

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: March 29, 2019

City of De Pere
335 South Broadway
De Pere, WI 54115-1199
www.de-pere.org

Contact: Andrew Pantzlaff
Communications Specialist
Phone: 920-339-2371
apantzlaff@mail.de-pere.org



Everyone deserves to play

De Pere recreation scholarships provide profound opportunities for local youth

DE PERE, WIS. – Soccer balls bouncing amongst a sea of giggling children. A brush, soaked in color, gliding along a blank piece of paper. Hands gripped tightly around the chains of a playground swing; and tiny shoes cutting through the air with every exhilarating rush forward. The thrill of a cannonball jump into a pool, bringing not only a thunderous splash, but wave of cool relief and good memories on a hot summer day.

Every child deserves to feel those moments, and thanks to a thriving recreation scholarship and a community with generous hearts, De Pere is providing increasing opportunities to make that happen.

In fact, 2018 was the most impactful, influential year of the De Pere Recreation Scholarship Program to date. This financial assistance program was established to provide youth in the City of De Pere an opportunity to participate in recreation programs offered by the Park, Recreation & Forestry Department, regardless of their financial status. In 2018, the City awarded 60 scholarships, which totaled its highest amount of scholarships ever given out in a single year. The previous best mark came in 2015, with 41 scholarships awarded.

In all, these 60 scholarships last year aided 50 families throughout 17 different youth activities and accommodated 43 pool passes. The amount awarded, in all, was \$4,007.50, which came through generous donations and support from local service organizations and community members.

“Without the scholarship program, many of the children I work with would not be able to access or participate in recreational activities,” said Melanie Brick, School Social Worker for the Unified School District of De Pere, adding “These are the very same families who do not have the resources to take family trips and vacations out of the area, so providing them new experiences, social opportunities, and exposure to healthy activities in our community helps to create positive memories and healthier bodies for these children.”

Scholarships are available for instructional programs, special events and pool passes, summer playgrounds, Kidz Zone, summer camp programs and/or City sponsored youth leagues.

Parents who have benefited from this program are profoundly grateful for a community that is willing to open its hearts and wallets in order to open up doors for other children. These opportunities help their kids connect with friends (old and new), learn new skills, build self-esteem, and create memories which may not have otherwise been possible due to financial hardships in their household.

“As a single dad unable to work currently because of a medical issue, I sought a scholarship to be able to have something fun for my son to look forward over summer on our very fixed income,” said one father who has benefited from the program.

A fellow De Pere mom shared a similar story.

“As a single mom, I pursued a scholarship for my kids to get a pool pass because it's hard to come up with the money for recreational programs. We struggle to meet our basic needs so having my kids participate in recreational programs would not be possible without the scholarship,” she said.

For many in similar scenarios, the De Pere Recreation Scholarship Program has been a tremendous relief; if not a saving grace in providing recreation opportunities.

“The positive impact of the scholarship program is immeasurable,” Brick said. “The De Pere Park & Recreation Scholarship has helped to increase children's self-esteem by learning a new skill, such as learning to swim, play soccer or baseball and has provided health benefits exposure to healthy activities, to providing hours of fun for children and their families in the sun at one of the De Pere pools.”

The De Pere Recreation Scholarship Program was founded in 2010 and has awarded a total of 285 scholarships since then.

“This community is truly special. When community members know of needs, they always rise to the occasion to help their neighbors. There have been very few needs that have not been met for the families I work with due to the generosity of this wonderful community,” Brick said.

NEED A SCHOLARSHIP?

Scholarships are awarded on a first come, first served basis and will be awarded only as long as there are available funds. A family may receive a maximum of \$75 per youth per year, and an additional \$75 per year for Family related activities/events. Also of note, scholarships will provide a maximum of 50 percent of the league participation fee for any individual requesting assistance for a league ran by De Pere Baseball, De Pere Youth Hockey, De Pere Rapides Youth Soccer, and/or De Pere Girls Softball Association.

If any resident is in need, or knows of a family in need, of financial assistance to help local children participate in City programming, they are encouraged to fill out an application, found at www.de-pere.org. You may also call 920-339-4097 for more information.

WANT TO DONATE?

For those compelled to help donate to this recreation scholarship program, the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department appreciates your generosity in ensuring future opportunities for local children. To donate, please call 920-339-4097.

###