



The **Willington** **WORD**

Inside this issue:

A letter from the First Selectman

Parks & Recreation

Willington Youth, Family & Social Services

Willington Public Library

Community Activities

Spring 2011

40 Old Farms Rd, Willington CT 06279 • www.willingtonct.org

Dick Brvenik
Dick Brvenik
President and CEO



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General Information



TOWN OF WILLINGTON OFFICE BUILDING

CONTACTS

First Selectman	Christina Beebe Mailhos	860-487-3100
Assessor	Mary Huda	860-487-3122
Building Inspector	Bradford Freeman	860-487-3123
Business Manager	Donna Latincsics	860-487-3134
Dog Warden	Dick Claus	860-684-7936
Parks & Recreation	Teri Gareau	860-487-3108
Planning & Zoning	Susan Yorgensen	860-487-3123
Public Works	Lynn Nicholls	860-684-9313
Tax Collector	Carol Larson	860-487-3111
Treasurer	Tish Iगतowicz	860-487-3133
Town Clerk	Donna Hardie	860-487-3121
Registrar of Voters	Nancy Vogel & Gail Kapinos	860-487-3120

BUSINESS HOURS

Mon. 12:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Tues.-Fri. 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

ADDRESS

40 Old Farms Road
Willington, CT 06279

WEB SITE

www.willingtonct.org

From the Desk of the First Selectman:

Dear Willington Residents,

After a highly unusual and trying winter, it is a pleasure to think ahead to spring and the many opportunities it brings. I personally cannot wait for the day that we can put away the snow blowers and bring out the lawn mowers.

As you read through this Willington Word, you will see a few new spring events listed. For example, there is a town-wide tag sale being planned by the "Circle of Friends" Relay For Life team that everyone is encouraged to participate in. There is also an "adopt a road" spring clean-up event organized by the 5th grade Willington Girl Scouts. And don't miss the ribbon cutting and athletic invitation at the River Road Athletic Facility (tentatively scheduled for May 15) where our Rec Commission will be unveiling the new additions to the park.

Of course, there are traditional events to look forward to as well, such as the very popular "Life Saving Angels" Relay For Life Chili Fest, opening day for Little League baseball, the PTA Fun Run and Memorial Day Parade. In addition, Willington Day is back and will be held on the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend as it was last year.

These events bring us out of our homes and into the fresh air. They also give us the chance to do a good deed for a deserving local non-profit. In addition, we can have fun spending time with friends and meeting neighbors. After a long, hard winter I think this is just what we all need!

So get out those calendars (and check www.willingtonct.org for updates), make some plans to "Get Up! Get Out! And Get Moving!", and think Spring!

Sincerely,

Christina Beebe Mailhos
First Selectman

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General Information

FROM THE DESK OF THE WILLINGTON ASSESSOR

Elderly and Totally Disabled Tax Relief

NOTICE

Town of Willington

Elderly Homeowner State Tax Credit Program

Elderly and totally disabled tax relief program applications must be filed with the Assessor's office between February 1, 2011 and May 15, 2011.

The State of Connecticut Program is available to residents of Willington who:

- Have attained the age of 65 on or before December 31, 2010.
- Hold full time residence in Willington.
- Received an income not exceeding \$32,300 for a single person or \$39,500 for a married couple.

Applications can be obtained at the Assessor's Office, Town Hall, 40 Old Farms Road, Monday 12:30 pm- 7:30 pm and Tuesday – Friday 9:00 am - 2:00 pm or one can be sent to you by mail if you call 860-487-3122 during the hours above.

Proof of income, social security and 1099 earnings required. Those persons who are already on the program but, required to renew have already been mailed an application.

FROM THE DESK OF THE WILLINGTON TOWN CLERK

Fishing & Hunting

Springtime on the way and that means its fishing season. Opening day for Trout Fishing is April 16, 2011. Licenses are available in our office or on line at www.ct.gov/dep. The Guide Books are available on line also at www.ct.gov/dep/fishing or www.ct.gov/dep/hunting and will be available in the town clerk's office in beginning of April. Check with the clerk's office. You can contact DEP by phone (860) 424-3105 with any additional questions. Any Connecticut Residents 65 years of age or older are entitled to a free license. Anyone with a "Lifetime" has to renew each year if you are a hunter or if you salt water fish. Make sure you bring in your old license with the conservation number on it.

Important Budget Dates

Budget Hearing April 5, 2011.

Don't forget the *Annual Town Meeting* on April 19, 2011.

Budget Referendum May 3, 2011 cast your Vote at the Town Office Building, Old Senior Center, 40 Old Farms Road. Absentee Ballots will be available for residents at the Town Clerks Office if you will not be in town on the day of the referendum. Please contact the Clerk's Office for date of absentee ballots will be available.

Any questions contact the clerk's office at 860 487-3121

Dog Licenses

June is the time to register your dog. You will receive renewal reminders at the end of May 2011. There is fee of \$8.00 for a spayed/neutered dog and a \$19.00 fee for male/female dog. You can license your dog in person or by mail. All dog license requests must be received in this office in person or in the office

via the mail by June 30th. An updated rabies certificate, if not current is required, a check payable to the Willington Town Clerk and a self addressed, stamped envelope should be included, if by mail. New dogs being registered would need the rabies certificate, spayed/neutered papers, check payable to Willington Town Clerk and a self addressed, stamped envelope, if mailed, for us to process your license. Please register your dog in June to avoid additional late fees as of July 1st. There is a \$1.00 per month and \$1.00 each additional month per state statute.

Passports

Passports are no longer processed in our office due to new government regulations. Forms are available online at pptctcsn@state.gov Get your passport, as soon as possible, if you know you will be traveling. An approximate processing time is about 4 weeks to 6 weeks. The Probate Judge's Office in Tolland or the Storrs Post Office processes passports. The Probate Judge's telephone number is 860 871-3640 or the Storrs Post Office is 860 429-9681.

Notary Services

We are Notary Publics and can notarize documents. We will not notarize any documents that will be filed on the town land records or persons wills. There will be no fees for this service for town residents.

If you have any questions, please call our office 860 487-3121.

Donna J. Hardie, Town Clerk

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Programs

Get up! Get Out! Get Moving!

Questions: Call Teri Gareau, Parks and Rec Director at 860- 487-3108 or visit www.willingtonct.org for more information.
ALL REGISTRATION FORMS ARE ONLINE

BOATING COURSE

Connecticut Safe Boating and Personal Watercraft Course. This single session, 8-hour course, taught by Professional Marine Education, provides a certificate of completion as partial fulfillment of the requirements to obtain the Certification of Personal Watercraft Operation, which allows the operation of motorized recreational vessels up to 65' and sailboats 19 ½' in length and longer. Upon successful completion of this course, the student can mail or deliver the diploma to any State DEP office, and combined with an application for certificate (provided) and appropriate fee, qualifies the student to obtain the Certificate of Personal Watercraft Operation. The certificate is a one-time, lifetime certification. Students should bring a pen or pencil to class.



Age: Designated for ages 12+
Instructor: Professional Marine Education
Date: Saturday, April 2
Time: 8:30 am- 4:30 pm at the Willington Public Library
Fee: \$75.00 *Bring a lunch.*

FENCING

General Info – The Willington Recreation Dept. will be offering open fencing this fall. This session will have six classes and is available to male and females from age 9 to adult. This course is intended for students with prior experience in fencing.

Modern fencing is an amateur sport consisting of three weapons; foil, saber and epee. Fencing can be enjoyed by men and women of all ages at many levels; from a recreational pastime to National and International Competition.

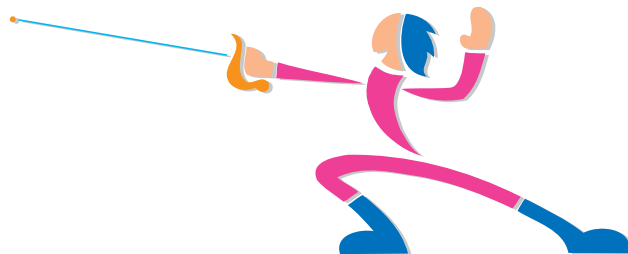
Instructor: Matt Green
When: Saturdays starting March 19th
Where: Old Town Hall, Jared Sparks Road
Open Fencing: 10:00 am - 11:00 am
Beginner Fencing: 9:00 am - 10:00 am
Minimum of 5 needed to run
Cost: \$60 (per session)
Registration: Space is limited; we will accept a maximum

Safety:

of 12 students.

Fencing equipment and safety rules will be strictly enforced. The Recreation Department will retain the right to remove students from the program if safety rules cannot be followed.

Equipment: The Parks & Recreation Department will have equipment available for use during class time. If you intend to purchase your own equipment please email piratedojo@gmail.com first to discuss requirements. *NOTE: Old equipment may not be suitable for class use, please have any old equipment inspected before the class begins.* Students may wear sweat pants or knickers with full length socks (no shorts). A flat soled sneaker (indoor soccer shoes are good) or fencing shoe is best for footwear.



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Location: Skungamaug River Golf Course in Coventry

Instructor: Rick Nelson, PGA Professional

Co-ed Adult Classes

Day & Dates: Tuesdays, May 3, 10, 17, 24

Time: 5-6 pm

Day & Dates: Thursdays, September 1, 8, 15, 22

Time: 6-7 pm

Ladies Classes

Day & Dates: Thursdays, June 2, 9, 16, 23

Time: 6-7 pm

Day & Dates: Tuesdays, August 2, 9, 16, 23

Time: 5-6 pm

Kids Classes (ages 8-15)

Day & Dates: Thursdays, June 30, July 7, 14, 21

Time: 6-7 pm

Cost: \$60 per student- min 6/ max 8

Contact Golf course if weather is questionable-860-742-9348.

KARATE

Traditional Shaolin Kempo Karate and JuJitsu for all ages starting at 3 years old presented by Hidden Dragon II Karate. Hidden Dragon was awarded the 2008 National Marital Arts School of the Year. Sensei Dan, who is a member of the U.S.A. Martial Arts Hall of Fame and was awarded the Martial Arts Man of the Year by the same

Hall of Fame, will teach the program with highly qualified assistant instructors.

Day: Wednesdays

Dates: April 6, 13, 20, 27, May 4 and 11
Next session TBD

Time: 5:00pm

Location: Hidden Dragon II, Phelps Crossing Plaza

Fee: \$40.00; payable to the Willington Parks and Recreation Department

Once students have obtained the rank of Yellow Belt, students have the option to join the school full or part time, or leave the program.

All new students are required to purchase Hidden Dragon Tee Shirts for \$15.00. Make checks payable to Hidden Dragon II.





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Programs

Get up! Get Out! Get Moving!

Kayak Loaner Program

Beginning in April

Through a Grant from the Eastern Highlands Health District initiative "Healthy Eating, Active Living" (HEAL) there are several kayaks available to town residents through a FREE loaner program!! All rentals include kayak; one life jacket and one paddle. **These are available by appointment only!!** Loaner agreement is available online or in the Parks and Recreation office.

VOLLEYBALL-ADULT CO-ED

Come play Adult Co-ed Volleyball at Hall Memorial School gymnasium. The program is available to all individuals ages 18 and out of high school. USVBA rules are followed and mastery of skills is encouraged. Space is limited to 21 players per night. The program runs year round.

Days: Monday and Thursday Nights

Time: 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm

Registration Fees:

Resident-\$15.00 - 1 night \$25.00 - 2 nights

Non Resident- \$20.00 - 1 night
\$30.00 - 2 nights

Drop In Fees: (payable at Gym)

Resident - \$2.00 per night

Non Resident - \$3.00 per night

YOGA

These yoga classes are for everyone who wants to improve their health and well-being. Yoga is a carefully designed and extensive program using gentle and restorative yoga, modified postures, breath work and meditation with the intent of giving relief from physical pain and improving joint and organ functions.

Participants will improve their posture and flexibility. The posture positions improve blood circulation; promote sound sleep and relaxation allowing the body to heal itself. The individually guided breathing techniques promote harmony and release stress. This class is especially appropriate for individuals who wish to get their bodies back to health after illness, surgery or injury. It can help those suffering from various difficult physical conditions, like back pain and arthritis. The techniques taught are appropriate for beginners, older adults as well as advanced yoga students.



Instructor:

Davender Khokhar

Days:

Wednesdays

Session 9:

March 23rd- April 13th -- 4 classes \$30.00

Session 10:

April 27th -- June 1st -- 6 classes \$45.00

Times:

6:30 pm -- 7:30pm

Location:

Center School

Drop ins welcome \$10.00 per class

Equipment:

All students must bring their own mat and big towel. Parks and Recreation will have 5 mats available to those who do not own one-first come first serve.

Registration:

Preregistration is required at the Park and Recreation Dept. Participation based on space availability.

Must have 8 people to run program.

OOPS! Sometimes despite our best efforts, a misprint may make its way into the Word. In this case, changes may be made to some of the programs listed. We apologize for any inconvenience.



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The routines feature interval training sessions where fast and slow rhythms and resistance training are combined to tone and sculpt your body while burning fat. Add some Latin flavor and international zest into the mix and you've got a Zumba® class!

Instructor: Sheri Henderson
Days: Tuesdays
Dates: March 22nd – May 3rdth (no class on April 19th)
May 10th – June 14th at
Times: 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm
Location: Center School
Fee: \$45.00 - 6 week punch card
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Go to www.willingtonct.org to download registration forms; get updated information on upcoming programs, events, and facility rental information!

Questions: Call Teri Gareau, Parks and Recreation Director at (860)487-3108 or email me at tgareau@willingtonct.org

Inclement weather Policy:

In the event of inclement weather, programs maybe cancelled, and a makeup date scheduled. If schools are closed, all programs will be cancelled. Notification will be placed on WFSB 3 TV.

Payment:

Payments may be made by check or cash. All checks should be made out to the Willington Parks and Recreation Department. Returned checks are subject to a \$20 service charge.

The Parks and Recreation Commission meet the 4th Tuesday of every month at 7PM in the Town Office-Selectman Conference Table.

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860-487-3118

<http://willingtonct.virtualtownhall.net>

Early Childhood Programming

Caterpillar Club - This free play group runs every Thursday from 9:30 to 11:00 am at the Willington Public Library. Parents and children (ages 18 months-4 years) socialize and play together; creating family and community bonds that will last a lifetime.



Toddler Time Music & Movement Class - This very affordable and professionally instructed class meets every Tuesday from 9:30 to 11:00 am at the Willington Public Library. This class is specially designed to promote motor and social skills in children ages 18 mos. to 4 years of age. Join anytime and pay as you go! Music & Movement Class is an affordable \$5.00 per class, or \$40.00 per 10 week session.

Toddler Time Pre-School Activity Class - This class meets at the Willington Public Library on Fridays from 9:30 to 11:00 am. Professionally instructed, this class helps to prepare your child for the activities of the pre-school classroom. Join anytime and pay as you go! This activity class is \$5.00 per class or \$40.00 per 10 week session.

Youth Programs

New Horizons Girls Club - Welcome to your future girls! This activity and leadership group meets approximately twice monthly and helps to prepare girls to engage in their community and become independent thinkers. The club runs for girls grades K-6 in the Willington Public Schools. Check out all the details on the WYFSS homepage!

Coming Soon

Town of Willington April Camp - Do you have to work through your child's April vacation? Send him or her to April Camp! This WYFSS camp will run from April 18-21, and features a different theme each day. Download your program description and registration forms on our homepage after March 15th.



Two of the Best Kept Secrets in Willington

The Town of Willington's News & Notifications Directly to your inbox. The Town of Willington encourages you to get involved and stay informed! Go to www.willingtonct.virtualtownhall.net/subscriber and choose the town departments for which you would like to receive email announcements about special events, department meetings, and town-sponsored programs for all ages.

Willington FoodShare Mobile Site - Families and seniors alike may attend FoodShare every other Thursday morning at 9:00am sharp. The mobile truck utilizes the parking lot of the Willington Senior Center at 60 Old Farms Rd, Willington CT. Low to moderate income participants receive fresh fruit, vegetables, breads, and various other perishable food items. For more information on FoodShare go to: <http://fdshr.convio.net/site/PageServer?pagename=index>



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INFORMATION

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Wednesday 11 am to 5 pm
Thursday 11 am to 8 pm
Friday 11 am to 5 pm
Saturday 9 am to 3 pm
Sunday CLOSED

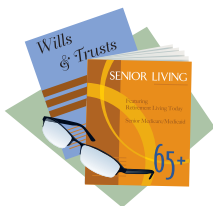
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Community room

Planning for Healthcare Costs in Retirement – 4/5

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Wills, Trusts, and Estate Planning – 5/3

Explanation of wills, trusts and other estate planning documents and why everyone needs to have a plan in place.

Please join us in the months ahead as we present a series of authors here at the library. One author will be highlighted each month, on a **Tuesday evening, from, 6:30 – 8:00 PM** in our Community Room. Invite a friend!

On **April 19th**, author and longtime resident of Wilmington, **Barbara Meredith** will share her new parenting book called "Daisy & Friends: How to Stay Healthy". Books will be available at a discounted price for purchasing and signing.

With more authors to come in the year ahead...be watching for more information.

April School Vacation is also National Turn T.V. Off Week!

Thursday evening, April 21st, at 6:30 to 7:30 PM, join us for lots of fun and laughs; as we play the family game for all ages... "Apples to Apples".

Every last Saturday, of each month, we show a family movie on our Community Rooms BIG screen at 12:30 PM. Come watch the showing of **Disney's "Tangled" April 30th**. Rated PG. All are welcome! You may also bring your own snacks.

We are getting ready for our **Summer Reading Program** beginning the end of June. Our theme this year is **"One World, Many Stories"**. Join us for another year of summer fun activities.

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Community Groups

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR

APRIL 23rd

9:00 am - 1:00 pm

"WILLINGTON CLEAN-UP DAY"

In celebration of Earth Day, residents are encouraged to adopt a road (or a portion of a road) and clean-up the trash along the roadway. Bring your trash bags full of trash and recyclables to be weighed at the Transfer Station. Let's see how many pounds of trash we can collect!

All participants will receive a ticket for an ice cream treat at Willington Day, May 28th.

Pre-registration and road selection can be done in person at the Town Office Building or you can email Teri Gareau at tgareau@willingtonct.org. You can also sign-up at the Willington Transfer Station on the day of the event.

Yellow safety vest, a bamboo stick for trash pick up, gloves and two trash bags will be provided for each participant.

Organized by Willington Girl Scout Troop #65014.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION NOTES

These notes are being written in January as the snows lie deep in the forests and on fields and trails. We hope that as you read this, though, Nature is coming out of hibernation and is busily greening up, blossoming forth and renewing herself in all her wondrous ways. Willington has many miles of hiking trails from which you can observe these seasonal transformations. The 300-acre Fenton-Ruby Park and Wildlife Preserve and Drobney Sanctuary on Moose Meadow Road has 4-plus miles of trails through woods, over ridges and along ponds and streams. A kiosk with maps is located at the parking area and a box with nature trail guides is located a short distance down the Taylor Trail. Brochures and trail maps can also be found at the Town clerk's office and the same information is available on the Conservation Commission website (see below). The 28-acre Talmadge Tract, which contains the Talmadge Spur Trail with 1 ½ and 2-mile loops, will take you through scenic woodlands and along gravel Mason Road. This tract abuts the 400-acre UConn Moss Forest Tract which now includes the 96-acre North Property. Several miles of the Connecticut Blue Trail run through this area with a portion along the Fenton River as it flows through a deep ravine. Trail access locations and further description can be found in brochures available at the library and Town Clerk's office.

The Conservation Commission will celebrate National and Connecticut Trails Day on Saturday June 4 with a special

event at Fenton-Ruby Park. Local naturalist Barbara Austin will reprise her well-received 2010 presentation on how locally available plants readily found in the surrounding forests and fields can be used as part of your next dining experience. Bring paper, pencil and a taste for culinary adventure to this outdoor demonstration. Following this taste of forest edibles, Barbara will lead an informative, leisurely hike in the surrounding woodlands that will introduce participants to more of the forest plants that possess nutritional and therapeutic values. Come help us celebrate Connecticut Trails Day on June 4th in the Fenton-Ruby Park and Drobney Wildlife Sanctuary in Willington. We will meet in the Fenton-Ruby Park parking lot (corner of Moose Meadow and Burma Roads) at 10:00 AM. Rain date is the following Sunday afternoon, June 5th from 2:00 – 4:00 PM. The event is free, but please call Chris at 429-8384 to register.

If you are interested in taking an active part in helping the Town manage its environmental resources, the Commission has openings for alternate members. Alternate members participate in meetings and may be seated as voting members in the absence of regular members. Anyone is welcome to attend our meetings in the lower level of the Town Office Building on the fourth Tuesday of every month. Contact Peter Andersen, Commission Chair, at 429-1276 or andersen108@sbcglobal.net, or Kathy Demers, Commission Vice-Chair, at cdemers@mindspring.com for more information. Please visit the Conservation Commission website under "Boards and Commissions" on the Town of Willington home page, www.willingtonct.org, for information on conservation issues, programs and links to other websites. The Commission is also looking for someone to manage our website. This person would not necessarily have to be a member of the Commission. Lastly, we would be happy to hear any comments you may have about your experiences regarding Willington's outdoor resources.

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2011 Willington Fundraising Events "Team Circle of Friends"

March 26th:

"Zumba for a Cure": 2 pm - 4 pm at Hall Memorial Gym \$10.00 person. Registration 1:30 pm

May 7th:

"Opening Day Baseball Plant Sale" 11 am

May 14th:

"Town Wide Tag Sale" 8 am - 12 pm \$20.00 for a 10' space at the town Office Building or \$15.00 to be listed on the town map; donations also accepted to be sold by the "Circle of Friends"

May 17th:

"Red Cross Blood Drive in the Town Office Building Common Room" 1 pm - 6 pm

May 28th:

Willington Day Table: "Cotton Candy" 11 am. For more information: Contact the Assessor's Office (860) 487-3122 or go online to www.willingtonct.org-communitypage

"Team Life Savings Angels"

April 2nd:

"3rd Annual Chili Challenge" at the Willington Hill Fire Department more details to come

June 10th and 11th:

"4th Annual Relay for Life" at Tolland High School

**2010 Relay for Life raised \$105,000;
\$5,000 over their goal.**

WILLINGTON PTA Upcoming Events

Mother-Son Bowling at SpareTime, Vernon
Sunday, April 10

Family Camping Weekend, Brialee Campground
April 29 thru May 1

Willington PTA 5K Road Race & Fun Run
Saturday, May 28

We are currently seeking interested individuals to serve on the 2011-2013 PTA Board. Our upcoming nominations and elections will take place as follows:

April 28th - officer nominations presented
by nominating committee

May 19th meeting -- officer elections for
2011-2013 PTA board

If you are interested in serving, please contact a current board member with any questions you may have!

Goods and Services Auction

The 2nd annual Goods and Services Auction hosted by the Willington Federated Church will be held on Friday, May 6 from 6:30-9pm at the Willington Public Library located at the corner of Routes 320 and 74. The evening will include both silent and live auctions. Tickets are \$5 with food and entertainment also being provided. A list of auction items can be found on the Church's web-site at www.fedchurchwillington.org beginning April 1.

Seating is limited to 75, so ticket pre-purchase or reservations are strongly suggested. For more information or to order tickets, please contact the Federated Church at (860)429-9911 or Alice Casells (860)429-9394. All proceeds benefit the community wide programs of the Federated Church of Willington. Please join your neighbors for an entertaining evening – hope to see you there!

Willington Day 2011

Willington Day 2011

Center School Field/Willington Hill Fire Department

Saturday May 28, 2011 11 p.m. - 3 p.m.

(Fishing Derby at Thompson's Pond 4-5:30 p.m.)

The Willington Day Committee would like to invite you to attend and/or support Willington Day 2011 on Saturday May 28, 2011. The Willington Day tradition has always been to host an old fashioned fair designed to bring the town together for some affordable family fun. Willington Day will immediately follow the Willington PTA's Fun Run on Saturday morning and should make for a full day of fun for all.

We would love to build on last year's success and great turnout. We hope many Willington businesses and organizations will reserve a booth and help make this a very special day for our Town. Get creative and come up with a fun event or idea to promote your group or business. It is a wonderful way to meet and make a personal connection with your customers and fellow townspeople. We hope to see all our neighbors there!

- The Willington Day Committee



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Willington Park Recreation Commission 2011 Update

Joseph C. Colangelo – Willington Parks and Recreation Commission Chairman

The Willington Recreation Commission was reactivated in February of 2002 following a long absence. Former First Selectman John Patton made an effort at that time to assemble a group of townspeople who were involved in Willington town groups and commissions, and parents who were coaching their children playing organized sports locally. Two members from that reorganized group still sit on the commission today.

The Town Hall Office Field was new at this time, and it became a great facility for baseball, softball, and opening day events. Volunteers helped to maintain the field and built batting cages, dugouts, snack bar with a storage area, and installed a flag-pole. Public Works provided mowing, but much of the cleanup and maintenance was done by players and their parents. So many townspeople helped out with money, time and equipment on this field, Center School and Hall School, that we were able to maintain and improve these fields. Most importantly, strong friendships were forged that helped to keep this cleanup and maintenance practice perennial.

A piece of property on River Road near the highway overpass was donated to the town for use as a sports facility and eventually provided Willington with its first regulation Little League field. A commission was formed to oversee the construction of the property. Once the process was underway, the Willington Recreation Commission assumed that responsibility. Like all small town recreational projects, money was hard to come by, and resources never stretched far enough. Capital improvement dollars were provided and spent, along with contributions and more volunteerism. Infrastructure for future water, power and communications was installed, as well as our Little League field and an all purpose field used mainly for soccer. A STEAP Grant (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) was obtained in 2010 with a scope of work including installation of a basketball court, volleyball court, playscape, pavilion, and 2,000' walking path. A piece of property once used to hold highway construction material is now a functioning park called the River Road Athletic Complex.

With a real park to care for the Willington Recreation Department now became the Willington Parks and Recreation Department and assumed the maintenance for the RRAC, Center School, Hall School and the Town Office Fields. Our present Parks and Recreation Director, Teri Gareau, has taken an enthusiastic approach to this department and collaborated with other towns adding many programs creating a universal appeal to the department for townspeople. Fencing, karate, Zumba, yoga, skating, skiing, basketball, golf, summer camp, volleyball, snowshoeing, kayaking, and archery programs, along with many others, give all age groups and ability levels a chance to "Get Up, Get Out and Get Moving". We have local high school seniors work with the department to complete their "senior projects". This is a program that helps keep the volunteering attitude strong with what may be our most important group of citizens and certainly our future town leaders.

Sitting on the Parks and Recreation Commission has given me a front row seat to what we can accomplish through cooperation, common sense and volunteerism. The Willington Board of Finance has listened to our group and come through with funding that is responsible and well used. Our Selectmen have always been willing to help the Commission with good advice and direction. Our local Boy Scout Troop has provided many projects that benefit the town's recreation programs. The townspeople of Willington, with their small town belief in lending a hand whenever possible or necessary, have been a mainstay volunteer force helping to keep our fields and equipment in good shape. During the construction of the RRAC we had a Judicial Community Service work crew volunteers help with the playscape under the direction of one of our commission members, and extra time and effort was provided by contractors on that site without compensation. Thanks to the Board of Finance our Parks and Recreation Department budget now includes field maintenance, allowing us to use professional help to keep the fields playable.

The Parks and Recreation Commission members along with our Parks and Recreation Director truly enjoy the work we are doing. We have been allowed to make a small department into a useful part of the Willington landscape. The hope is to someday watch a Little League or soccer game under the lights at the RRAC on a warm summer night with a hot dog and soda served up from the refreshment stand attached to the pavilion. A summer concert at the site, winter events like cross country skiing or skating, soccer and baseball playoff games, opening day for baseball, Willington Day, family picnics, and just taking a break to use the walking path or playscape with your children are all possible once the RRAC is completed. We are planning on having an opening day event this summer to introduce the park to Willington. Please look for our announcement and come enjoy the park that we have all worked for.



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