ANN ARBOR PARKS & RECREATION

GIVE 365

2023 Season Report

2023 Report
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WHO WE ARE

GIVE 365 is a volunteer & outreach program within Ann Arbor Parks & Recreation. Our volunteers work in “developed” parks, facilities, and playgrounds- park spaces that aren’t purely natural areas. (Our friends at NAP manage those!) GIVE includes the Adopt-a-Park program and the Visit Every Park Challenge. We specialize in Parknerships, and community engagement is our thing!

Fast facts:
- Founded in 2011
- Funded by the Parks Maintenance and Capital Improvements Millage
- Office located in Fuller Park
- Our motto: Anything is Possible
2023
GIVE 365
Staff

ERIKA
Recreation Supervisor

MELISSA
Adopt-A-Park Coordinator
Left in Dec 2023*

RYAN
Marketing / River Cleans

CONOR
Outreach Coordinator
Left in Sept 2023*

AMELIA
Gardener

ANDY
Playground Technician

OLIVER
Crew / Event Team

DOM
Crew / Event Team

JAKOB
Crew / Event Team

GARRET
Bike Parks / Event Team
Ann Arbor Parks & Recreation Core Values

- Stewardship
- Exceptional Customer Service
- Innovative Improvements
- Integrity
- Community
- Excellent Parks & Spaces
- Fun!

Namita Nisal (2020)
2023 Totals

2,591 Volunteers

5,920 Volunteer Hours

257 Workdays & Events

Graydon Park
Neighborhood Workday 5/6/23
We work with volunteers (groups and individuals) to help care for and maintain Ann Arbor’s parks. Most of our projects involve park maintenance & beautification but we facilitate a huge variety of meaningful volunteer tasks!

Some of the many tasks:
- Spreading woodchips on playgrounds
- Weeding playgrounds
- Gardening
- Collecting litter on land & along the river
- Paint & mural projects
- Cutting invasive brush
- Helping at parks special events
Who We Work With

We work with a variety of groups and organizations, scheduling personalized workdays with them. We also host open events that we recruit individual volunteers for, where anyone is welcome to come join and lend a hand.

A variety of groups:
- Businesses
- Students
- Ann Arbor Residents or Visitors
- Community Organizations
- Nonprofits
- Sports teams
- Anyone who loves parks!
To those without a logo or one we couldn’t find, we appreciate you as well!
GIVE 365 can work in any City of Ann Arbor park that is not purely a nature area. There are **162 park properties** and we have worked in over 130 of them. In 2023 we worked in **74** of those parks!

Parks where we held an event in 2023

GIVE 365 office
WHERE WE WORKED

We held volunteer events in 74 different parks in 2023.

Number of events held at some of our larger parks in 2023:

- Gallup – 40
- Veterans Memorial – 21
- Bandemer – 20
- West – 14
- Fuller – 13
- Buhr – 8
Volunteer instructors led a bike skills clinic at the Bandemer Bike Park 6/24/23
There are 78 playgrounds in city parks. The city standard is to manage these beloved play areas without the use of traditional herbicides. Volunteers pull weeds by hand and spread play-safe woodchips. A salt & vinegar mix has been tested in a few of these areas. These playgrounds are managed and scouted by our Playground Technician, Andy.
Gardening

Guiding gardening philosophy:
- Support what is present
- Maximize seasonal interest
- Plant native species and provide native habitat

- Gardening events: 92
- Volunteers: 785
- Volunteer hours: 1,377

Waterworks Park 6/17/23
Arbor Hills Park 7/19/23
Gallup Park 9/19/23
Fuller Park
North Main Park
In the summer months (June, July, August, September) GIVE runs a series of cleanup events on the Huron River, in partnership with the Gallup & Argo liveries. Volunteers get in canoes & kayaks, armed with litter-grabbers, and paddle on the river collecting trash. This program is funded by a MiCorps Volunteer Stream Cleanup Program (VSCP) grant from EGLE.

2023 Totals

- **1611** pounds of litter removed
- **25** events
- **295** volunteers
- **573** volunteer hours
GIVE 365 is managing 2 ongoing Shoreline Restoration Projects, one at Gallup Park & one at Island Park. There are in partnership with the Washtenaw County Water Resource Commissioners Office. These projects are focused on erosion prevention and habitat support.

16 Invasive removal events held in 2023
- Cutting non-native invasive plant species, including buckthorn and honeysuckle
In 2023 GIVE 365 piloted a program to look into alternatives to mowing turf grass and to consider park areas that could be turned into temporary or permanent “No-Mow” areas. This was adapted from City Council’s 2022 No Mow May initiative to reduce emissions and support pollinators. We designated eight areas in parks as no-mow areas after soliciting community feedback and recorded observations of these areas. Neighbors and friends of these parks were invited to provide feedback on this pilot program.

We have several Park Sustainability Initiatives that we are working on, see more information about this project and other initiatives at the Park Sustainability Initiatives page.
SPECIAL EVENT: HURON RIVER DAY
5/21/2023 - 1500+ attendees - 14 volunteers

GIVE 365 has a long history of helping out at Huron River Day by recruiting volunteers for the event. This time we also served as an exhibitor, presenting educational materials about our Huron River Cleanup Program.
SPECIAL EVENT: TRICK-OR-TREAT ON THE RIVER

10/15/2023
2000+ attendees
84 volunteers
BY THE NUMBERS: 2023 Bike Parks Annual Report

1000 1,000 followers were added to the Ann Arbor Bike Parks Facebook page and 140 on Instagram.

55 A record breaking 55 signed in volunteers participated and 22 were repeating volunteers.

52 52 people attended skills clinics (35 at the free beginner skills clinic and 17 at the free advanced skills clinic) led by volunteers.

24 24 volunteer events were offered at Bandemer and Tuebingen bike parks.

8+ 8+ regular/repeat volunteers contributed at Tuebingen Bike Park. The most ever recorded!

Other significant accomplishments:

Significant improvements were made to erosion management/drainage features at Bandemer and erosion management carpets, tarps, gravel and drain tubing were added at Tuebingen.

The sheds at Bandemer and Tuebingen are now equipped with a range of essential items, including kids’ shovels, watering cans, patch kits, tool kits, pumps, sandwich boards, GIVE sign-up tables, cloth, binders, forms, gloves and shirts. A “Gorilla Cart” is also being housed at Bandemer.

Three riding lines and 10+ jumps were added at Bandemer in response to 2021 citizen survey respondents’ requests for jumps and progression options. The number of ride lines increased from 4 to 7, with lines added for beginners, intermediates and advanced riders (including options to transfer between lines). The number of jumps increased from 14 to 24+. Features were rearranged to make progression more intuitive with lines increasing in difficulty from right to left. A beginner start hill and return berm were added to increase progression and safety.

Many cubic yards of clay were added to the Bandemer Bike Park.

Volunteers and staff assisted Jen Proctor with research and information for her documentary film about the Ann Arbor Local Loop. And, plans were made to present at the 2024 A2 Bike Summit.

A part-time Bike Recreation Volunteer Coordinator position was added to the GIVE 365 program.

49 posts were created and shared on Facebook and 42 on Instagram.

Staff began tagging City of Ann Arbor, Parks & Rec, and GIVE365 on social media posts.

Restoration continues to the riding lines and features at Tuebingen Bike Park including the addition of three banked turns and two jumps!
The Adopt-a-Park program, which is part of GIVE 365, fosters long-term relationships with an individual park. Adopters and staff work together to develop expectations, create workplans, and schedule workdays. These adopters can be individual people or groups & organizations, including neighborhood groups, businesses, and more.
2023 Totals

41
Parks with active adopters

40+
Adopt-A-Park workdays

1,777
Volunteer hours
Waterworks Park Neighborhood Get-Together

Waterworks Park was adopted by Ann Arbor Farm & Garden. To celebrate, they partnered with Adopt-a-Park to host an event for neighbors and friends of the park in June. There were crafts, games, refreshments, flowers were planted, and kids painted rocks to put into one of the park’s garden beds. AAF&G has made several gifts to the park and hosted another event in the fall!
Waterworks Park Fall Celebration
10/7/23 with Ann Arbor Farm & Garden

Ann Arbor Farm & Garden helped host another event at Waterworks Park, celebrating autumn and several trees that they donated to the park. These trees were planted near the playground to help provide shade and featured some native oaks. There were donuts and cider, more games, and pumpkin painting for kids.
Visit Every Park Challenge

In addition to our core volunteer activities, GIVE 365 coordinates the Visit Every Park Challenge! The VEP challenge encourages participants to try visiting all 162 parks, and earn prizes along the way. Visit them all to become a champion! 2023 was the busiest year for VEP yet, by far!
2023 VEP Recap

- **32** new champions (representing 16 households)
- Ordered and distributed over 3,000 VEP brochures!
- Launched the Park Finder tool - [www.a2gov.org/parkfinder](http://www.a2gov.org/parkfinder)
  - Search by park name or amenity, includes links to Google Maps coordinates to park parking lots
- Partnered with the AADL Summer Game— **1,448** players entered the code at the “VEP Lounge” outside the GIVE 365 office in Fuller Park, over **2,000** found the codes on our website!
- Updated large banner at the VEP Lounge in Fuller Park, added one at Gallup Park with brochure box
- Implemented a registration sign-up form to try to capture how many community members are participating
  - Over 340 individuals registered representing diversity of all ages and backgrounds. Many of these were participants with family members, pets, or friends they recruited!
2023 Visit Every Park Wall of Champions
These champions have visited every Ann Arbor Parks & Recreation property!

Nish & Moose

Brooks

Elana (Pictured: Kodi)

Aladdin

Karin & Jim

Bowie

Rachel & Kellen

Deven

Izzy & Zyler

Cathy

Parag

Jim & Ginny

Kennedy + Hull Family

Miller Family

Lala & Riyan

William
“This challenge and the Ann Arbor parks provided much needed light, joy and something to focus on and challenge myself with.”
THANK YOU

to the thousands of volunteers for their dedication to park stewardship efforts!