



## Seasonal Reflections

### INSIDE

**Inclusive Play  
Gaining Momentum in  
Anchorage** **2**

**Challenge Grantees  
Make Strides** **3**

**Back to School with  
Schools on Trails** **4**

**Mayor's AmeriCorps  
Members Give Back to  
the Community** **4**

**Youth Employment  
in Parks Wraps Up** **5**

**Health on Trails** **6**

**Anchorage Trails  
Wayfinding** **6**

As the first snowfall dusts our city, the finishing touches are being put on Muldoon's dream inclusive playground at Chanshtnu Muldoon Park. There will be a huge net climber that reminds neighbors of the old Mann Leiser greenhouses and an ice skating ribbon weaving around the play equipment. No matter the time of year, Chanshtnu Muldoon Park will be the place to play! The Northeast Community Council worked hard with the Municipal Parks and Recreation team, and it paid off – stay tuned on a festive winter celebration for the whole family.

South Anchorage is buzzing about the new South Anchorage Sports Park inclusive playground. It is the proud to feature the tallest climber in Anchorage (say, is that part of the Chugach Range?) and a double roller slide, multi-level spinner, sand pit, and red apple slide for tots. Even lowering temperatures can't keep the flocks of children away from this incredible playground.

I hope you'll take a minute to page through the amazing list of completed 2017 park and trail projects, and let us thank you for adding your hard-earned private contributions and volunteer hours to taxpayer supported projects throughout town. We know you love parks and trails and you want to make a difference in your community with your work, your resources, your vote, and your voice.

Sincerely,  


Beth Nordlund  
Executive Director



# Inclusive Play Gaining Momentum in Anchorage



Anchorage is leading the way in inclusive play. The Anchorage Park Foundation and the Municipality of Anchorage are making inclusive play a priority because children of all abilities deserve a place to play. A recent study by University of Alaska student Adam Schoffstall found that Anchorage is a leader in the nation having a whopping 12 inclusive playgrounds and working with multiple stakeholders to continue to plan and construct even more. The Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education recently recognized the Anchorage Park Foundation and partners for the work that has been done on inclusive play. We know there's still a lot to do, but we have made great strides this summer!

In July, we helped host the second annual Anchorage Teddy Bear Picnic. Over 3,000 people came together to celebrate inclusive play in Cuddy Family Midtown Park, home to Anchorage's first inclusive playground. The picnic included bouncy castles, a Teddy Bear parade, salmon burgers, and many activities that catered to all abilities and ages.

We partnered with The Arc of Anchorage, Ted Stevens Foundation, Anchorage Parks and Recreation, Stone Soup Group, Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, Special Olympics, Equine Assisted Therapy Alaska, FOCUS, Girl Scouts of Alaska, Anchorage Public Library, Anchorage Skating Club, and Parks for All to make this day a resounding success.

In September, the inclusive playground at South Anchorage Sports Park opened. This playground boasts a little bit of everything: an ADA accessible parking lot, two roller slides that inspire healthy competition and provide a unique sensory experience, an oodle swing that encourages collaborative play, accessible play surfacing, and the



Our friends at The Arc of Anchorage enjoyed an afternoon playdate at the new inclusive playground.

largest net-climber in the city—30ft tall! The whole playground was built with inclusive play in mind, and we are thrilled to see so many children enjoy all the fun features this playground offers.

The 30ft net climber at South Anchorage Sports Park is wildly popular among children and adults alike!

Construction continues at Chanshtnu Muldoon Park (previously referred to as Muldoon

Town Square Park). The playground design is inspired by the Alaska Greenhouses that once resided on the land, with a greenhouse net climber, sculptural grass spinners, and floating rocks. Other inclusive features include accessible play surfacing, musical instruments, two oodle swings, and a supernova spinner for group play. We look forward to the playground opening in the coming weeks and the work on Phase 2 of the park which will begin next summer.

Also on the docket for next year, Jewel Lake Park, Chugach Foothills Park, Whisper Faith Kovach Park, and Frontierland Park are all set to get new inclusive play features. We are also excited for our first indoor playground, which will be at the Fairview Recreation Center.



This multi-level spinner encourages collaborative play!



# Challenge Grantees Make Strides

This spring, with the support of Rasmuson Foundation, we awarded **16 Challenge Grants** to community park improvement projects championed by passionate neighbors. Challenge Grants encourage stewardship and partnership to make positive changes in Anchorage's parks and trails. Recipients of the grant must match the funds with private donations, in-kind services, or volunteer hours, and have two years to make their project happen. Many of the groups are already well on their way! **Here's what was accomplished this summer:**

## Fairview Park Improvements



Renovations began at Fairview Park as part of the Challenge Grant project championed by Anchorage Community Land Trust and the Fairview Community Council. We joined the Challenge Grantees along with the Mayor's Americorps Resiliency Coalition and Fairview neighbors to plant apple trees, strawberries, and rhubarb, build hexagonal raised beds, paint benches, and install temporary art on the fence. The Fix-It was the first step in a plan for major improvements to the park.

## Hostetler Park Renovations



The Anchorage Rotary Club partnered with Victims for Justice to turn the often-overlooked Victims for Justice Memorial in Hostetler Park into a more accessible and inviting space for families and friends to mourn the loss of their loved ones, as well as find hope and healing. Improvements included replacing the memorial, installing an ADA-compliant walkway, increasing lighting, and landscaping.

## Folker Park Fitness Equipment



Progress towards a health and healing themed park is well underway at Folker Park in the U-Med District. Volunteers planted forget-me-not flowers to mimic a stream weaving through the park's east side. Park neighbor Barbara Garner and the Providence Horizon House, a senior residency located across the street, were awarded a Challenge Grant for their idea of a fitness area with equipment that people of all ages can use together. The group continues working toward their vision.

## Dave Rose Cricket (Kilikiti)



The Samoan cricket (Kilikiti) community celebrated their new official field in Dave Rose Park. The Kilikiti community has been playing in parks all over Anchorage for the last few years and now have a permanent home. The new layout includes a 455-square foot concrete pitch surrounded by a large circular field.

## Outdoor Learning Spaces



Campbell STEM Elementary and Sand Lake Elementary have big dreams of regularly taking their lessons outside and were both awarded Challenge Grants to build outdoor classrooms in their nearby parks. The STEM Afterschool Club broke ground at Wolverine Park this fall where they planted new shrubs and seeds. Students at Sand Lake Elementary have been working with volunteer landscape architects and a surveyor to design their future outdoor space.



## Mayor's AmeriCorps Members Give Back to the Community



This was the first summer of the Mayor's AmeriCorps Program (MAP), a twelve-week summer program in partnership with the Municipality of Anchorage. Ten Anchorage youth were selected to serve in five municipal departments including Police, Parks and Recreation, Public Library, Health and Human Services, and Fire. The members helped with community outreach projects including door-to-door neighborhood polling, fire inspections, and park masterplanning. "This program has introduced me to a whole new profession that I think I could see myself doing in life [and] helped further solidify my passion for serving my community." -Alex



## Back to School with Schools on Trails



Fall is back to school and a fabulous time to take students outdoors and immerse them in the changing of the seasons. Schools on Trails has been very busy starting off the school year with the field trip of a lifetime to Portage Glacier and the Begich Boggs Visitor Center thanks to a Every Kid in a Park grant through the US Forest Service. Fourth graders from four Title 1 schools, Mountain View Elementary, William Tyson Elementary, Creekside Elementary, and Fairview, took the one hour boat ride to view Portage Glacier (pictured above), touched glacier ice, and learned about glacier formation. For many of the students and their parent chaperones, it was their first time seeing a glacier.

In the spring, we awarded Challenge Grants to three Anchorage schools to help them improve their nearby parks and take their lessons outside. With the school year beginning, projects are really coming to life. Campbell STEM Elementary students have been working hard in Wolverine Park with the help of volunteer landscape architects Elise Huggins (Earthscape)

and Bri Keifer (Huddle). They've planted edible shrubs, mapped trail improvements, located sites for future bird houses, and updated their local community council on their plan for improvements. Sand Lake Elementary students spent an afternoon with volunteer landscape architect Kevin Doniere (NPS), surveyor Mark Aimonetti (Edge Survey) and Russian Jack Rotarians, visualizing their outdoor classroom design on the ground and developing a technical plan. Students at Pacific Northern Academy are working on designing and constructing a multi-use loop trail in the northwest corner of Ruth Arcand Park.

Fall is also the time of year when teachers who attended our Summer Academy course can finally test out the new ideas and activities they learned. This 2-day course at the end of May is a collaboration between Schools on Trails and other Get Outdoors Anchorage partners to help ASD teachers expand the boundaries of the classroom to include the outdoors. This summer 28 teachers learned how to utilize the parks and trails within walking distance of school for classes and activities through hands-on lessons. Now in its fourth year, this is a very popular course.





# Youth Employment in Parks Wraps Up

Youth Employment in Parks (YEP) had another successful season!

This summer the YEP program hired 25 Anchorage youth, from nine different high schools, to complete park improvements throughout the Municipality of Anchorage. This year's projects included:

- Construction of a neighborhood connector trail in Russian Jack Springs Park
- Building a sustainable trail from Kincaid Park to the Coastal Wildlife Refuge
- Three streambank restoration projects along the Campbell Creek corridor
- Trail maintenance on the Kincaid Beach Trail
- Park improvements at Jewel Lake Park and Lions Park in Girdwood
- Brushing and trail maintenance at Davis Park
- Re-opening an old (and loved) walking trail at Russian Jack Springs Park
- Building raised garden beds at Fairview Community Garden



One of the highlights of the summer was Campbell Creek bank restoration. To prepare for the project, the teens participated in a Streambank Rehabilitation and Habitat Protection workshop with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, and the Alaska Plant Materials Center. They learned techniques for restoring degraded streambanks and fish habitat, as well as preventative measures landowners can use to prevent erosion and habitat degradation. After completing the class our teens took to the creek and put their classroom knowledge into action. We restored 1,400ft of streambank!

Throughout the summer the crew members participated in a variety of education and recreation opportunities. These activities provided them with the necessary skills to become reliable employees and stewards of their community. For our civic engagement event this year the teens helped out at the Anchorage Teddy Bear Picnic. This community event focused on bringing awareness to inclusive play. The teens learned about different features and designs playgrounds can incorporate to remove physical and social barriers so that play is accessible to all.

We look forward to another exciting year in 2018 with a new group of amazing Anchorage teens! Know someone who might be interested in applying? YEP will be accepting applications for crew members approximately January 16 - March 19, 2018.





# Health on Trails



Who: everyone Date: everyday

**Rx:** *walk or mountain bike  
the hilly trails at Kincaid  
Park*

Sig: *1 hour, 3 times a week*

Dispense:

Refills: *unlimited*

Signature: Anchorage Park Foundation

Have you heard of Health on Trails? One of our newest initiatives, this interdisciplinary coalition is working to connect the outdoor recreation and health sectors. This year the committee launched two programs: **Park Rx** and wellness maps. Park Rx is a national program based out of Washington, DC where clinicians prescribe park and trail recreational use to their patients to combat obesity and prevent chronic disease. Over the summer, Health on Trails utilized two Mayor's AmeriCorps Program members to begin mapping health assets in Anchorage parks, which will be added to the Park Rx database.

The other arm of the initiative, **wellness maps** will be used by local organizations and businesses to encourage physical activity among their employees and lead to improved health and increased productivity. The maps show walking and exercise routes connecting workplaces to parks and trails and inspire employees to get thirty minutes of daily exercise. Health on Trails is working with four different organizations, Providence Hospital, DOWL, Catholic Social Services and the Aleutian Pribilof Islands, to pilot this program and incorporate wellness maps into their worksite wellness programs.

## Anchorage Trails Wayfinding



We continue to work hard to sign our Anchorage trails and create a system that locals and visitors alike can use to easily navigate their way through the city. This

summer we celebrated the installation of mile markers along the Chester Creek Trail and two directional signs in Russian Jack Springs Park. Interested in sponsoring a sign along the Coastal Trail? You can learn more here:

[www.aedcweb.com/live-work-play/areas-of-focus/trails-transit](http://www.aedcweb.com/live-work-play/areas-of-focus/trails-transit)



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