

## Chapter 5 - Recreation Programming



# Chapter 5 - Recreation Programming

Providing services to the public is the basic function and responsibility of municipal government. Government's purpose is to provide, on a broad scale, those services that help to meet the significant needs of citizens but can't be performed as efficiently or economically by individual citizens acting for themselves. This includes providing public parks and offering public recreation programs. The goal is to ensure that the members of every segment of the population – regardless of age, physical or mental condition, or economic or social standing – have opportunities to enjoy broad, satisfying recreation experiences.

Providing park land and recreation facilities are important municipal functions. Equally as important are the recreation experiences residents have through involvement in recreation programs. Recreation programming is the process of creating opportunities for people to engage in recreation experiences – both organized and self-directed activities.

Recreation programs build community by providing positive activities that encourage a sense of unity, pride, and appreciation for community traditions and heritage. Through recreation programs, citizens improve their health and fitness, enhance their creativity, build relationships, reduce stress, and become happier and more involved in community life. Children develop self-confidence, stay physically active, and make friends.

Spring Garden Township provides its citizens with public recreation programming through its Recreation Department. The Township is not the sole provider of recreation services in the community, however, it is one among inter-related public, non-profit, private, commercial, and other agencies that contribute to the recreation facility and program resources available to Spring Garden Township residents. This chapter addresses the variety of organizations that help to meet the recreation program needs of Spring Garden Township citizens.

## Inventory of Recreation Programs and Providers

### Spring Garden Township Recreation Department

The Spring Garden Township Recreation Department offers special events, sports programs and learning opportunities for all ages.



Table 5-1 details the programs offered by the Township in 2014 and 2015.



**Table 5-1  
Spring Garden Township  
Recreation Department 2014 - 2015 Programs**

<b>Program Type</b>	<b>Program Name</b>	<b>Program Location</b>
Family Special Events (5)	Screen Free Week Community Yard Sale Breakfast with Santa Fall Fest National Night Out	Tri Hill Municipal Building Tri Hill Park Valley View Elementary Tri Hill Park Penn State York
Preschool Programs (8)	Little Hands Cooking* Preschool Arts and Crafts Princess and Pirate Party Super Hero Camp Preschool Tea Party Indoor Pee-Wee Soccer* Dr. Seuss Day Luncheon* Summer Tot Park	York Township Office Tri Hill Municipal Building Tri Hill Park Tri Hill Park Tri Hill Municipal Building York Township Park Building York Township Office Tri Hill Park
Youth Programs (9)	Getting to Know the Kitchen* Snack and Small Meals* Parent and Child Culinary Challenge* Cooking Rocks* Beginner Bakers* Easter Egg Hunt Flashlight Egg Hunt Summer Tween Park Summer Parks Program	York Township Park Building York Township Park Building York Township Park Building York Township Park Building York Township Park Building Tri Hill Park Tri Hill Park Grantley Park Tri Hill Park, Elmwood Park
Adult Programs (7)	Boating Safety Course* Safe Driver's Course* Master Gardener Classes* My Painting Tonight* The Vegan Kitchen* Cooking Hearty Winter Foods* Apple iPad/iPhone Class	York Township Park Building York Township Office York Township Park Building York Township Park Building York Township Park Building York Township Park Building Tri Hill Municipal Building
Adult Fitness (3)	Zumba* Senior Strides* Interval Step with Pilates*	York Township Park Building York Township Park Building York Township Park Building
Adult Athletics (2)	Bocce League* Indoor Shuffleboard*	York Township Park York Township Park Building
Youth Athletics (6)	Cheer Camp Track and Field Meet Punt, Pass and Kick Contest EYC Basketball Basketball Cheerleading  York Little League Baseball and Softball	Tri-Hill Park York Technical Institute Elmwood Park York Suburban High School and Middle School, East York, Yorkshire, Indian Rock and Valley View Elementary Schools Tri Hill Park, Custis Field, Elmwood Park
Trips and Tours (7)	Resorts Casino* New York City Shopping* Radio City Christmas Show* Brandywine Tour and Longwood Gardens* Orlando, FL* Branson, MO*	N/A

( ) = Number of programs      Total number of programs = 47

\*Sponsored by York Township Recreation Department. Spring Garden Township residents may register at York Township resident rate, but must register directly with York Township.

**Youth Sports** – A variety of youth sports organizations serve Spring Garden Township residents. Nearly all of the sports programs offered are organized by separate volunteer groups; there is no umbrella athletic association. Groups include: Trojan Wrestling Club (grades 1 to 6); Trojan Track Club (ages 5 to 15); York Suburban Lacrosse Club (ages 8 to 15); Trojan Soccer Club (ages 5 to 18); CK8 Sports Flag Football (ages 5 to 17); Trojan Aquatic Club (ages 5 to 18); and Eastern York County Football and Cheerleading (ages 6 to 12). Tennis for Kids, a free five-week summer tennis program for ages 7 to 16, runs at York Suburban High School and Penn State York. Spring Garden Township boys ages 13 and up play in the York County Baseball League.

**York Suburban School District** – The York Suburban School District offers after-school intramural activities and clubs at its middle school. These include intramurals in basketball, cross country, field hockey, and volleyball; and club activities such as chess, color guard, walking, weight training, ping pong, sign language, and skiing/snowboarding. A variety of club programs are available at the high school. They include community service, student fitness, table tennis, traditional games, ultimate Frisbee, ski and board, book and green clubs. School district parent-teacher organizations sponsor recreation programs such as dances, family fun nights, roller skating parties, and festivals for each school as well as district-wide events. Until recently, the School District sponsored an extensive schedule of adult education programs and instructional swimming lessons. It is currently reviewing its adult education programming and is not offering classes in the spring of 2015. The York JCC has taken over the instructional swimming lessons at York Suburban High School. The Trojan Aquatic Club uses the high school swimming pool as well for its competitive swim team. The School District's Community Education Department offers Summer Enrichment camps for school-aged students. Sports camps include girls' lacrosse, girls' soccer, fundamental volleyball, power volleyball, field hockey, snorkeling, scuba diving and bowling. Other camps include creative writing, art, cooking, science, and preparation for Kindergarten.

**York Jewish Community Center** – The York JCC is a non-profit membership-based community center located in York Township, in close proximity to Spring Garden Township. The York JCC is open to everyone regardless of religion, financial, or ethnic background. Included in membership is the use of the fitness center, over 75 group and water fitness classes each week, lap and family swims, open gym use, swim lessons, family art, gym activities, and discounts on sports, dance, wellness, and enrichment classes, camps and programs. All activities are available to non-members at a higher price. Preschool day care, before and after school care, and summer day camps are also offered.

**Heritage Hills Resort and Athletic Club** – The Heritage Hills Athletic Club is a membership-based fitness center in York Township that offers a full schedule of group fitness classes such as cycle, kickboxing, and yoga. Team sports indoor leagues are offered for adults in flag football, men's and women's soccer, and men's basketball; and for youth in boys' and girls' soccer, girls' field hockey, and boys' lacrosse. The club's Ballyhoo Sports Academy offers youth club sports for boys' basketball, girls' basketball, girls' field hockey, football, lacrosse, soccer, softball, and volleyball. A full-day summer day camp is held during the summer months. The Heritage Hills Resort offers snow tubing, ice skating, miniature golf, and laser tag. The resort has two 18-hole golf courses, Heritage Hills and Springwood. Both are open to the public for daily play; season memberships are available as well. Heritage Hills Golf Course also features a driving range. The resort sponsors golf clinics, private lessons, tournaments, adult leagues, junior golf camps, and instructional leagues.

**White Rose Senior Center** – The White Rose Senior Center is located in York City. The Senior Center is part of the York County Area Agency on Aging; it is a multi-service facility for adults ages 60 and

older. Its programs are designed to overcome loneliness, enhance self-esteem, encourage personal growth, and facilitate independence through involvement. It serves a free daily lunch Monday-Friday for members and participates in the Meals on Wheels program. Programs include bus trips, health and wellness workshops, craft classes, holiday parties and special events, exercise classes, and bingo. The Center is open Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Martin Memorial Library** – The Martin Memorial Library, part of the York County Library System, is the nearest regional library to Spring Garden Township. Located in York City, it is dedicated to providing area residents with library and information services. The Library maintains a selection of classic and current materials for all ages. In particular, its children’s library and children’s programming are designed to foster and maintain a love of books and reading in children. It also has access to thousands of other reference sources through county and state interlibrary loan services, the internet, and online databases. Programs include baby, toddler and preschool story times; writer’s workshops, teen art club, Lego club, and special events such as a Princess Book Party.

**WellSpan Health** – WellSpan Health offers year-round community health and wellness programs. These include fitness programs such as T’ai Chi and Yoga, cooking classes, first aid and CPR, baby sign language classes, Safe Sitter Babysitter courses, nutrition classes, and health-related educational programs.

**Outdoor Recreation** – A section of the York County Heritage Rail Trail County Park traverses the Township along its western edge, from the Codorus Creek to the York City boundary. The 21-mile-long trail runs north from the Mason-Dixon Line just south of the Borough of New Freedom to the Colonial Courthouse in the City of York. The trail connects to Maryland’s 20-mile long Torrey C. Brown Trail. The most popular activities on the trail are hiking, jogging, bicycle riding, and horseback riding. The Indian Rock Campground is located adjacent to the rail-trail. Open year-round, it features 40 campsites with electric, water and sewer hook-ups as well as a separate tent camping area.

#### **Other Recreation Providers –**

- **Gymnastics** – Gymnastics of York offers boys’, girls’ and preschool gymnastics classes, cheerleading tumbling, and parent-tot classes, plus competitive gymnastic team training. Tiny Tumblers provides introductory gymnastics and fitness classes for children ages 15 months to 8 years at its location in the South York Plaza.
- **Dance** – The Performing Arts Academy of York offers lyrical, ballet, tap, jazz, and hip hop dance classes for preschoolers through teens.
- **Karate** – Kim’s Karate is located on Mount Rose Avenue in the Township and offers karate classes for all ages.
- **Swimming** – The Wisehaven Swimming Pool is a family-owned private outdoor swimming pool in York Township. Tennis courts are also on the property. Wisehaven offers season memberships for individuals and families. With no outdoor pools located in Spring Garden Township, many residents join the Wisehaven Swimming Pool.
- **Youth Groups** – Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and church youth groups are very active in the Township.

- Fitness Centers – Area adult fitness and gym providers include Evolution Power Yoga, Renaissance Yoga Studio, Curves, Anytime Fitness, Planet Fitness, and Gold’s Gym.
- Bowling – Suburban Bowlerama is located in Spring Garden Township and provides after school bowling programs for York Suburban elementary and intermediate school students, with bus transportation provided. The bowling alley offers bowling leagues and lessons on Saturday mornings for children, a variety of bowling leagues for adults, and public open bowling hours.
- Roller Skating – Roll ‘R’ Way Family Skating Center in York City offers public roller skating sessions for all ages, plus special events and private parties.
- Ice Skating – The York Ice Arena is located in York City’s Memorial Park. It houses two NHL regulation ice surfaces with locker rooms and spectator seating. The second level of the complex houses a fitness center and large community event space available for rental. The York Ice Arena is home to the York Ice Hockey Club and White Rose Figure Skating Club. Skating lessons and public skating sessions are held year-round.

## Program and Facility Partners

The York Suburban School District plays an active role in recreation. It allows public use of its facilities for youth sports programs and offers swimming programs at its indoor pool. In the past, the school district sponsored adult education programs. The Township uses the district’s four elementary schools, middle school, and high school for programs throughout the year. The Township pays an hourly rate to use indoor school facilities Monday through Friday. A separate custodial fee of \$55/hour is charged for weekend indoor facility use. The Township is not charged a fee when it uses the district’s baseball field.

The Recreation Department supports the Tennis for Kids program financially, with an \$800 annual contribution. This enables Township children to participate in this program, held at York Suburban High School and Penn State York, at no cost.

The Recreation Department is partnering with the York Little League to sponsor baseball and softball programs for Township boys and girls. Another major program partner is the York Township Recreation Department, which allows Spring Garden Township residents to register for many of its programs at the resident rate.

## Program Promotion and Public Awareness

The Spring Garden Township Newsletter is published two times each year and mailed to all Township residents and businesses. The Township’s organized, scheduled recreation programs are promoted in this newsletter and through the Township’s website. A separate flyer is prepared and mailed in the beginning of May to promote summer recreation programs. Program flyers are distributed through the schools as well.

Facebook social media is used to promote programs. The Recreation Department also has a Summer Parks blog on weebly.com that is used to communicate important information to parents.

# Recreation Programming Analysis

## Strengths

Because of the variety of recreation program and facility providers in place throughout the greater York area, Spring Garden Township residents have many recreational opportunities. The Township offers a small, balanced recreation program schedule with activities for all age groups. In particular, the summer parks program for children and the youth baseball and basketball programs are very popular. The Township has two full-time staff positions devoted primarily to recreation programming and a small number of program partners. The Recreation Department is willing and able to partner with businesses, community groups, youth sports organizations, other recreation providers, etc. Programs are reasonably priced. Non-resident fees are charged for recreation programs and park facility rental.



## Challenges

The program schedule is limited, with only 22 recreation programs offered by the Township. No programs are offered for adults or older adults in the Township, and few family or teen programs are offered. The Recreation Department has no dedicated space for indoor programs. Lack of a dedicated indoor facility limits the quantity and types of recreation programs the Township can offer on its own. Township-sponsored programs are not held at every Township park or at locations throughout the Township.

More than half of the programs offered for Spring Garden Township residents are provided by York Township Recreation Department. This may not address programs that Spring Garden Township residents desire, since the programs are planned by another Township for its citizens. The York Township partnership expands the number of program offerings, but makes registration confusing as it directs residents to another website and away from Township park areas. It also does not contribute to strengthening the sense of community for Spring Garden Township, which is an important role of a recreation department.



The process of registering for a Spring Garden Township recreation program is not user friendly, as residents must visit the Township website, print a registration form, fill it out, and mail or walk it into the Recreation Department office. There is no program registration form in the Township Newsletter. In addition, on-line registration and payment for recreation programs is not available; on-line permitting and payment is not available for park pavilions, building, or recreation facility rentals. Credit cards are accepted for program and facility payments, but this must be done in person and a service fee is charged. Program registration software is not used; Excel spreadsheets are used to keep track of program enrollment.

The program refund policy is outdated and not customer friendly. Currently refunds are not granted after a program begins unless there is an illness or injury, and written documentation is required by a physician.

Program participants are not asked to evaluate programs. An annual report detailing Recreation Department programs and park facility use is not prepared. Program participation statistics are not kept.

There is no written inclusion statement in the Township Newsletter or on its website that promotes and values the involvement of all persons – including those with disabilities – in recreation program offerings.



There is no standard percentage used to set non-resident fees; non-resident program fees are sometimes \$5, \$10, or \$100 more than resident fees or even double the resident fee. Pavilion rentals are \$20 for residents and \$50 for non-residents with a refundable deposit required for restroom keys. No goal is set for the amount of revenue to be raised each year.

If residents are looking for financial help for their child to participate in Township recreation programs, they must submit a written request and include proof that their child qualifies for free or reduced-price school lunch. These requests are approved or denied by the Recreation Commission.

Many Township residents have never visited some of the parks and may even be unaware that they exist. Directions and a brief listing of the facilities at each Township park are not on the Township website. The self-directed recreation opportunities available at the Township parks, such as picnic pavilions and playground equipment, are not promoted with photos. Facility rental information is also not included. The Township does not actively promote the services of its other community recreation providers.

## Opportunities

Joint sponsorship of recreation programs, including shared use of facilities, is a significant opportunity. The number of recreation programs provided to Township residents, and the number of program locations, can easily expand with partnerships.

Partnerships of all types will help with staffing, promoting, sharing facilities, and keeping costs down for recreation programs and special events.

The Township's six park areas are significant Township-owned and financially-supported assets that can be more actively promoted for resident use.

As it is not the sole provider of recreation services, part of the Recreation Department's role is to make Township residents aware of all of the opportunities available to them, whether the programs are sponsored by youth sports groups, the library, the senior center, or other groups.

The focus of the Spring Garden Township Recreation Department should be to strengthen the community's recreation and parks system through Township-operated programs and facilities. Filling in the gaps in recreation programming and minimizing duplication of services by collaborating and cooperating with other recreation providers and community groups is the key.