball | 214 |
| Softball | 119 |
| Total | 1,376 |

| 2023 | |
|---------------|--------------|
| Soccer | 579 |
| Basketball | 274 |
| Flag Football | 103 |
| Volleyball | 68 |
| Cheer | 45 |
| Baseball | 212 |
| Softball | 135 |
| Total | 1,416 |



Pitch, Hit, Run

New this year, the ORC partnered with Major League Baseball to host a local Pitch, Hit, and Run competition. 73 participants across 4 age divisions competed to earn the highest score in pitching accuracy, hitting distance, and running speed. 5 local winners qualified for the Team Championship at Kauffman Stadium. One ORC event participant won their Team Championship and qualified to participate at the 2023 MLB World Series in Atlanta. In total, the local competition had participants from 3 different states, and was put on thanks to the help of 15 volunteers.

Did you know? Post-COVID, nationwide trends are showing a decrease in participation rates in traditional organized sports? Luckily, Ottawa is seeing the opposite trend, with participation numbers within ORC sports teams increasing year-over-year since 2020. The ORC saw a staggering 55% increase in 2021, followed by a 15% increase in 2022, and another 8% increase this year.

Aquatics

In 2023, the ORC saw an increase in aquatic programming numbers such as swim lessons and party rentals, but daily open-swim attendance numbers were slightly lower than 2022. We held the first ever Sensory Swim in Ottawa, which provided a safe and inclusive environment for patrons with special needs, and their families, to swim after the pool had closed to the public.

Nationwide lifeguard shortages continued to make headlines, and multiple pools in our local area were again severely understaffed. **If you know anyone looking for a summer job, please suggest they consider becoming a lifeguard!**

2023 Pool Attendance Numbers

| | | | |
|-------------------|------------|-------|--------|
| 2023 (72 Days) | 0 - 2 | 413 | 12,012 |
| | 3 - 11 | 3,797 | |
| | 12 - 59 | 6,195 | |
| | 60+ | 356 | |
| | ORC Camp | 995 | |
| | Rain Check | 88 | |
| | Classes | 168 | |



| Expenses | |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Administrative | \$ 7,302.48 |
| General Staffing | \$ 44,647.38 |
| Lesson Staffing | \$ 8,430.80 |
| Program Staffing | \$ 1,274.00 |
| Equipment/Supplies | \$ 2,316.81 |
| Uniforms | \$ 2,036.49 |
| Training | \$ 2,541.05 |
| Other | \$ 2,946.84 |
| Capital Projects | \$ 7,012.64 |
| Total Expenses \$ 78,508.49 | |

| Revenues | |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Concession | \$ 1,111.95 |
| Admission/Passes | \$ 28,027.40 |
| Lessons | \$ 12,816.97 |
| Rentals | \$ 4,074.50 |
| Programs | \$ 1,782.50 |
| Total Revenues \$ 47,813.32 | |

2023 Pool Season Profit/Loss
-\$30,695.17



LIFEGUARD



***Did you know?** Pool season dates are determined by the availability of our lifeguard staff, which is mostly made up of high-school students. The pool usually opens Memorial Day weekend which gives one week to train staff and prepare the facility after USD 290 classes end. The pool closes 1-week prior to classes beginning again, which gives the students time to prepare for their return to school and close down the facility. The current structure of season dates have been unchanged for quite some time.*

The Classics!

In the later half of 2022, the ORC launched our first-ever program area specifically for people 55 and older. This was our fastest growing program, increasing from 80 participants in 2022, to now over 250 in 2023.

Named “The Classics”, this group takes 2 trips a month to dinner theaters, museums, and other fun excursions. Recreation is more than just sports, so be on the lookout for more exciting trips in 2024!



Teen Programs

New! Thanks to your feedback during our strategic planning process, we identified a gap in services for teens, specifically those in 6th-8th grade. The new “Whirlwind Adventures” programs created just for teens. Our first program was a huge success! On a day off from school, we took a trip to Top Golf with lunch at Chick-Fil-A (crowd favorite).

We’re excited to see this program grow, and thankful for the opportunity to engage local teens in a new style of recreation activities.

Did you know? According to Kansas State Statutes, since the ORC is a joint-commission, meaning established by joint-resolution between the City of Ottawa Municipal Government and the USD 290 – Ottawa School District. To support the ORC financially, the agency with the higher assessed valuation is responsible for levying taxes for the ORC. The ORC mill levy was last increased 2001.

In most cases, and as is here in Ottawa, school districts have a higher assessed valuation than municipalities. In Ottawa, USD 290 levies property taxes on behalf of the ORC, for the purpose of providing recreation programs, services, and facilities for the community. ORC Staff develop the annual budget for the Board to review and approve. After ORC Board approval, the ORC mill levy shows up on your tax sheet under the USD 290 School District since they levy the taxes for the ORC.

Create!

Creative classes saw a huge surge in 2023. First introduced in 2022, the ORC was able to offer at least two different creative classes a month. These classes were either DIY crafts, painting classes, and cookie decorating.

We estimate having nearly 600 people participate in these activities throughout the year. These activities, classes, and events are a great addition to our program offerings to show recreation is more than just sports!



Holidays

In the spirit of new programming, 2023 also saw the first ever ORC Breakfast with Santa! Partnering with Chris Cakes, the ORC held a special event for families to enjoy some good food, entertainment, and the chance to hang out with the Jolly Old Fellow himself!

All in all, over 120 people came out to spend the morning with us!

Self-Defense

In April, the ORC partnered with the Ali Kemp Educational Foundation to offer a free Women's Self-Defense course at the Goppert Building. The TAKE Self-Defense class has been provided to over 74,000 women and girls nationwide!

The TAKE organization gives women all over the United States the physical and mental skills to not become a victim! Nearly 40 women and girls attended the training, and we hope to see that number increase in 2024.



Did you know? According to Kansas State Statutes, the ORC cannot own property unless by gift or donation; therefore, the ORC partners with USD 290 and the City of Ottawa to provide recreation programs and services at their facilities.

The Orlis Cox Sports Complex, Forest Park Pool, and Forest Park Ballfields are all facilities owned by the City of Ottawa, but managed and maintained by the ORC. The Goppert Building and Lincoln Soccer Fields are both examples of USD 290 facilities the ORC manages and maintains. The ORC also utilizes many other USD 290 facilities like the OHS Soccer Field and elementary school gyms to support our growing recreation programs.

Summer Camp

Summer Camp continued to be a strong program in 2023. Staff worked to create experiences for the kids learning about local businesses, visiting different recreation facilities locally, and just having a positive experience.

One specific highlight from Summer Camp 2023 is thanks to our partners at the Frontier District Extension Office. They funded a trip to Hutchinson for 23 of our campers to visit the Cosmosphere. It was such a rewarding day for the kids and a fun way to learn more about science and space!

The success of the different experiences for the kids would not be possible without our great partners. From the different learning activities to the Ottawa Fire Department summer spray down and soap-making with Julie Riggins, there are too many partners to name. We are always thankful for the local support to provide a safe and enjoyable summer experience for our kids!



AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM



After-School

The ORC After-School program has grown tremendously over the past few years. In 2021, the after-school program had 256 participants over the year, but in 2023, that number grown to be more than 480...that's an increase of over 200 kids over the course of the year!

The ORC provides transportation from Ottawa Schools to the Goppert Building after school, and provides a safe space for kids to work on homework and also participate in physical activities, crafts, education, and many other activities.

Did you know? According to the 2021 NRPA Out-of-School Time (OST) Report, more than four in five park and recreation agencies offer OST programs. The top benefits of OST programs include childcare for working parents and/or caregivers, offering children a safe place outside of school hours, opportunities to engage in physical activity through play, exercise and sports, social opportunities, and chances to connect youth to peers.

Fitness

Another key pillar of ORC programming are our fitness/wellness classes. Our most popular program is the Silver Sneakers Class with total attendance over 3,500 this year! The daily workout is designed for seniors and features low-impact exercises for people of all abilities.

Other offerings this year were two types of yoga classes (plus a cat yoga class), Zumba, Pilates, and Taekwondo. Our community has interest in more, and different, fitness offerings, so be on the lookout for what's new in 2024!



Adult Sports

Adult Sports remains as one of our most consistent program areas after 2023. With offerings like Adult Volleyball and Adult Basketball we enjoy seeing friends get together to play in the leagues. The adult leagues are a great way to get active while having fun!

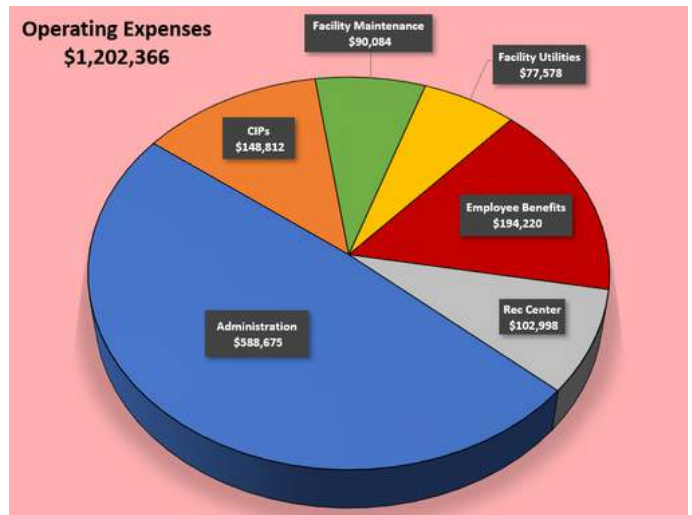
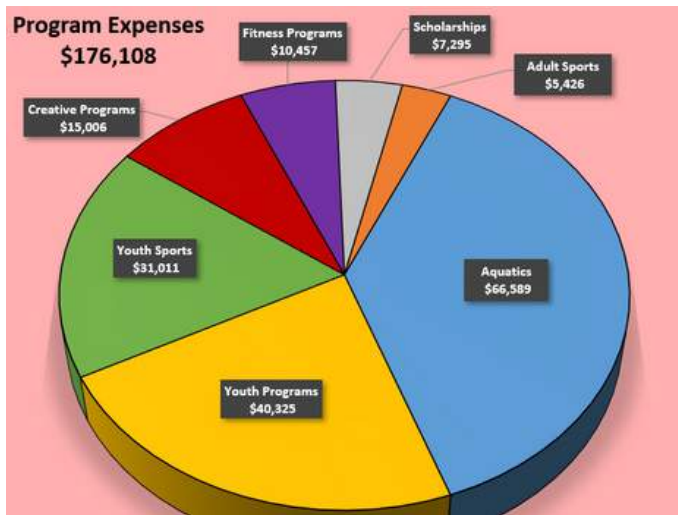
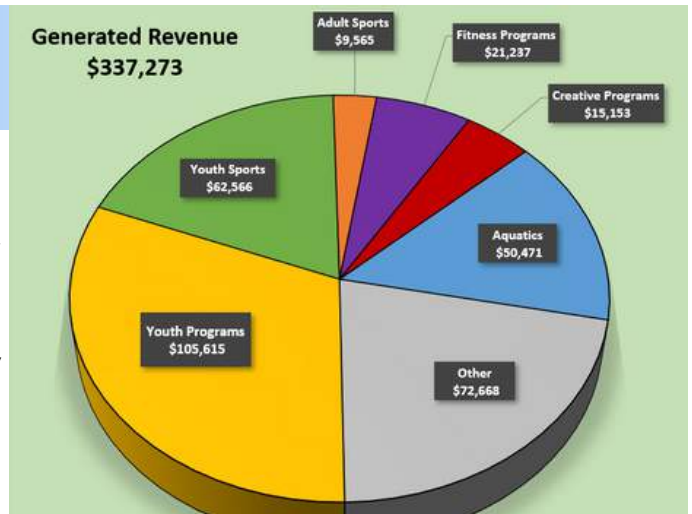
2023 also saw the return of ORC Sand Volleyball. In partnership with Blanco's Bar and Grill, the ORC was able to provide two different sessions this summer.

Did you know? Living close to parks and other recreation infrastructure is consistently related to higher physical activity levels for both adults and youth. Moreover, parks provide a connection to nature, which studies demonstrate relieves stress, tightens interpersonal relationships and improves mental health.

According to NRPA's 2022 Engagement With Parks Report, over 275 million U.S. residents visited a local park and recreation facility at least once during the last year, with families visiting local facilities an average of 22 visits per year.

FY23 Financials

ORC fiscal year begins in July and ends in June. The ORC is primarily funded through property taxes levied by USD 290 with administrative costs, capital improvements, and facility maintenance primarily funded by tax dollars. Programs are generally funded through registration fees, grants, and sponsorships, but supplemental tax funding allows us to keep user fees low. In 2023, the ORC received nearly \$25,000 in grants to support programs and facility improvements.



Facilities

From 2020-2022, resources were allocated towards getting programs and operations back on track post-COVID, but 2023 focused on facility improvement projects. The ORC Goppert Building received the majority of those improvements which included: lobby and hallway updates, new fitness equipment, and improvements in the gym and multipurpose room.

Facilities like the Orlis Cox Sports Complex and Pool are owned by the City of Ottawa, but leased by the ORC. The ORC's limited funding and resources are mostly consumed by repairs and maintenance at each facility. Over the last 20 years, the ORC has individually funded over \$500,000 in improvements. One of our goals for 2024 is to review our shared operating agreements, hopefully leading to better partnership and noticeable improvements at Orlis Cox and the Pool, which our community deserves.

In 2023, the ORC spent over \$170,000 on maintenance, operations, and programming at the Orlis Cox Sports Complex, the Pool, and the Forest Park Fields. In that same time, combined revenue generated from those facilities equaled \$74,000. Meaning, the ORC had a nearly \$74,000 "loss" to operate and keep those facilities in their current condition. Tax dollars help supplement the gap in generated revenue.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



Left to Right: Scott Vink (City, 2024), Casey Chapman (Chair, At-Large, 2026), Matt Schurman (USD 290, 2027), Bruce Tate (City, 2025), Ashley Gillaspie (Vice-Chair, USD 290, 2026).

The Ottawa Recreation Commission is an autonomous governmental body comprised of a 5-member volunteer Board. The Ottawa City Commission appoints two members, the USD 290 Board appoints two members, and the four previously mentioned elect a member-at-large. ORC Board Members, by law, are not paid, and volunteer their time to represent the community. The ORC Board is responsible for establishing the written policies, protocols, and budget which govern ORC property, operations, programs, and safety.

The Commission has the authority to hire an Executive Director to oversee the daily operations and functions of the organization on their behalf. The Executive Director assumes full responsibility for overseeing staff, programs, facilities, and the finances of the organization.



Levi Meyer, Executive Director



Glenda Guge, Office Manager



Josh Blanco, Facilities Manager



Amy Carlson, Program Manager



Lanny Diel, Facilities Supervisor



Matt Parenti, Program Coordinator



Payton Whaler, Sports Coordinator



FROM THE DIRECTOR...

Thank you for taking the time to celebrate the highlights of our year by reading this report. As 2023 comes to a close, we enjoy reflecting on the many accomplishments over the past year while also planning what we want the ORC to accomplish in 2024. I'm incredibly proud of the hard work from our all of our staff and board members to make this a successful year.

The positive growth in 2023 can be highlighted through the following metrics:

- 10 new programs created.
- 41% overall increase in program registrations.
- 39% overall increase in generated revenue.

Additionally, thanks to the new technology, we are now able to count traffic into facilities like the Orlis Cox Sports Complex, which recorded 65,000 vehicles entering the park in 2023.

The success in 2023 simply wouldn't be possible without the continued support of our volunteers and community. In 2023, we estimated over 4,000 volunteer hours by our youth sports coaches alone! The number of business sponsorships also increased, which funds our scholarship program...thanks to the generosity of our local businesses, we anticipate adding swim lessons to the list of scholarship-eligible programs in 2024 !

Our partnership with USD 290 continues to create more impactful programs and services. For example, the ORC had the opportunity to host OMS PE Classes for 6 weeks while their gym floor was being repaired. We estimate daily building traffic totaling over 6,000 by OMS classes alone.

Other notable partner highlights include:

- Visits by K9-Zivon, the Franklin County Sheriff's Office Therapy Dog, to our youth programs.
- Ottawa Fire Department Summer Spray-down and utilization of the Goppert Building for PT.
- Frontier District Extension Office events for to educate kids on the keys to a healthy lifestyle.

Our new strategic plan will be published early 2024, and we look forward to using the feedback YOU provided to better serve the community. We will continue to push for more innovative, inclusive, and diverse programs and facilities.

While we look forward to continued progress, new developments, and opportunities in 2024, you can count on your Ottawa Recreation Commission to continue proudly providing excellent quality of life services. Thank you for choosing the ORC and supporting our mission to improve the overall health and wellness within our community, it is our pleasure to serve.

~ Levi Meyer, ORC Executive Director