



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **ORC SUMMER PROGRAMMING UPDATE**

The Ottawa Recreation Commission Board met on Wednesday, May 13, 2020 to discuss summer programming for 2020. The recommendations made by ORC staff were made in concert with the Governor's Phased reopening plan as well as with input from the City of Ottawa, CDC, Franklin County Health Department, Franklin County Emergency Management, Kansas Recreation and Park Association, and multiple other agencies and organizations.

#### **ORC Summer Sports:**

The ORC staff presented the results from the joint Eastern Kansas Baseball League and Twin Rivers Softball League vote on whether or not to hold a league in 2020. The results of that vote were 7-4 against holding leagues this summer. The decision was made due to safety and rules concerns along with concerns regarding participation. Many communities had suspended registration and did not believe they would have enough players to field teams.

The ORC staff presented the board with an alternative for the season. The ORC will begin planning baseball and softball camps with experienced coaches and clinicians in order to provide children the opportunity to continue learning baseball and softball skills. The ORC's tentative plan is to offer these camps to those ages 7-12 years old. Families currently registered for baseball and softball will get the first opportunity to participate and will be contacted directly by the ORC via email. Those registered for Tiny Tot T-Ball and 6U baseball/softball will be given refunds. Please allow 2-4 weeks for refund processing. The ORC is also looking into soccer and volleyball camps later this summer. The camps will be contingent on developments with COVID-19.

Practices held by organizations outside of the ORC can be held by following Kansas phased guidelines. Organized practices cannot be held in Phase One and restrictions are put in place for Phases Two and Three. The ORC will be in touch with each baseball and softball organization to go over the specifics of the phased guidelines that must be followed in order to promote a safe environment at Orlis Cox Sports Complex.

#### **Forest Park Swimming Pool:**

The Ottawa Recreation Commission announces that the Forest Park Swimming Pool will remain closed for the 2020 season. This decision was made with an abundance of caution for public health as well as staffing and logistical challenges. Additionally, lifeguard staff cannot safely train for lifesaving operations while social distancing is in effect.

Like many Kansas communities, the ORC has been looking at summer programs and activities and are trying to make sure they are safe and healthy for the community. "We have looked into every possible scenario at the pool", said Brandon Stortz, Recreation Manager at the ORC. "Our goal from the outset of COVID-19 was to

open as many amenities and programs as possible during this pandemic. We face an unprecedented time in our operation and have been working with many national, state, and local entities in order to provide the best possible solutions for our community.”

The Ottawa Recreation Commission will be refunding all swimming lesson registrations as well as all pool party reservations. Please allow 2-4 weeks for refund processing.

### **Summer Camp:**

The ORC staff presented a fluid plan for the ORC’s popular summer camps. The ORC is planning to offer its afternoon camp “Kid Camp” this summer. The camp will tentatively run from 12:30 – 5:00 pm Monday-Friday. Camp will look differently than it has in the past as camp will be held with activities on campus at the Goppert Building and no field trips will be scheduled. Dates for the camp have not been set and are fluid due to COVID-19. Summer camp will tentatively be held in accordance with the Governor’s guidelines as well as with KDHE and CDC recommendations

### **Fitness Programs:**

The ORC is working to provide socially distanced fitness classes as we move into each Phase of the Governor’s plan. Plans include socially distanced in person classes as well as virtual classes that participants can do at home with a trained instructor.

### **Senior Programming:**

While the ORC’s Goppert Building is not considered a Senior Center, the ORC will not be offering senior programming until Phase 3. This includes PATH, TOPS, Pickleball, and Chair Yoga.

### **Continued Virtual Programming:**

The ORC will continue to offer its virtual programming through its Facebook platform. These offerings include a weekly workout, sports drills as well as games you can play at home, Trivia Thursday, coloring pages, and the Barbecue with Brandon series.

### **Goppert Building:**

ORC staff is continuing its planning for reopening the Goppert Building. There will be many changes in ORC operations with a focus on an abundance of safety for patrons and staff. The ORC will release its reopening plan once the plan is finalized.