

# OPENING OF THE JEAN SHEPHERD COMMUNITY CENTER, HESSVILLE

First in a series

## Jean Shepherd Center fulfills dream of more community activities for Hessville

In the late 1990s, community groups in Hammond's Hessville neighborhood began looking for ways to increase activities for children and families living in this southeastern area of the city.

Among the items on the community's "wish list" were meeting spaces as well as creative, educational and athletic opportunities, said Curt Vosti, administrator of the Hammond Parks and Recreation Department.

"The committee formed out of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church. Then Mike Koharczyk of O.L.P.H. brought in the Northwest Indiana Federation of Interfaith Organizations. They brought their ideas to the parks department and we began looking at available facilities for a community center," Vosti said.

When it was determined that no existing facility could fulfill the needs, the idea of building a new community center emerged.

"The mayor was brought in early and expressed support for the new facility," Vosti noted.

Petitions and surveys followed and Dowling Park was selected as the site for this new community center because it had large amounts of open space that was not being contained and a good location just off Kennedy Avenue at the Borman Expressway. The community center also dovetailed with Hammond's masterplan for its parks, Vosti said.

In the summer of 2001, the Hammond City Council added its approval of the project and that fall the Hammond City Council OK'd a \$2.7 million bond issue to build the facility.

"There is no impact on taxpayers because the bonds are payable with gaming revenues," Vosti said.

Construction began in the fall of 2001 on the facility designed by Garcia L.E. & Associates of Ham-

mond, with Harker Construction of Crown Point as the general contractor. The grand opening of the 41,000-square foot Jean Shepherd Community Center at Hessville's Dowling Park on Saturday, March 15, fulfills the dream the community envisioned as the Hammond Parks and Recreation Department unveils its newest community center.

Located on the south end of Dowling Park, the Jean Shepherd Center honors one of Hammond's native sons. Shepherd, who grew up in Hessville, went on to fame as the writer of tales about "Hohman, Indiana" in such books as "In God We Trust, All Others Pay Cash" and the screen play for a holiday movie classic "A Christmas Story". Nestled in a picturesque area of the park, the Jean Shepherd Center sits next to a tree-lined pond that will be used for summer-time fishing and ice fishing as well as winter ice skating. Inside the community center is a 33,000 square foot gym



33,000 sq. ft. gym

that features two regulation-size basketball courts with a volleyball court in between. The entire gym can also be converted into a full-size indoor soccer field.

In addition, a 1/10th mile walking/running track rings the gym. Special protective dasher boards separate the walkers and runners from the action on the gym floor.

The remaining 8,000 square feet include office and reception space, a computer lab, an arts and crafts room, classrooms, a small exercise room, a large multi-purpose area that can seat up to 125 and can be divided into three smaller areas and a kitchen.

"The possibilities of using this space for so many activities are limitless," Sue Rzeszut, building manager said. "We see the Jean Shepherd Center as a vital meeting place like the Civic Center."



Computers inside center

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The grand opening of the 41,000-square foot Jean Shepherd Community Center at Hessville's Dowling Park on Saturday, March 15, fulfills the dream the community envisioned as the Hammond Parks and Recreation Department unveils its newest community center.

Located on the south end of Dowling Park, the Jean Shepherd Center honors one of Hammond's native sons. Shepherd, who grew up in Hessville, went



# OPENING OF THE JEAN SHEPHERD COMMUNITY CENTER, (in Dowling Park)

Second in a series

## Jean Shepherd Center offers lots of indoor, outdoor activities

Whether you enjoy basketball, ice skating, arts and crafts, sledding or dancing, the Jean Shepherd Community Center at Dowling Park in Hammond's Hessville neighborhood is the place to be.

This newest Hammond parks department facility officially opens on Saturday, March 15 with a day-long celebration that includes tours, sports clinics, musical entertainment and an official dedication at 9 a.m. Named for the nationally-known writer and Hammond native Jean Shepherd, the center will offer a vast array of indoor and outdoor activities.

Built in the southern section of Dowling Park, the 40,000-square foot center adjoins a tree-lined pond where visitors will be able to fish all year long as well as ice skate during the winter months.

"We hope to have fishing derbies and ice skating parties on this pond," said Sue Rzeszut, building manager of the Jean Shepherd Center Place.

Picnic tables will be placed under the trees so that picnickers can enjoy the serenity of the water while eating al fresco.

Also facing the pond is a 10-foot wide patio lighted by antique-style street lamps on which center visitors will be able to sit and enjoy their snacks and beverages. When the weather permits, a 30 by 20 foot deck will be added overlooking the pond to extend the center's access to the

outdoors.

"This can be used by senior citizens, for example, who want to walk and then have their coffee and donuts out on the patio," Rzeszut said.

In addition to the Jean Shepherd Community Center, the wide open spaces of Dowling's new sledding hill are located nearby. The hill provides a safe place for outdoor enthusiasts of all ages. Other outdoor park facilities include tennis courts, soccer fields and playground equipment.

Inside the center is a 33,000-square foot gymnasium that features two regulation sized basketball courts with a volleyball court in between. The entire gym floor can also be converted into a full-sized indoor soccer field. On the outside of the gym floor is a 1/10th mile walking/run-

A cricket pitch is located in Dowling Park, just outside the Jean Shepherd Community Center. The cricket pitch area was created because of community involvement. A group requested it because the nearest cricket facility is in Barrington, Ill.

"We looking forward to



The new Jean Shepherd Center gym includes two basketball courts

bringing cricket back to this area this spring," said Curt Vosti, administrator of the Hammond Parks and Recreation Department.

The remainder of the center's 8,000-square foot indoor space includes offices, classrooms and a large multi-purpose room which can seat 125 and has an adjacent kitchen.

A 6-station computer room is already set up and will be open all day on Saturday, March 15 during the dedication. Internet access will be available this summer and the staff is currently developing policies and procedures for the Internet use. Eventually 12 computer stations will be available, and Rzeszut said she plans to offer a homework center here where students can get help with their studies. Computer classes will also be offered, she said.

An arts and crafts room will provide space for classes. Currently arts and crafts classes for children and ceramics and scrap-booking classes are

planned. The LACARRE Art League is working with the parks department to exhibit artworks throughout the new building.

Other classrooms can be used for a variety of activities, including possible Spanish language courses, martial arts classes, book clubs, writing workshops and cake decorating classes.

"We've already had six inquiries about renting space at the center," Rzeszut said. The multi-purpose room could be used for baby showers, small wedding receptions, business after hours meetings and much more, Rzeszut said.

In addition, the gym will be the site of a number of different shows, including the city's popular Hunting and Fishing Show and art shows. Arrangements are being made now to reopen the LACARRE Art League's International Cultural Fest at the Shepherd Center in 2004. The fest, which for 30 years was held in the parking lot of Morton High School, was discontinued in 2002.

"We're excited about bringing the fest back in partnership with LACARRE," Vosti said.

A small exercise room will provide fitness and aerobics as well as nutritional assistance, although the Hammond Civic Center remains the place for major exercise workouts and swimming.

"The Jean Shepherd Center should be a beehive of activity," Rzeszut said. "The public will tell us what they want here."

In fact, a special suggestion box will be set up dur-

ing Saturday's grand opening and visitors are encouraged to voice their choices for center activities. Following Saturday's dedication, the regular center hours will be from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mondays and

Tuesdays; 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Wednesdays through Fridays; and 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays. While there are no regular Sunday hours, there will be Sunday hours for organized leagues.

## Center building director brings experience to new role

Sue Rzeszut knows Hammond's Hessville section, and will put that knowledge to good use as the building manager for the new Jean Shepherd Community Center in Dowling Park.

"I grew up in Hessville and went to Our Lady of Perpetual Help School and Gavit," said Rzeszut, who joined the Hammond Parks Department about one month ago after working for 14 years with the YMCA.

The mother of four and grandmother of eight, Rzeszut said she is looking forward to the beehive of activity the Shepherd Center will become. She expects her own family to be among those enjoying the facilities.

"I was fortunate enough to be accepted for this job," she said. "I'm very excited about opening this facility."

As building manager, Rzeszut will oversee all the programs and activities, rentals and staff at the Shepherd Center. Her staff will include a building manager, an office manager and several part-time employees include a receptionist and class instructors. In addition the building will include the office of Hammond Recreation Supervisor, Harold Hull.

"This building is a facility that provides a creative,



Sue Rzeszut, Director of Jean Shepherd

athletic and intellectual outlet in the community," she said. "It's part of the park department's goal of providing programming for all the citizens of Hammond."

## Join the Hammond Parks

and Recreation Department on Saturday, March 15 for the grand opening and dedication of the Jean Shepherd Community Center at Dowling Park, Kennedy Avenue and I-80/94.

Early morning walkers can gather from 7 to 8 a.m. for a sunrise walk followed by a continental breakfast. The official dedication and flag raising ceremony begins at 9 a.m. Building tours, open gym hours, live music, clinics and fitness demonstrations will be just part of the activities



Kids enjoy the sledding hill at Dowling Park

# OPENING OF THE JEAN SHEPHERD COMMUNITY CENTER, (in Dowling Park)

## Third in a series It takes a team to keep Hammond parks running smoothly



Administration Staff - Susie Demaree, Annisha Patrick, Curt Vosti, Darlene Burfield, and Gloria Kaminsky



Recreation Staff - Jennifer Basino, Lona Valadez, Roy Ortiz, Harold Hull, and Leroy Harwell Jr.



Facilities Staff - Sheila Huzzie, Yvette Gawne, Sue Rzeszut, Greg Brown, Roy Speelman, Mike Arnold, and Brenda Diehl



Maintenance Staff - Bruce Williams, Enrique Igartua, Jason Johnson, Mark DelRio, and Tom Reis



Civic Center Maintenance - Mike Arnold, John Pie, Mike Mercado, Ed Kudfa, and Roy Speelman

Providing safe and enjoyable recreational opportunities for Hammond residents in the city's 45 urban parks and facilities requires the talents of 56 people who work for the Hammond Parks and Recreation Department.

Headed by Curt Vosti, Administrator, the Hammond Parks Department is divided into four divisions - administration, maintenance, facilities and recreation. And the coordinated efforts of these groups help keep the year-around park programs running smoothly.

The administrative staff provides direction for all the many park programs offered in Hammond and coordinates the opening of new park facilities such as the Jean Shepherd Community Center in Hessville's Dowling Park, which officially opens this Saturday, March 15. In addition to Vosti, the administrative staff includes Annisha Patrick, Darlene Burfield, Gloria Kaminsky, Sue Demaree, and Phyllis Samano. The administrative offices for the parks and recreation department are housed in the Civic Center at 5825 Sohl Ave.

Superintendent Tom Reis Sr. heads the maintenance division, which includes maintenance workers, craftsmen and engineering staff. The city's three geographic areas - north, central and south - have parks which are maintained by staff under the direction of three area supervisors. Mark DelRio, Rick Egartua and Jason Donovan serve as the area supervisors, with the assistance of Bruce Williams who is the lead master craftsman and Mike Arnold, who serves as the building engineer for both the Civic Center and the Jean Shepherd Community Center.

Among the wide range of duties performed by the maintenance division are regular repair and cleanup of the city's parks, including grass cutting; snow removal from all areas of the parks and facilities where walking, biking and driving occur; maintaining the baseball and softball dia-

monds; checking and maintaining the city's four outdoor park pools and the two indoor pools at the Civic Center and Ogden Street Pool; maintaining the bike trail and playground equipment and doing routine checks in each park for safety concerns. In bad winter weather, the maintenance crews also help the city's department of streets and sanitation with snow removal.

Special events in the city require special attention. Although crews work five days a week on a regular basis, "we adjust our schedule around city activities," Reis said. Those special events include the Harrison Park Fourth of July celebration and this weekend's dedication of the Jean Shepherd Community Center.

"Planning on a month to month and year to year basis helps us provide consistent and seamless activities in our parks," Reis said. "Everything we do is consistent with the mayor's vision for optimizing our resources and providing services for our citizens. This planning also helps us utilize taxpayers' dollars to provide quality services."

All the community centers in Hammond offer a variety of recreational facilities and programs under the coordination of center directors. In addition to supervising the day to day operation of these centers and their staffs, the directors oversee rentals of the properties and special events at their facilities.

Yvette Gawne heads up the Hammond Civic Center, which includes the swimming pool, fitness center, gymnasium and meeting rooms. Brenda Diehl as assisted by Sheila Hutsey coordinate activities at the Ogden Street Pool, and Sue Rzeszut is the Center Director of the new Jean Shepherd Community Center at Dowling Park.

The many recreational programs and events offered by the Hammond Parks Department are organized and operated by the recreation division, headed by Harold Hull, Recreation Supervisor. Assisting Hull are Leroy Harwell Jr., Sports Coordinator; Jennifer Basino, Special events/community

Theater Coordinator; Lona Valadez, Pools Coordinator; and Roy Ortiz, Environmental Education Coordinator.

In addition to the array of summer arts and crafts and sports education programs at the city's parks, the recreation division organizes weekend sports programs for adults and children, night swimming at high school pools, activities at the parks' skating rinks and the adult basketball league. This division also coordinates permits for use of park fields and facilities.

Special events are another part of this division's responsibilities, including this Saturday's grand opening of the Jean Shepherd Community Center and the upcoming First Annual Pampered Woman Show from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, March 29, and Sunday, March 30, at the Hammond Civic Center. This show will feature fashion shows, demonstrations of self-defense techniques and cooking, free samples and door prizes.

The recreation division also partners with groups in the city to help provide such programs as ballroom dancing and card parties for senior citizens, and the Harrison Park Fourth of July parade and celebration.

An integral part of the Hammond Parks and Recreation Department team is the Hammond Park Board, Vosti said. The Hammond Park Board sets policy parameters and support for the directions we want to take the department," Vosti said. "We do appreciate their support and look for their guidance."

In addition to Mayor Duane Dedelow Jr., the park board includes Craig Kouris, president; the Rev. Antonio Dagggett Sr., vice president; Rick Bryant, treasurer; and Gerardo Torres, secretary. The park board meets on the second Tuesday of each month.

## Get your 'Passport' to park facilities

A new program initiated by the Hammond Parks and Recreation Department will now allow members of one community center to use the facilities at all three centers.

The "Passport to the Parks" program gives residents membership to the Civic Center, Ogden Street Pool and the new Jean Shepherd Community Center in Hammond's Dowling Park.

"It's based on the idea that if you are a member of one community center, you're a member of all and can participate in any program the centers offer," said Sue Rzeszut, Center Director of the Shepherd Center.

Each Center offers a variety of activities and has its own fee structure and membership benefits. However, once a person has an annual membership to the Civic Center, for example, he or she can go to classes at the Shepherd Center without paying another membership fee. The Ogden Street indoor pool facility, at the former YWCA building, features year-round swimming lessons for children as young as 2 and aquatic programs for seniors as young as they want to be. It, too, is part of the Passport Program.

Using the Passport Program, the only cost would be the fee for the specific class, program or activity, Rzeszut said.

"This is a way to tie all of the park programs together as one family, one unit," she noted. "The park program goal is to provide programming for all of Hammond's citizens."



Maintenance Department staff

## OPENING OF THE JEAN SHEPHERD COMMUNITY CENTER (in Dowling Park)

Fourth in a series

### Honoring one of Hammond's native sons

When the Jean Shepherd Community Center officially opens its doors on Saturday, the dedication will honor one of Hammond's most famous native sons.

The suggestion to name the center after this famous writer, humorist and radio personality was made by Rick Bryant, treasurer of the Hammond Park Board and a long-time Shepherd fan. Jean Shepherd grew up in Hammond's Hessville neighborhood. During the 1920s and 1930s, the Shepherd family lived at 2907 Cleveland Street. Jean attended Harding Elementary School and Morton Junior High School, and graduated from Hammond High School in 1939.

It was this era and this place that provided so much material for Shepherd's later tales about growing up in "da Region". Area residents easily identify and understand his many references to "Flick's Tavern" on Kennedy Avenue, the area's steel mills and oil refineries, and to Warren G. Harding Elementary School. He also wrote humorously about the many personalities he encountered growing up in the city he called "Hohman, Indiana".

After serving in the U.S. Army's Signal Corps during World War II, Shepherd attended Indiana University and then moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, where he became a radio show host. During his time in Cincinnati, he also started a TV show called "Rear Bumper".

Later Shepherd became a resident of New York City and one of that city's leading raconteurs on radio station WOR. His writings included his most famous work, the popular movie "A Christmas Story".

This annual classic from MGM Studios recalls a fond, but satiric view of family life in Hammond in the 1940s. Ralphie Parker dreams of a Red Ryder BB gun for Christmas, while his grouchy parents insist "you'll shoot your eye out, kid". Ralphie also has continual confrontations with schoolyard bullies Farkus



Jean Shepherd during programming

and Grover Dill. The movie also immortalizes Ralphie's friendship with Flick and Schwartz, the saga of his father's winning the Lady's Leg Lamp at the bowling alley and his mother's dilemma of getting the same sugar bowl four weeks in a row at the Orpheum Theater's dish night.

**"As a third grader, I had no idea I was going to a school named after the worst president in history."**

Shepherd's novels included "Phantom of the Open Hearth", an offbeat recollection of a young man enduring the trials of his junior prom in the 1940s; "Wanda Hickey's Night of Golden Memories and Other Disasters", which contains eight semi-autobiographical stories of growing up in the oil and steel complex of the Calumet Region; and "In God We Trust - All Others Pay Cash", which centers around Flick's Tavern in Hohman as the proprietor spends an afternoon recalling episodes of growing up amid the belching

furnaces and roaring Bessemer ovens of the region's steel mills.

"As a third grader, I had no idea I was going to a school named after the worst president in history," Shepherd once wrote. "New Yorkers thought I invented Warren G. Harding School in my stories and that it was a touch of genius. This is an example of how humorists are born - there must be some poor kid now going to Richard M. Nixon School."

Shepherd returned to the Calumet Region several times before his death at age 78 in Sanibel Island, Florida on Oct. 16, 1999.

In September of 1980, he was part of the 13th annual Northern Indiana History Conference at Purdue University Calumet. On April 7, 1981, Shepherd received the second annual Hammond Achievement Award "which recognized Hammond educated individuals who achieved national or international fame in the arts, sciences, business or industry," said Janet Moran, a member of the committee planning the opening of the Jean Shepherd Community Center. The author also joined the Friends of the Lake County Public Library in June of 1984, and was also Grand Marshal for Hammond's Centennial Parade. He made his final public visit to the Calumet Region on April 19, 1996 for the presentation of the Sigrid Stark Writing Awards at Purdue Calumet.

"I'm surprised to see so many people in the audience," Shepherd said during the Stark awards ceremony. "This is the Calumet Region and a literary occasion. Those two don't go together."



### Flick's Tap 'lives on' for Jean Shepherd fans in Web site

Although Jean Shepherd passed away in 1999, his legacy lives on in his books and the movie classic "A Christmas Story". But it also comes alive every time someone clicks on www.flicklives.com.

And since the year 2000, more than 150,000 visitors have done just that.

"A Christmas Story".

There are also a variety of "Shep Re-Runs", including replays of Shepherd's radio show on WBAI 99.5 FM NY.

In addition, "Flick's Lives" provides links to lots of other Shepherd sites including "The Jean Shepherd Project" (formerly

Shepherd's humor some 30 years ago while watching "Phantom of the Open Hearth" on PBS as a young child. A trip to the library followed and Speelman was hooked.

"His humor is quite characteristic of this area we live in," he said, adding that humor of "da Region"

has a bit of an edge to it. "Growing up in this area you recognize the things he's talking about," Speelman said.

Shepherd's references to Warren G. Harding School and the awarding of the Lady's Leg Lamp in "A Christmas Story"

are among his favorites, Speelman said. "It's hard to pick just one or a couple of favorites."

Speelman said the Hammond native who went on to fame as a writer and humorist "tells a very good tale and weaves a very good web."

And his memory will live on, too, at the new Jean Shepherd Community Center. "We're getting ready to open," Speelman said. "It's exciting."



Photo courtesy of Jim Clavin at www.flicklives.com

This Web site, created by long-time Shep fan Jim Clavin, salutes the novelist, humorist, radio personality and Hammond native. Here you'll find a profile of Shepherd, from his boyhood days growing up in Hammond's Hessville neighborhood through his stint in the U.S. Army to his famed career.

Fans have sent in photos of Shepherd's boyhood home on Cleveland Street



as well as other "Shep Stuff" including cartoons. One clever cartoon shows a rabbit with its tongue stuck to a flag pole, a scene evocative of the movie,

known as FATHEAD CENTRAL). If you're interested in Shepherd memorabilia, such as a collection of his recordings on CD, this Web site provides the link-up. You can also communicate with other Shepherd fans via e-mails.

One of Shepherd's long-time fans - Roy Speelman of the Hammond Parks and Recreation Department - is fittingly now the building engineer for the new Jean Shepherd Community Center in Dowling Park, which officially opens on Saturday with activities from 7 a.m. through 6 p.m. Speelman visits the Flick's Lives Web site and finds it "very authoritative. (Clavin) isn't getting paid for this. You can tell it's someone's hobby and passion. Those are the people who do the best work."

This south Hammond native first discovered Jean

## Community, city combined efforts to create Shepherd Center

When the Jean Shepherd Center at Dowling Park officially opens on Saturday, it will be the culmination of a successful collaboration between public and private groups.

"This is a win-win situation," said Tom Reis, superintendent of the Hammond Parks and Recreation Department. "It's public and private sectors working collaboratively, combining what the community desired with the vision of the mayor (Hammond Mayor Duane Dedelow Jr.) for a greater Hammond for generations to come."

The story of the Shepherd Center begins several decades ago when the Faith United Church of Christ relocated from East Chicago to land north of the expressway in Hammond's Hessville

neighborhood. Much of what is now Dowling Park was originally purchased by the church to build homes for its parishioners, said Pastor Anne Smith, minister at Faith United for the past four years.

When that plan was abandoned, the land was sold to the Hammond Parks and Recreation Department, resulting in Dowling Park. The park became a haven for softball teams because of its fields. But, eventually, the neighborhood residents and community groups expressed a desire for a community center where people of all ages could gather for activities and meetings.

In the late 1990s, a committee formed through Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Hessville to explore just such a plan. One of

those committee members, Mike Koharczak, brought in the Northwest Indiana Fed-



Pastor Anne Smith

eration of Interfaith Organizations.

The Federation helped generate some ideas and brought the ideas to the Hammond Parks and Recreation Department, said department administrator, Curt Vosti. The search for available facilities to house a community center found no existing building that would serve the needs of residents, and the idea for a newly built community center emerged.

Mayor Dedelow quickly expressed support for the facility, primarily because it dovetailed with his vision for Hammond, Vosti said. The new community center also fit into the Hammond Parks Department's masterplan for city parks.

Petitions and surveys followed and Dowling Park was selected as the site for the new community center.

Smith said the church's pastor at that time, the Rev. Dr. Donald Capp, was asked to host community meetings, which he also attended as a community member. Originally, plans called for the center to be built immediately south of Faith United Church of Christ, Smith said. However, the congregation expressed reservations about that plan because it would create a parking problem, she added. Those concerns were addressed and the new community center was relocated on the south side of the park next to a picturesque pond.

In the summer of 2001, the Hammond Park Board approved the project and

one of its members, Vice President Rick Bryant, suggested naming the facility after Hammond's native son, the writer and humorist Jean Shepherd.

That fall the Hammond City Council OK'd a \$2.7 million bond issue to build the facility and furnish it. Because the bonds are payable with gaming revenues, there's no impact on taxpayers, Vosti noted. Construction began in the fall of 2001 on the 41,000 square foot Jean Shepherd Community Center.

"We're very excited about opening the Jean Shepherd Community Center," said Sue Rzeszut, the Center Manager. "This has been very much a community and city effort."

## OPENING OF THE JEAN SHEPHERD COMMUNITY CENTER (in Dowling Park)

Fifth in a series

### You're Invited!

Come on out for the grand opening of the new Jean Shepherd Community Center!

**WHEN:** Saturday, March 15.

**WHERE:** The Jean Shepherd Community Center in Dowling Park, Kennedy Avenue and 175th Street (just north of the Borman Expressway). There's plenty of free parking.

**WHAT'S GOING ON:** Stay the entire day or choose your favorite activity. There's lots to do, including:

- 7 to 8 a.m. Sunrise Walk, continental breakfast.
- 8 to 9 a.m. Building tours.
- 8 a.m. LACARRE Art League opening.
- 8 to 10:30 a.m. Registration for Basketball Skills Competition.
- 8 to 11 a.m. Open Gym.
- 9 a.m. Dedication and official flag raising ceremony.
- 9 a.m. Aerobics demonstration.
- 10 a.m. Latino aerobics demonstration.
- 10 to 11 a.m. Youth Basketball Clinic.
- 11 a.m. Kickboxing demonstration.
- 11 a.m. Basketball Skills Competition.
- Noon to 1 p.m. Volleyball Clinic by Synergy Volleyball Club.
- 1 p.m. U16 Soccer Exhibition Varsity Soccer with Hammond & Hessville Clubs.
- 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. Volleyball Exhibition Match.
- 6 p.m. Women's Soccer Exhibition, featuring Calumet College & local High School All-Stars. Semi-Pro Men's Soccer Challenge with Olympico vs. Hammond Futbol Club.

**ARTS AND CRAFTS:** Join us for Youth Arts & Crafts, Ceramics and Scrapbook Making.

**MUSIC AND DANCE:** Enjoy performances by Crestone Music, the Bilingual Dance Club, the Scott Middle School Choir and the Morton High School Band.

**AND MUCH MORE:** Check out the Center's Computer Lab which will be open all day. Visit the Hammond Park Exhibits highlighting park programs.



## Park-sponsored events throughout the year spell F-U-N for residents

Throughout the year, the Hammond Parks and Recreation Department hosts a variety of events and programs designed to inform, entertain and empower city residents, sometimes in conjunction with civic and private agency partners.

This synergy includes

to be an integral part of the city's cultural and recreational masterplan. Volleyball and basketball tournaments are played regularly at the Civic Center. Special events are also held here including the circus and the popular Hunting and Fishing Show. One upcoming program at

which currently offers eight miles of biking/hiking pathways, will continue to be expanded and will eventually connect the city's parks. New recreational facilities along the city's many waterways are part of the masterplan for Hammond's parks.



Hammond Park Dept. co-sponsors the 4th of July parade in downtown Hammond along Hohman Avenue

such events as the Fourth of July celebration which features a parade down Hohman Avenue and a festival in Harrison Park complete with musical and theatrical entertainment, food and fireworks.

Senior citizens can enjoy programs at the Civic Center designed just for them. For example, ballroom dancing and card parties bring seniors together for companionship and old-fashioned fun. There's also a nutrition center at the Civic Center,

the Civic Center is the First Annual Pampered Woman Show which will be held from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, March 29 and Sunday, March 30.

Other park department facilities also offer a variety of programs that add to the quality of life in Hammond. The Ogden Street Pool, for example, provides swimming lessons, open swim times, aquatic exercise sessions, scuba lessons and life-guard programs.

The opening of the Jean Shepherd Community Center will expand the parks department's opportunities to provide programming and special events for the city's residents and visitors. In 2004, for example, the LACARRE Art Show and International Culture Fest will be held at the



Children of all ages participate in the Hammond Parks-sponsored swim contests

Shepherd Center. The art show will include fine art entries because the event will be held in the center's 33,000-square foot gym. Trade shows, including the Hunting and Fishing Show, may also move to this new facility.

This facility continues

Hammond's bike trail,

As part of its commitment to the city, the Hammond Parks and Recreation Department also sponsors seasonal programs that provide creative, educational and recreational activities for Hammond's residents. For example, summer parks programs allow children to create arts and crafts and to both learn and play various sports. In the winter, ice skating parties provide a healthy fun activity. Adults, too, can get in on the fun with weekend sports programs and leagues. Another parks program offers night swimming events at the city's high schools.

"It's an exciting time in the history of Hammond," said Curt Vosti, administrator of the Hammond Parks and Recreation Department. "The vision for our urban parks complements Mayor Dedelow's vision for the city of Hammond. We want to create green spaces and small urban parks throughout the city."



Ballroom dancing at Civic Cts



Seniors lunch at the Civic Center nutrition site

## What the future holds for the Shepherd Center

With the opening of the new Jean Shepherd Community Center in Dowling Park, an era of new opportunity dawns in Hammond.

Not only does the Shepherd Center expand the facilities and programming offered by the Hammond Parks and Recreation Department, it also opens the way to connect this park and center with the Carlson/Oxbow Trail, located along the south side of the Borman Expressway.

"I'd like to see a bridge over the expressway so people could walk or bike from one park to another," said Curt Vosti, administrator of the Hammond Parks and Recreation Department. In addition, Vosti said

the Lake County Visitors Center on the southwest corner of Kennedy Avenue and the Borman Expressway could also be linked to

Hammond



Parks & Recreation

the new Shepherd Center. Recordings of Shepherd's radio programs and albums, and videotapes of his TV and movie productions could be provided on a rotating basis at the visitors' center. Guests could be directed

to visit the Shepherd Center for additional exhibits and/or opportunities to view and hear the humor of Hammond's native son, Jean Shepherd.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to link Lake County attractions," Vosti said. "It's a way of working together for the good of all."

#### PARK BOARD COMMISSIONERS



Craig Kouris



Rev. A. Daggott Sr.



Rick Bryant



Gerardo Torres