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# The Community Benefits Issue

April 2024, Issue 4

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## [Inside This Issue](#)

<a href="#">What's in this Newsletter?</a> ...	p. 1
<a href="#">Community Benefits &amp; Parks and Recreation</a> ...	p. 1
<a href="#">Find Us On Facebook</a> ...	p. 2
<a href="#">References and Resource Links</a> ...	p. 2
<a href="#">Tell Your Story in Future Newsletters</a> ...	p. 2
<a href="#">Resources: Book Club</a> ...	p. 3
<a href="#">Kudos!</a> ...	p. 3
<a href="#">News, Notes, and Up-and-Comings</a> ...	p. 3 – 4

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## What's in this Newsletter?

Welcome, all, to the fourth issue of the 2024 ORPS Newsletters! Last issue, we discussed the importance of *access* to our services, facilities, spaces, and experiences in the Parks and Recreation field. Before that, the Newsletter touched upon some trends in the field and on some of the economic impacts and **benefits** of eSports, state parks, and more.

This month, we'll take a look around Parks and Recreation with **community benefits** in mind. We'll look at the question of "how does what we do benefit our communities?" We heard from Thomas Buckley last month about the benefit having access to Parks and Recreation in Yukon, OK had for a community member. Many, if not all of you, have similar stories about the impacts of what you do for those whom you do it! Multiply those stories by the sizes of your communities (however you define them: geographically or otherwise) and... those impacts are powerful!

So, as we look to what the data and research show us, I'd ask that each of you take time to reflect and truly think about, in your own professional lives, the power and impact you have (have had, and will have), the importance of what you do (have done, and will do), and how you can communicate that importance to decision-makers and community members around you.

### **And REMEMBER -> Add It To Your Calendar**

ORPS 2024 Conference will be November 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> in Norman. The theme this year is "**Together We Thrive!**" If interested, [Submit a Session](#).

As always – thanks for lending an ear!

Kevin Fink, [kfink1@uco.edu](mailto:kfink1@uco.edu)

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## Community Benefits & Parks and Recreation

We return to Chris Nunes' discussion from his ORPS 2023 keynote, about advocating for our field by considering specific discussion points for specific audiences that make up our community (e.g., residents, visitors, decision-makers). Knowing what each stakeholder is looking for we can promote our services, activities, and facilities including how our experiences, actions, and activities benefit them.

The NRPA (n.d.) reported findings in *Building a Movement* that more than 90% of those surveyed believed Parks and Recreation (P&R) was an important public offering. A study in 2018 by Mowen et al. examined current nationwide visits and engagement with P&R. They found that only 8% of those surveyed (the study had 1,144 participants) **did not** believe the community benefited from P&R offerings. And the sample included **users** and **non-users** (those who visited (or not); those who **engaged** in programming (or not)). So, despite not everyone being a user or visitor, many community members still saw a benefit from the services and activities P&R provide!

Listening to our community members, including those not engaging with our services and spaces, might help determine if Mowen et al.'s (2018) findings are the case where we live, work, and play. And if so, what benefits are non-users/non-visitors receiving anyway? And how can we best communicate those to others in our messaging?

At a more local level, Lindenmeier et al. (2022) investigated motivators, among other variables, with the 2023 – 2027 *Oklahoma SCORP*.

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**Put It On  
Your  
Calendar!**      **ORPS 2024 Conference**  
November 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>  
Norman, OK

[CLICK HERE](#)  
to Submit a Session for ORPS 2024

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## Community Benefits & Parks and Recreation (Cont'd)

They surveyed (separately) Oklahoma residents, user groups, and P&R providers. They found that **Oklahoma residents** (sample of 591) reported “relaxation” and “connection to nature” and “staying fit” as some top motivators for recreating outdoors (p. 17). Similar sentiments were found nationally, as well, as discussed on the NRPA (n.d.; [Click here](#) for more information; [click here](#) for the SCORP). These findings may assist providers with messaging.

Providing autonomy and agency, by having a voice and a space for **users** (and **non-users**) to communicate their ideas and needs to practitioners provides community benefit as well – specifically for those who live in the community and those who may benefit from implementation of community ideas (Azuma et al., 2006). For example, Denver P&R, with additional partners, worked with residents (including unhoused individuals and refugees) to learn how the residents would like a particular greenspace to be used to benefit their community (King et al., 2015). After members provided input, a number of improvements and developments were made to the area (e.g., courts, ballfields, a dedicated gardening area). What Denver P&R found was increased physical activity and more individuals visiting and playing in the area than prior to the improvements; though some in the community were still not well represented in their use of the park, at follow-up.

Overall, our spaces, facilities, and programs can provide opportunities for engagement and interaction; they can provide attachment to our community (i.e., “home”); and they can provide and connections and attachments among community members (Azuma et al., 2006; Scannell & Gifford, 2010).

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## Find Us On Facebook

**Tag ORPS** in upcoming events, activities, partnerships, renovations, etc. We’ll include those exciting updates in this space, too!

I will be scrolling through **ORPS Facebook** notifications to put into the **News, Notes, and Up-and-Comings** each month **so add us** on **Facebook!**

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## References and Resource Links

- Azuma, A. M., Gottlieb, R. B., Vallianatos, M., Gudmundson, J. K., Shaffer, A. L., & Dreier, P. (2006). *Connecting the parks to the community and the community to the parks*. UEP Faculty and UEPI Staff Scholarship.
- King, D. K., Litt, J., Hale, J., Burniece, K. M., & Ross, C. (2015). ‘The park a tree built’: Evaluating how a park development project impacted where people play. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, 14(2), 293-299.
- Lindenmeier, D., Brenner, T., Good, C., & Passmore, T. (2022). *Oklahoma SCORP 2023 – 2027*. [SCORP](#)
- Mowen, A. J., Barrett, A., Pitas, N., Graefe, A. R., Taff, B. D., & Godbey, G. (2018). Americans’ use and perceptions of local park and recreation services: Results from an updated study. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 36(4), 128-148.
- NRPA. (n.d.). *Parks and recreation is essential*. <https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/building-a-movement/parks-and-recreation-is-essential/>
- Scannell, L., & Gifford, R. (2010). Defining place attachment: A tripartite organizing framework. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 30(1), 1-10.
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## Tell Your Story in Future Newsletters

If you would like to **write a short Newsletter Story** (~100 – 400 words), have any **Announcements** or a Kudos / recognition (e.g., new hires, grant funding awards, staff shout-outs), reading a great field-related book, or want to **share upcoming Experiences / Programs / Services to Promote / Share About Your Community, email me at:**

- Kevin Fink ([kfink1@uco.edu](mailto:kfink1@uco.edu)) with content by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the following month of each current Newsletter.
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## Resources: Book Club

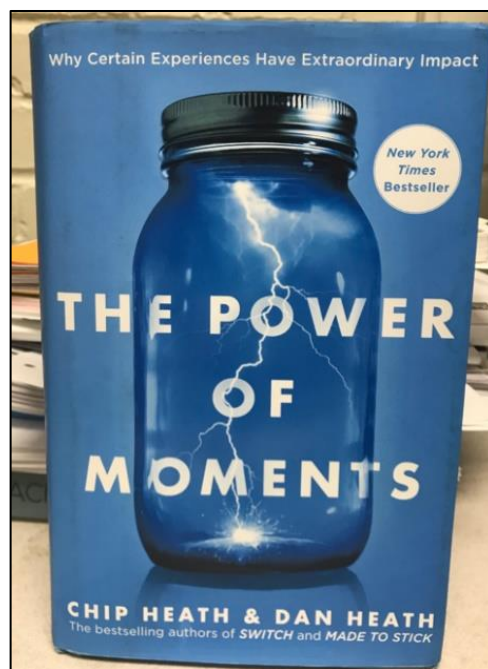
**Author:** Kevin Fink

In May, we'll start ***The Power of Moments* Book Club**. We'll tackle a couple of chapters each Newsletter issue, starting with **Chapters 1 and 2** next month. Each month, I will pose a few questions in the Newsletter developed by UCO's *Community Recreation* students for that month's chapters.

As I mentioned last month, if there's interest, we can start a small group email chain ([kfink1@uco.edu](mailto:kfink1@uco.edu)) or Zoom and discuss how to create ***moments*** in our respective areas of Parks and Recreation, together. Whether you reach out to your fellow members at ORPS or individually think about your responses, I'd welcome you to join us in reading it!

Again, join us this summer for ***The Power of Moments* Book Club**, by the Heath Brothers. **Grab a copy** at your local Library or retailer, online, or on Audible or Overdrive or other audiobook apps.

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## Kudos!

**The Gathering Place** named "Best City Park" in 2024 by USA Today!

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## News and Notes and Up-and-Comings

### Blood Mobile at Scissortail Park

- Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup> from 9AM-12PM

### Move Your ScissorTAIL Walking Club

- Free Walking Club Thursdays and Sundays from 8AM – 9AM at Scissortail Park.

### Gathering Place

- Check out the Gathering Place's [website](#) or Facebook page for daily and weekly activities like Zumba and Dog Play Days.

### City of Ardmore Parks and Rec

- Join the City of Ardmore for *The Ultimate Taylor Swift Party* on **April 19<sup>th</sup>** at The Clubhouse!

### OKC Parks 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Daddy Daughter Dance

- **Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup>** at the Meinders Hall of Mirrors.

### "Spring 2024 Marketplace" – Moore Parks and Recreation, City of Moore, & Moore Central Park & The Station

- **Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup>** from 9AM – 3PM.
- More than 50 vendors selling local products with food trucks available as well.

### First Friday Tree ID

- Lake Thunderbird State Park's naturalist will be providing tree education at *Discovery Cove Nature Center* on **Friday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>** at 1PM.
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## News and Notes and Up-and-Comings (Cont'd)

### 2024 National Outdoor Recreation Conference (NORC)

- May 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024 in South Lake Tahoe / Stateline, NV.
- NORC provides a conference for “recreation resource planners, land managers, policy makers, tourism and destination stewardship partners, researchers, consultants, innovators, and leaders in outdoor recreation.”
- For more information about focus areas for this conference, click [here](#).

### Million Coaches Challenge Grant Program

- For agencies providing programming for youth, check out this [grant opportunity](#) at NRPA for funding related to positive youth development; **applications due on May 8<sup>th</sup>**.

### Kids to the Park Day 2024

- Check out the free event *Kids to the Park Day* with Norman Parks and Recreation **on May 18<sup>th</sup>**.

### Pubs in the Park

- **Friday, May 31<sup>st</sup>** at Scissortail Park, check it out on Facebook!
- Local breweries from around the Oklahoma City area.
- A ticket must be purchased, and you must be 21-years old or older to attend.

### Association of Aquatic Professionals (AOAP)

- **Swim Lessons and Life Jacket Grants** are available through AOAP. You can apply for one or both grants with four cutoff dates to apply throughout the year (the next is **July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024**).
- For more information about the application and/or contact information, [click here](#).

### Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2023 – 2027

- For those interested in **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants** (typically due in September), the [SCORP](#) was recently published and released for our viewing. LWCF grants should be, in many cases, aligned with needs found in the SCORP.

### PlayCore

- Provides resources “to build healthy communities through play, recreation, and outdoor spaces.”
- One of the resources provided is the [Funding Tool](#) locator for local and nationwide funding opportunities.

### National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Grant Opportunities

- Consider the [NRPA Grant and Fundraising Opportunities](#) page for other funding opportunities.
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