



**good for you.
good for all.**
PENNSYLVANIA PARKS & RECREATION

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**CELEBRATE PARK & RECREATION PROFESSIONALS DAY IN JULY WITH
THIS FUN WAY TO BRING YOUR COMMUNITY TOGETHER TO SHOW
THEIR good GRATITUDE**



"I just wanted to say that
having a robust Park/Rec
dept. in a community is so
important on many levels..."

- Citizens of UD
since 2006

STATE COLLEGE, PA – (March 17, 2023) – On July 21, communities across the commonwealth will celebrate the [Fifth Annual Pennsylvania Park & Recreation Professionals Day \(PRP Day\)](#). This year, the Pennsylvania Park & Recreation Society ([PRPS](#)) is sharing a fun way for communities across Pennsylvania to celebrate: a *good Gratitude campaign* that invites local citizens and leaders to share the reasons they love their local park and rec facilities and the folks who keep these facilities safe, clean and inviting.

The idea draws upon the Commonwealth's [good for you, good for all](#) program, which helps local communities thrive by engaging with their area parks and recreational facilities, improving the lives of all Pennsylvanians.

The good Gratitude campaign honors park and rec employees; however, the greatest benefit of participation for local municipalities will be to remind residents of the impact of their local park and recreation services on their lives. [According to a survey](#) by the National Park & Recreation Association, 93% of U.S. adults say their mental health is improved by services offered by local park and rec programs. The top three activities cited were socializing with friends and family, spending time in nature and exercising.

[Pennsylvania is home to more than 6,100 local and state parks](#), and its typical Park & Recreation Agency manages more than 19 parks and offers more than 175 recreational programs. Together these agencies employ more than 8,000 people and engage more than 2,000 volunteers.

PRP Day lands in the middle of most park and rec professionals' busiest month of the year. According to PRPS CEO Tim Herd, who created PRP Day, "most people don't realize the level of detail it takes to make activities at their local park go well or just to run the local camp or pool. This work is largely taken for granted, but our members are responsible for providing safe and clean facilities that operate seamlessly.

"We all know asking mom to plan our Mother's Day brunch is not really a treat for mom," continues Herd. "It's the same for our members, who are planning activities all the time. That's why this year we're asking municipalities to work with their residents to make PRP Day special."

Six Easy Steps to Creating a Community good Gratitude Campaign

1. **Ask your community members to create a thank you note or short video thanking a local park and rec employee for their service.** This can be as specific or general as they desire. For example, it could be a child saying thank you for the yummy watermelon at the pool on the Fourth of July, an older adult thanking their yoga teacher or a parent expressing appreciation for the lighting that keeps their child safe when playing basketball each evening.
2. **Increase your response rate by using every tool at your disposal.** Use social media, email and your newsletter to reach your entire community. Don't forget to reach out to local community groups, like the pickleball club and swim team parents. Create a flier and post it in the library, local businesses and other gathering spots. If you have a high school AV club, ask them to videotape community members who aren't comfortable doing it themselves or to go to a local camp, senior center or other facility to gather lots of content at once.
3. **Encourage residents to be creative and to get their children involved.** All they need are paper and writing implements or a phone with video capability. It may be helpful to share an example with them of what you are seeking.
4. **Encourage local leaders to participate.** According to Heather Dighe, executive director of Lancaster Recreation Commission, it would be particularly meaningful to get messages from elected officials. Says Dighe, "Frequently our interactions with elected officials are to work together to solve problems. It would be special to us to be recognized by them for the exceptional work that we do."
5. **Ask the media to amplify your efforts.** Pitch a story about this effort or ask for a reporter to help you deliver a huge box of thank you notes on PRP Day. A story about this campaign makes a great feel good feature and would bring great publicity about your community services. According to the National Park & Recreation Association, employers and employees are more likely to locate near high-quality park and recreation amenities. Nearly three quarters of adults say that access to a nearby park, playground, open space or recreation center is an important factor in deciding where they want to live. And 82% of corporate executives indicate that quality-of-life is an important factor when they consider making new facilities, expansion or relocation plans. This all means parks and recreation boost home values and property tax bases.

6. **Share the love!** Edit together the videos and take photos of the thank you notes. Share both on your municipal website and via social media, and don't forget to tag @goodforpa and use #goodforpagratitude. If you have screens in your municipal building, play the video on a continuous loop to bring a smile to visitors' faces. Post the original thank you notes on a bulletin board or wrap them up in a big box and deliver them with a flash drive of the videos to your director of parks and recreation. ***Most important, send a thank you email or text to your park and rec employees with a link to the thank you notes and videos on your website.***

The ***Good for You, Good for All*** (GOOD) campaign was developed by the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society (PRPS) to serve as the statewide rallying cry for the essential and irreplaceable nature of local parks and recreation in Pennsylvania's communities.

Founded in 1935, PRPS is a nonprofit statewide association providing industry leadership, professional development, advocacy, and resources for those working and volunteering in the parks and recreation field. PRPS is focused on empowering recreation and park professionals, along with citizen advocates, to enhance life-enriching services and improve environmental, economic, and social health and wellness for current and future generations.

For more ideas about how to celebrate PRP Day or to get help planning, reach out to goodforpa@gmail.com

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