

All-Access Playground Proposal

Marion City Council



The Marion PEP Club

Parks Enhancement Project

The Marion PEP (Parks Enhancement Project) Club

Introducing the Marion PEP (Parks Enhancement Project) Club:

The Marion PEP Club is comprised of community members that have a desire to work with the Marion City Parks Department to create safer play environments that address physical, social and emotional needs allowing people of all abilities to develop their skills.

The group began in the 2018 Leadership Marion! Program of the Marion Area Chamber of Commerce. From the beginning of planning for the group project the members of our board have had a passion for helping to enhance the Marion City Park system's image and strive to make Marion a more desirable place to live, work and play.

The Marion PEP Club is currently operating as a 501(c) (3) organization. (marionpepclub@gmail.com)

Members of our Board of Directors are:

- Christy Neff, President (Buckeye Ridge Habitat for Humanity)
- Becky Worley, Vice President (Nachurs Alpine Solutions)
- Lori Seckel, Vice President (Modern Woodmen of America)
- Ashley Teets, Secretary (Peacock Water)
- Christina Golden, Treasurer (United Church Homes)
- Chris Simon, Board Member (Sika)
- Danielle Landon, Board Member (Whetstone Financial) Chris Simon, Board Member (Sika)
- Mike Cheney, Member (Marion City Parks Superintendent)

Our Mission:

The Marion PEP Club, in collaboration with the Marion Parks Department, seeks to enhance and beautify our Marion City Parks.

Our Vision:

Unifying our community to provide a clean, safe, and family friendly recreational experience within our city parks

Our Why:

We want families in our community to have a positive experience at our parks. We know that great things can happen when like-minded individuals within the community join together with the same goal.

PEP Club Accomplishments:

- Summer 2018- PEP Rally in the Park
 - Kick off of Project and Announcement of plans to community
 - Park Clean Up Day- Inaugural Volunteer event
 - There are several small projects that we accomplished, alongside City Parks Department. These projects required volunteers only as the Parks Department provided the materials:
 - McKinley Park
 - Painted restrooms
 - Painted Erickson Pavilion
 - Painted basketball hoop backboards and installed new nets
 - Patterson Park
 - Spread a truckload of mulch throughout the entire playground
- Fall 2018- Develop Momentum and direction for the project
 - Formed committees for various tasks- Fundraising, Publicity, Design, etc.
 - Established board and by-laws
 - Gathered information and ideas from local youth
 - Continued to build relationship with City Parks Department
- Spring 2019- Helped spruce up landscape at Lincoln Park Aquatic Center
- Summer 2019-Planted flowers and beautification at Marion Airport Entrance

Goals:

- Continue to work with the Marion City Parks Department to establish more volunteer projects
- Promote project to everyone- community organizations, civic groups, faith communities and Clubs
- Apply for grants

McKinley Park and Project Playground:

McKinley Park (located at 1000 McKinley Park Blvd.) consists of 23 acres and includes basketball courts, sand volleyball courts, 2 shelters, fishing pond, restrooms, and Project Playground.

Project Playground was built in 1993 by over 100 community members. It was a Robert Leathers design built from pressure treated lumber. There are now significant issues with the existing structure:

1. The playground was given a lifespan of around 20 years (currently 27 years old)
2. The structure was built with pressure treated lumber (chemicals in lumber no longer meet today's safety standards for repair or replacement)
3. The base surface of woodchips is outdated and substandard compared to modern surfaces.
4. The repairs or replacement of the playground are outside of the City Parks Budget.
5. The equipment is not accessible for people of all abilities.



Current Community Concerns:

"I never take the kids here only because it's so busy and hard to keep a good eye on {child's name}. This park is so run down and so dirty. It needs attention."

"Excellent idea in the beginning, but I think many fell through the cracks in regular maintenance and upkeep. I live near the Glenwood Park and would love to see it expanded."

"Project Playground needs updated and improved."

"I used to like taking my kids to Project Playground. The last few times I noticed a lot of graffiti and kids throwing mulch. Now we go to Garfield or Delaware Parks."

"It needs kept up and re-worked but a cool park."

PEP Club's Proposal:

We would like to see the Marion community rally again and build a new, all-access playground for our families. The new playground would include:

1. Equipment that would be accessible for **all abilities** and **all ages**.
2. Sustainable building materials (ex. Composite or metal) requiring low maintenance. We are also looking into materials that would be vandalism resistant.
3. An enclosed area (fenced with lighting), highly visible design to provide an extra level of safety for parents and caregivers.
4. A new vibrant curb appeal for the City of Marion which would attract residents from all over Central Ohio to our City.

This new playground would offer a free recreational opportunity for everyone regardless of economic status. The Marion City Parks Department is willing to provide the ongoing maintenance of the new park and our PEP Club has already investigated options on developing a charitable foundation at the Marion Community Foundation to help supplement the park's budget for repairs.

The benefit of revitalizing the current playground area is that the location is very easily accessible from all areas of Marion. Restrooms, utilities, and parking are already established for people to utilize while visiting the park. McKinley Park is large enough to expand the project to possibly include a new entertainment pavilion, splash pad, walking track and a pathway with solar lights and crosswalks (which improves accessibility from OhioHealth Marion General Hospital for their visitors needing to take oftentimes much needed breaks).

Funding the New Playground:

We have plans to promote this fundraising effort throughout Marion and beyond. Through our research we have discovered grants and foundations that we would like to apply to for funding and also to reach out to local, state and national organizations for additional donations. Also, we have the opportunity to reach out to local companies with a needs list. Instead of monetary donations we would also be open to in kind donations of items like fencing, concrete, landscape materials, and labor.

We are closely working with the Marion Rotary Club to determine a donation to celebrate their 100 Year Anniversary!

WE CAN DO THIS TOGETHER:

25 years ago our community came together to build an amazing structure for the children of Marion. Project Playground has been a staple to our community and lots of memories have been created ranging from the original rallying of the community in building the structure to the many years of children playing there.

Now is the time to rally together again. As a community we can raise the funds to develop an even bigger and better playground that EVERYONE can enjoy.