



City of Bristol

NEWS RELEASE

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SUPERINTENDENT OF PARKS FIRST 100 DAYS

(BRISTOL, CT) — In his first 100 days as the new superintendent of Parks and Recreation, Dr. Josh Medeiros is running full speed ahead, and he's making big changes.

"A lot of the changes we've been working on to start are administrative in nature," said Medeiros, who was tapped to head the parks department in February of this year. Among the most notable changes, according to Medeiros, include developing division-specific budgets to make the overall financials of the department more transparent and accountable.

"Transparency and accountability is paramount," said Medeiros. "That's why we've engaged in Strategic Planning with administrative staff, including the establishment of department goals and objectives for 2019-2020. We're also trying to engage the Parks Commission in a more pro-active way, which is why we developed a new Superintendent Report for the monthly meetings to provide substantial detail about highlights from the department and on-going projects."

So far, the Mayor and City Council are very pleased with what they see. "Not all the changes Dr. Medeiros has initiated are simply administrative," said Mayor Zoppo-Sassu. "Josh has also spearheaded several new projects that will help grow the services over time, and improve the quality of life for the thousands of Bristol residents that take advantage of Parks programs every year."

Among these new collaborations is a new partnership with Home Depot, in which Home Depot staff provided free mulch and planted patriotic flowers along Memorial Boulevard in advance of Memorial Day. Medeiros has also been working on developing a new "All Heart Pop-Up Parks" initiative, funded in part by the Main Street Community Foundation Broad View Fund Grant.

Medeiros has also been working with the Board of Education athletic director and facility director in the hopes that the two departments can streamline field scheduling and field maintenance and determine other ways to collaborate.

Similarly, Medeiros has been working with Public Works on several items, including equipment sharing, acquiring refurbished equipment to save the city money (including a garbage truck from public works and a backhoe from the water department for a savings of over \$100,000), removal of unsafe trees, and bringing Public Works employees to the Park's April Vacation camp to present on recycling and other Green activities, as well as establishing new programs like All Heart Nests and Kids to Parks Day.

"Residents may also have noticed some changes taking place at Page and Rockwell parks, as well" said Medeiros. "Parks staff did a massive cleaning and re-organization of both the Page Park maintenance building and recreation building. We're also continuing design work for a new pool at Page Park, with the expectation that construction will begin in the fall and the new pool will be open summer 2020."

"In the meantime, I'm pleased to report that our Aquatics Supervisor has developed a new Water Safety Awareness event to increase awareness for drowning safety coming into the summer season. The program is also endorsed by the Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association," said Medeiros.

In April, the Department established a new rain garden at Page Park with the help of the Pequabuck River Watershed Association, and are working with volunteers to create a new trail system for mountain biking at Rockwell Park which is slated to get underway mid-summer.

"We're happy to have so many new projects and initiatives underway," said Medeiros, "But our programs are only exciting when local residents get to take advantage of them. That's why we made it a priority to engage the Friends of Bristol Parks and Recreation Fund for additional scholarship monies to support qualifying Bristol families, helping to ensure that everyone has access to great recreational services and camps, regardless of income."

As for what's next, Medeiros says he is excited to begin work on establishing other new initiatives, including a 'Celebrate a Life: Memorial Tree Program,' the All Heart Pop-Up Parks scheduled for Summer 2020, Art in the Park to paint murals on park roads and in select spaces, and annual giving campaigns to support the Friends of Bristol Parks and Recreation fund – as well as a lot more. In an effort to save money the department, Medeiros says he is being aggressive about seeking grants and partnerships to support these initiatives.

In the meantime, Medeiros says that the Parks Department is gearing up for opening up the pools at Page and Rockwell Parks, as well as the spray parks and hundreds of other summer programs and events offered by the Parks department. "This includes our popular summer camp programs, summer concert series, sports camps and clinics, swim lessons and so much more," said Medeiros. "A full preview of all summer programs is available at www.bristolrec.com. Registration is available online and in person at the Parks and Recreation Office Monday-Friday, 8:30 AM-5 PM."

"I've really enjoyed these first hundred days as Bristol's new superintendent of Parks," said Medeiros. "Everyone in the department has been so welcoming and patient, and I really appreciate how excited they all are to get going on these new projects, while staying committed to all of the other important work they do every day. For example, the Parks Crew worked hard to get all city fields online and ready for spring sports usage, including getting Muzzy Field ready to play on for early use by the high school teams, but that's what we're here for, to support each other. We're all a part of Team Bristol, working around the clock to make the city as good as it can be."

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