



# Listen Up – Your Community is Talking

February 5, 2025

# About Me

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Program Manager  
Centerville-Washington Park  
District



# Why should we listen to our community?

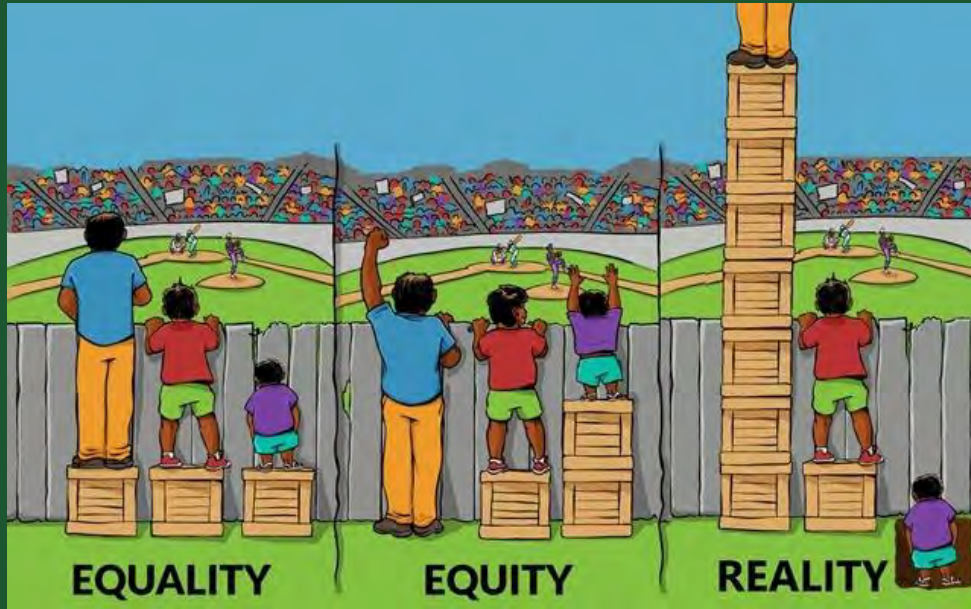
- Reflect Community Needs and Desires
- Building Trust and Engagement
- Encouraging Support and Funding (Think Levy)
- Fostering a Sense of Ownership
- No two communities are the same





# Learning About What Listening is NOT

Hearing the loudest person



Equality – listening to every comment equally – (prioritizing after a storm)

Reality – listening to the loudest person – (water polo / HOA example)

Equity – Listening to everyone and making the best decision for the community

# Listening is NOT

- Always making dramatic changes
  - Sometimes you just need to provide more education or an explanation



# Listening is NOT

- Putting your head in the sand.
- Making excuses
  - What are common “Park and Rec Excuses”



- Money
- Staffing
- Red Tape
- We are on the ballot soon
- Conflict of interest
- Weather
- Contractor Issues
- Permitting Issues
- Part / Items on back order
- Safety Concerns
- Vandalism or Theft



# How do we listen to all the voices?

- Actually listen when someone speaks up
- Surveys
- Focus Groups
- E-Newsletter
- Secret Shoppers
- Community Engagement Events
- Workshops / Open House
- Social Media
- Mobile Apps / QR codes
- Talk with Schools or Community Groups
- Direct Mail to Target Regions



# How do we listen?

- Residents want to feel heard
  - Talk Less, Listen More



Who has these in their parks???



# Program Surveys

- We do these after every program season and send them out to anyone who registered for a program
- We limit them to 8-10 questions and try to include new and unique questions each time (some stay the same)
- Make them look good!
- When you ask a question ask it for a reason
- Offer a prize for one lucky winner who fills out the survey



## Centerville-Washington Park District 2024 Summer Program Evaluation

**B I U**  

Thank you for participating in a program offered by the Park District this summer! We would appreciate your feedback. Please fill out this form for each program in which you participated.

In which program did you or your family member participate? \*

Please pick one from the list below - if you attended several, we would appreciate you filling out this form for each program. Thank you!

1. A Walk in the Park
2. Beaded Embroidery: Beetles and Bugs
3. Bee Day Party
4. Beginner Archery
5. BIG Backyard Party

Questions Responses **107** Settings

How did you hear about CWPD programs? \*

☐ Park District News and Events (quarterly newsletter)

☐ Active Dayton

☐ E-Newsletter

☐ Facebook/Social Media


☐ Friend/Family

☐ Newspaper

The first 50 people to complete the survey will be entered in a drawing for a \$25 gift card to Marion's Pizzal! Please enter your first name and email address below to be entered in the drawing.

Short answer text

Image title



# What questions should I ask?

Questions need to either collect general information or serve a purpose.

- Example of collecting general info- Which program did you attend? Value for your money? Good communication? Knowledge of staff / instructor?
  - Reason – These question are always good to look at to see if you can spot a trend? Also a way to evaluate instructor.
- Example of serving a purpose- What type of movie would you like to see us show in 2025?
  - Reason- We want high attendance at these expensive events that are free to the community. 'Kid / Disney movies' were rated the highest. We also asked for movie suggestions and got some great answers.
- Example of serving a purpose – What park would you like to see camp at in 2025?
  - Reason – We were considering moving park locations for some of our summer camps next year. We included our current park camp locations and new / different ones. It was sent out to all campers. The two we currently hold them at came back on top.
  - What questions does your organization ask?



# Use the survey for free marketing

- Did you know we have a volunteer program? If you are interested in becoming a volunteer ....
- Did you know our new playground at Yankee Park is open? We would love to see you there soon.
- Did you know we are already in the process of hiring summer camp staff? You only have to be 16 years old and applications are currently on our website.





# Survey Results in Action

Family Fun Tennis Day



Gentle Yoga



Archery Camp



Kid's Cooking



# Community Surveys

- Paid Surveys
- Professionals can help you get statistically valid survey data to use and share with the public.

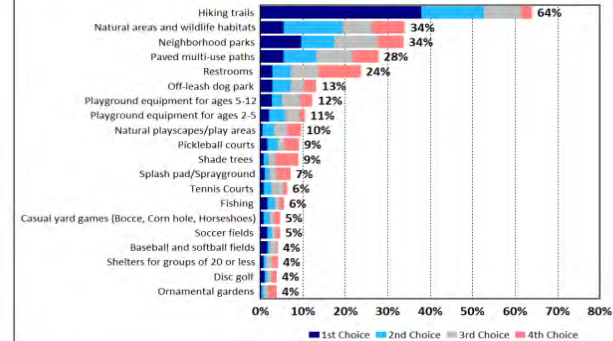


## Centerville-Washington Park District Community Interest and Opinion Survey – Executive Summary

**Amenity Importance:** In addition to assessing the needs for each amenity, ETC Institute also assessed the importance that residents placed on each. Based on the sum of respondents' top four choices, the most important amenities to residents were: paved trails (33%), unpaved trails (24%), and park lands (20%). The percentage of residents who selected each amenity as one of their top four choices is shown in the charts below.

### Q9. Amenities That Are Most Important to Households

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top four choices

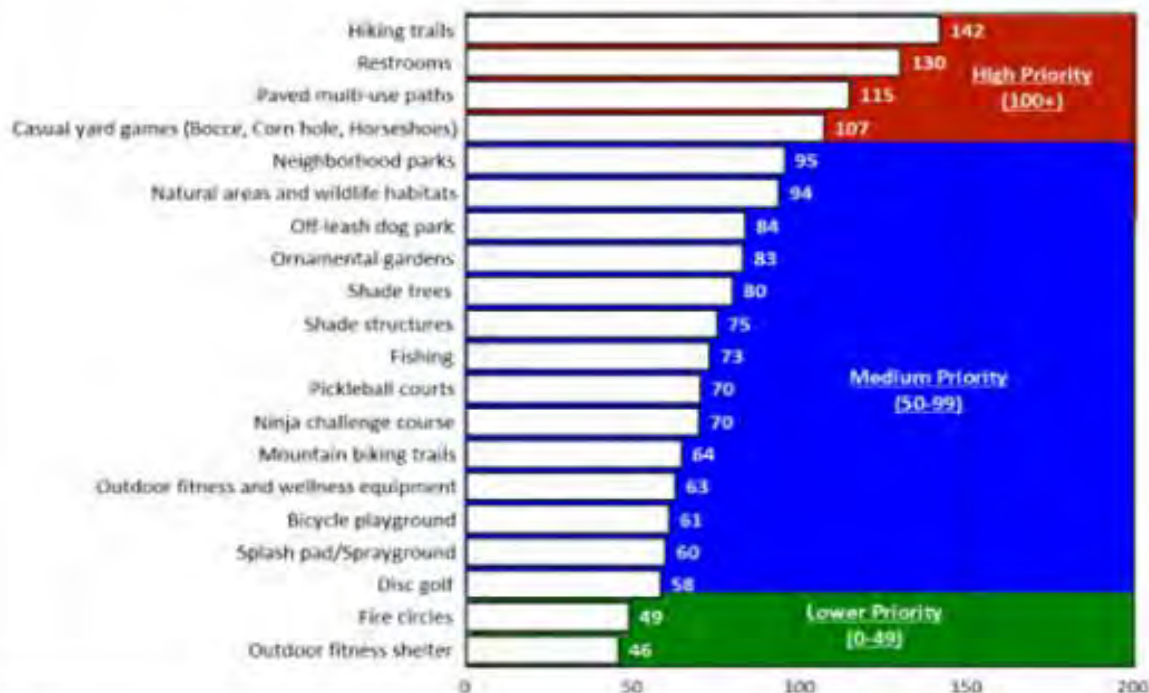


# Community Surveys

## Centerville-Washington Park District Community Interest and Opinion Survey – Executive Summary



### Top Priorities for Investment for Amenities Based on the Priority Investment Rating





# Focus Group

- Getting people that have a passion in a room to brainstorm ideas. You don't have to have a result from the meeting, but data collected can be key. [What is a focus group?](#)



- Advertise on social media, email people who might be a good fit, put up posters / banners.
- Give participants the questions in advance so they can prepare.
- Give people an option to respond even if they cannot attend
- Try to set up the meeting so everyone gets a chance to speak and the conversation is not dominated by one person.
- Record results

# Focus Group – Sign Board

“A communication board would also be an amazing resource!”

“Sign board for kids to point to things”

“My son is 16 and a nonreader. He could engage with his environment more if the information on signs included picture as well as words. Little ones would benefit from this as well.”



# E-Newsletter

An E-Newsletter is another great way to communicate with the public. The CWPD physical Newsletter is still very popular, but our E-Newsletter lets us show off more photos and give more updates. Other benefits are as follows:

- Cost effective
- Measurable and trackable
- Easy to make and share
- Environmentally friendly
- Promotes events and programs
- Easy to quickly change and update



Friday, December 20 is National Ugly Sweater Day! But, don't put your ugly sweater away! Join us the next day, Saturday, December 21, at Forest Field Park for a [fun run](#) inspired by one of the most "fashionable" parts of the holiday season! Wear your ugliest sweater and be ready to learn about some of the ugly "sweaters" found in the natural world.



Celebrate the Winter Solstice at the family-friendly [Winter Hiking Club Solstice Sunset](#) on Saturday, December 21, from 5 - 6 p.m. Meet at the Bill Yeck Park Smith House Entrance.



A snowy day? Walk to your closest park and build a snow animal! This unexpected sight will bring so much joy to other park visitors! Do you recognize this snow animal? Owelexander appeared in Village South Park last week!



#### Get Creative!

Make a [twig star](#) and embellish it with items you find in nature such as evergreen clippings, berries and pinecones! Use it as an ornament, tree topper or a beautiful nature craft for any time of year!



#### Nature News in Your BIG Backyard



Professor, Department of Biological Sciences at Wright State University writes a guest blog on our website. [Check out his latest article](#) about how diggerfish were still hanging around in November!



#### Park Moments

Owelexander gives great hugs! You never know when he is going to show up at a park program!

Do you have a special park moment to share? We would love to see it! Send it to us at [mail@cwpd.org](mailto:mail@cwpd.org) or tag us on social media!



## In Your BIG Backyard

A monthly Centerville-Washington Park District newsletter

We hope you enjoyed the Thanksgiving holiday!

Now it's time to decide how you will enjoy your parks this December! We recommend checking out these five things next month:



Need some encouragement to get outside this winter? We're here for you! Join the Winter Pop-Up Park Challenge and we'll give you a new reason to get



Enjoy a one-mile candlelit stroll! The [Luminary Walk](#) is on Friday, December 13. A shorter wheelchair and stroller-friendly paved path is available. Warm up by the fire circle and enjoy the sounds of the season with carols from Centerville High School's symphonic choir!



# Secret Shoppers

The idea of a “Secret Shopper” can be done in many ways and can be an effective way to listen to your community.

1. Give a free class to a patron in exchange for honest written feedback about the class or program.
  1. This is great to do with a new contracted instructor or employee leading a program.
2. Have a program where you give a resident credit in their account in exchange for feedback (household credit). They can pick and choose what they would like to do.
  1. Be sure to mix up who you pick and the less the person knows about your organization the better.
  2. Don't forget to ask about the registration process, pre-program notifications, exit surveys, etc.



# Events in the Community

Any large scale community event is a great time to listen to your community. Events are a busy and hectic time. If you have the staff and resources, dedicate someone to taking photos and asking questions at the event.

## Examples of good questions to ask – (You can even offer something for free)

How did you hear about this event? (Free Kona)

Are you from this area or did you come in from another town? (Hawaiian Leis)

Are you aware of our next event or summer camp program? (Raffle Drawing)

Always have a welcome table

Always have future program information available



# Board Meetings

- If they take the time to come to your board meeting, give them a chance to speak.
- Actively listen and get back with them. Nothing can really be solved at the board meeting.
- Follow up is KEY!





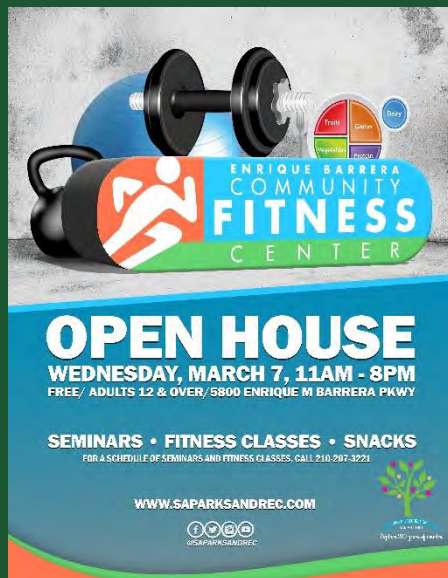
# Welcome Tables

- Do this everywhere you can!
- Events with the city, township, library, police, fire department, etc.



# Workshops / Open House

- Open Houses are especially useful for tax payer funded rec centers or Community Centers. How have you done this in your community?
- [Virtual Open House](#)

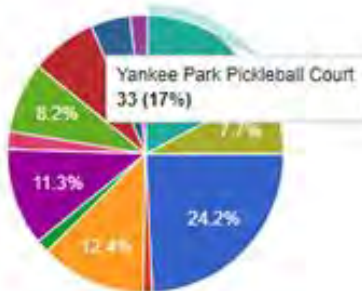


# Apps or QR Codes

- Apps and QR codes are a great way to collect information from park visitors.
- You can also use it for voting!

Which court did you visit today?

194 responses



● Activity Center Park Pickleball Court  
● Forest Field Park Pickleball Court  
● Forest Field Park Tennis Court  
● Green Park Tennis Court  
● Oak Grove Park Tennis Court  
● Old Lane Park Pickleball Court  
● Old Lane Park Tennis Court  
● Schoolhouse Park Pickleball Court

▲ 1/2 ▼

 Centerville-Washington  
PARK DISTRICT

## Vote for Your Favorite Yeti!

We hope you had fun searching for Spot's Yetis!  
Submit your votes and record sheet by 11:59 pm on  
Monday, February 20, 2023, to [klucas@cwpcd.org](mailto:klucas@cwpcd.org).



 Centerville-Washington  
PARK DISTRICT



# Let's Have Some Fun!

#2



#4



#5



#6



#12



#13



#14



#15



#8



#9



#10



#11



#17



#20



#22



#23



#24



#25



#26



#27



#32



#33



#34



#36



#28



#29



#30



#31







# Other ways to engage



Centerville-Washington Park District

December 17, 2021 · 🌟

...

🎵 Don we now our worst apparel! 🎵

Happy National Ugly Sweater Day! Help us vote on the ugliest CWPD staff sweater! There's more than pride on the line here ... the winner gets an Old Scratch gift card! Voting will end at 9am on Monday, December 20.

Thanks for voting and we hope you're enjoying this special holiday!





# Working with the Schools

Get involved with local schools and see how your organization can help. Listen up -- they know how to program for kids! Don't wait for them to come to you.



# Neighborhoods / Groups

Working with community groups helps you get your message out to others and gives groups a chance to meet you

- Neighborhood Pumpkin Contest
- Penbrooke Garden Sale
- Bike Centerville Rides
- Arbor Day Event





# Neighborhood Sponsorships

- Area businesses want to help out and be heard! Listen to them and see if they can assist your organization with resources or financially.






# Direct Mailings

1. Mailing sent out to all residents directly effected by changes. This instills confidence in the community and they always appreciate being in the know.
2. It also typically makes the residents “supporters” of the project.
3. Helps answer questions and clears up confusion before misinformation starts.
4. Always leave phone number and email at the bottom so they have someone to contact with issues or questions.

**Centerville-Washington  
PARK DISTRICT**

VILLAGE SOUTH PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT: ANTICIPATED COMPLETION LATE 2024



PLAYGROUND EXAMPLES FOR  
REFERENCE ONLY

Dear Park Neighbor,

The Centerville-Washington Park District has repair and replacement schedules in place to prevent gaps in services, whether it is for large items like hardscapes or playgrounds, or smaller items like picnic tables and soccer nets.

Based on this schedule, the playground at Village South Park is due for an update!

We plan to remove the current playground, add new playground equipment in a different location, and add a paved path for easier access. We will reach out again when it is time to select playground equipment. In the meantime, if you have questions, suggestions or other feedback, please don't hesitate to contact me. We appreciate your engagement with the process of improving your neighborhood park!

Thank you,  
*Nick Meyer*  
Nick Meyer  
Project Manager, Centerville-Washington Park District  
nmeyer@cwpd.org or 937-433-5155

# Direct Mailings



Polls letting you vote on the next playground for your community.

## **Centerville-Washington PARK DISTRICT**

221 N. Main Street, Centerville, Ohio 45459

Dear Park Neighbor,

The playground at Village South Park is ready for an update!

We have compiled playground equipment options for neighbors to review. Visit

**[cwpd.org/parks/village-south](http://cwpd.org/parks/village-south)**

to review the options and let us know your thoughts. Show your children/grandchildren and ask their opinions!

We would love to hear from you in person as well. Join us for an open house at the park! Representatives from the Centerville-Washington Park District and Penchura Playgrounds will be in attendance.

**Wednesday, May 22**

**5 – 7 p.m.**

We appreciate your feedback and are excited to make improvements to Village South Park!

# Direct Mailings

When voting on something, make sure your organization controls the options. Your organization must approve of all options and be comfortable with the one that wins.





# Social Media - Interacting

- Answer Social Media Questions
  - If you don't use it / don't have it
- Ask Questions
- If you want the community to talk to you, you need to let them know you are listening



# Make Your Community Feel Included

## Project VIPR





# Listen To Your Staff

- Don't forget that your staff is part of the community too. Many times they have great and useful ideas!
- Give full-time staff a chance to voice ideas.
- Some ideas for questions for a summer camp staff survey:
  - What is one activity that did not work out that we should not continue to do. Why?
  - Returners, what was better or worse this year?





# You Spoke, We Listened

After you listen to your community, it's important to show off what you did.



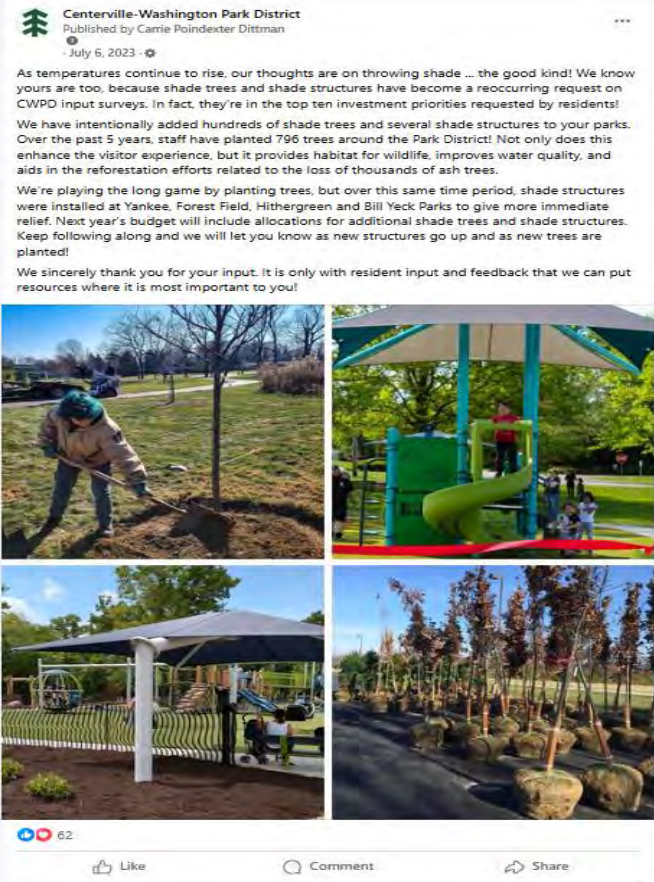
expanded to meet your requests!

## Overwhelming Approval of Levy Renewal

In a democratic system, there is no more powerful communication vehicle than the ballot box. On November 7, more than

Your Centerville-Washington Park Board is serious about providing the park and recreation opportunities you want. In 2015, a large sampling of residents provided us with lots of great feedback. Then in late 2016, we conducted *another* survey to get *more* of your ideas and opinions. We supplemented the survey with citizen interviews, focus groups and public meetings. Thank you to everyone who participated!

We would like to share the many improvements that are a direct result of your input. So, every two weeks for the remainder of the year we will be posting a short message about what's been added, fixed, improved or



# Social Media

Sometimes it's difficult to stay above it. Be sure to think before you post. Always get someone else to look at the post before you post it, if you are unsure.

“Generally my policy has always been -- don't feed the trolls. However, occasionally the situation calls for something a little more.” – Carrie Dittman, CWPDP Marketing and Communications Supervisor



# Social Media – Show Off

 **Centerville-Washington Park District**  
Published by Carrie Poindexter Dittman  
October 12, 2023

Fence Row Park has two new pieces of playground equipment! CWPD has detailed repair and replacement schedules, whether it is for large items like hardscapes or playground updates, or smaller items like picnic tables and soccer nets.

Which parks are scheduled for playground updates next? Waterbury Woods and Village South!

Learn more about recent park improvements on our website:  
<https://www.cwpd.org/2023/10/09/recent-park-improvements/>



**Fence Row Park**  
1650 Haley Drive

See insights and ads [Boost post](#)

67 10 comments 6 shares

Like Comment Share

View more comments

 **Bridget Ryan Holt**  
The neighbors in Yankee Trace thank you for this update! My kids love it.

1y Love Reply Hide 2



# Social Media - Show Off



Centerville-Washington Park District

Published by Carrie Polidoro (Dittman)

November 15, 2023 · 🌐

On November 3, the Centerville-Washington Park District was awarded an honorable mention for the inaugural 'Partner with My Public Library Award', sponsored by the national non-profit Let's Move in Libraries. The award shines a light on those who collaborate with public libraries to transform their communities.

The Washington-Centerville Public Library and CWPD have been collaborating partners for years —providing the community with robust joint programming such as nature walks, book discussions, poetry walks, a Race to the Holidays 5K and more. In 2023, WCPL and CWPD introduced a seed library to provide the community with free seed packets — grown and packed by CWPD and distributed at WCPL.

In their award nomination, WCPL wrote: "Washington-Centerville Public Library was selected as a host for The Wall That Heals, a ¾ replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. in July 2023. The vast exhibit was too large for any of the library locations, but when asked to partner with us, Centerville-Washington Park District jumped in to provide the perfect landscape—Yankee Park. Not only did they provide the actual space for the exhibit, but they volunteered their staff and crew (even the Executive Director, Kristen Marks!) to assist in the construction and deconstruction of The Wall That Heals, and provided electric and trash collection for the duration of the exhibit. Ken Carter, Park Operations Manager, even took an overnight volunteer shift for the exhibit when we were short-handed. We quite literally could not have done it without them. An estimated 4,700 people visited Yankee Park over a five-day time frame for the exhibit and we heard many wonderful compliments on the beauty and cleanliness of the park."

The Centerville-Washington Park District has been recognized three times in 2023 for partnership efforts. We are grateful to our partners and look forward to continuing to maximize our impact in 2024!



Centerville-Washington Park District is at Yankee Park.

April 21, 2022 · Centerville · 🌐

Yankee Park playground is open! Our new friend Everett helped us test it out this afternoon. The official grand opening and ribbon cutting will be in May. We'll announce those details later — for now, go have fun!



Kristen Marks, Ginger Clark and 193 others

27 comments · 15 shares



# Social Media - Show Off



Don't be afraid to get personal.  
People love real stories!





# What can happen when we listen

## Eclipse Event 2025





# Putting it all together



- [Activity Center Park Tour](#)



# Survey



## Scan Me!