

## Recreation department plays to a wide audience

By Phil Zahodiakin

For a lightly-staffed operation, the Jamestown Parks and Recreation Department offers an amazing range of activities for island residents and visitors.

Department Director William Piva and Program Supervisor Jill Goldstein occupy an office that overlooks the picturesque East Ferry harbor. But the energy inside the building is much more intense than the placid vista outside suggests.

The four full-timers in the office, located inside the recreation center on Conanicus Avenue, manage myriad tasks, along with a steady stream of people coming in to ask questions or fill out registration forms.

"The office is open from eight in the morning 'til four in the afternoon, and there's always someone available in the rec building after four – usually up 'til eight o'clock," Goldstein said.

The recreation center building is home to a basketball court, the teen center and the island's only theatrical stage. The department offers a wide range of programs, including volleyball, baseball and basketball, as well as adult and youth ballet, yoga, pilates, toddler dancing and the Jack o'Lantern Jog, a 5K run held every October for the last 20 years. In addition, the department manages a skate park and a variety of camping programs.

"We provide a lot of diverse activities for the community, from sports programs to arts and theater," Piva said. "We serve the young on up to the elderly, and that's pretty much been our philosophy: to be responsive to as much of the community as we can. Being a small department, you're pulled in a lot of different directions, and we know we can't please everybody all the time. People don't always realize that their event isn't the only event we're dealing with at a given time. We might have a concert going at the same time as a baseball camp or a soccer camp, so it can be hectic here at times, but we do our best."

Piva added that the teen center has only been a full-time activity for just over a year.

"Of course, whenever you're dealing with teens it takes a lot of your time and energy, but it's all worth it to provide a safe place for teens to hang out and be around positive people," he said.

Goldstein, who has been at her job since graduating from Colby-Sawyer College in 2008, runs all of the programs and camps. This year, she is also the department's tennis coach.

"I guess it helps reduce our costs a little," said Goldstein, who majored in sports management. "But I'm coaching mainly because I've played tennis for a long time and I love it."

Programs aren't the only item on the department's agenda. The recreation department also manages the town beaches.

"We have to satisfy local people and tourists who want to spend the day at the beach," Goldstein said. "We hire seven lifeguards and three parking attendants for the three beaches, and we have many other summer hires, as well."



Department Director William Piva, Administrative Assistant Andrea Masterson and Program Supervisor Jill Goldstein keep the Jamestown Department of Parks and Recreation running smoothly.

Photo by Andrea von Hohenleiten

Fortunately, the department is virtually never tasked with beach closings.

"I don't know if we've ever closed a beach for red tide," Goldstein said. "Since I've been here, we've had one beach closing because of bacteria – just for one day last year – and we haven't had any so far this year."

The department's maintenance crew, which includes two full-time employees, maintains the playing fields at both Jamestown schools, and the grounds at Ft. Getty, which offers parking sites for more than 100 recreational vehicles and a camping area with 20 tent sites.

"Ft. Getty is a full, working campground, which allows people to visit Jamestown for a week or the whole summer," Goldstein said.

In her job, Goldstein said, she's in contact with the public "pretty much 24/7."

"I take the registration forms and the liability waiver forms, I hire the people to coach, and I am always there on the first day of a program," she said. "There's always something going on."

To learn more about the Jamestown Department of Parks and Recreation, or to find program information, visit [www.jamestownri.net/rec/rec.html](http://www.jamestownri.net/rec/rec.html).

## Teen Center focuses on what kids need

By Samantha Emrich

Not every town offers its teens a safe environment for building friendships, doing homework or simply relaxing after school. But here in Jamestown, young islanders have a "place to call their own," said Teen Center Coordinator Debbie Tungett.

The center offers many fun programs to its members, such as microwave cooking and a tile mosaic project, Tungett said.

"The cool thing about the teen center is it's not completely structured," Tungett said. "We like to come up with new ideas and create things as we go, which makes us unique."

While the Teen Center is part of the parks and recreation department, its programs are all funded differently. The town pays for staffing at the center, but programs for the teens must be funded through alternative means.

"We get community members donating periodically and we do have fundraisers that sometimes generate some revenue and sometimes don't," Tungett said. "We run on private donations and fundraising."

The costs to kids for programs is minimal, she said.

"To come after school, to hang out and participate there is no cost to kids," Tungett said. "Occasionally, we'll have a fee for service program."

But, Tungett said, the center tries to provide free programs as much as possible.

"It's helpful to parents to know your kids are doing something productive and it doesn't cost you an arm and a leg," she said.

Tungett said parents should know that the teen center is "always supervised and staffed by trained people."

"All the staff have some college experience and have worked with this age group in the past," she said. "We're all about whatever the kids need."

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