

Children's Fund enriches summer experiences for greater New Bedford youth

Creation of bike program at Dennison Memorial provides opportunity to connect children throughout the community.

During the summer school recess, kids across Greater New Bedford have been building friendships and lifelong memories thanks in part to the Senator Montigny Children's Fund established at the Southcoast Community Foundation in partnership with Northstar Learning Centers. Montigny created the fund through the annual state budget in 2017, issuing grants to local non-profits and programs providing children with access to arts, culture, recreation, education, and wellness. The New Bedford Senator has earmarked state funding for the program each year since its inception.

Recreation and team sports were a major theme this summer. The Children's Fund supported Fairhaven Acushnet Youth Baseball during their journey to the 2022 Cal Ripken World Series in Missouri. Closer to home, Coach Rob Delaleu hosted the Greater New Bedford Hoop Academy for youth ages 8 through 18. The Children's Fund supported scholarships for athletes to ensure all youth could participate regardless of their financial status.



Office of Senator Mark Montigny photo.

This summer also marked the anticipated grand opening of the restored bowling greens at Hazelwood Park. The project, supported by a \$50,000 grant from the Children's Fund, will connect local children with seniors eager to teach two of the city's storied pastimes: lawn bowling and croquet. The Friends of Hazelwood Park and Youth Opportunities Unlimited are leading the charge to revive the two sports.

Finally, Montigny's program provided two separate grants to

Dennison Memorial Community Center to expand their bicycle program and continue summer field trips across the region. Montigny previously partnered with Dennison to create a new bike access program for kids, including for Afghan refugees relocating to New Bedford following the Taliban takeover of their country last year. During the 2022 Dennison Dribble in June, Dennison kids decorated their bicycles and held a bike parade to show off their new wheels and creative spirit. The kids also enjoyed field trips to the New England Aquarium, Boston Museum of Science, Roger Williams Park Zoo, College Pond in Myles Standish State Forest, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Pool in Fall River.

“Kids deserve summers filled with happy lifelong memories where friendships are made and important life lessons and skills can be cultivated,” said Senator Montigny. “The organizations and people behind this season’s grant recipients have done an amazing job providing these opportunities for our young people and I cannot thank them enough. The Children’s Fund is devoted to enhancing opportunities and joy for all young people across New Bedford, especially for those who may be in need of financial support. We will continue to support the organizations and programs making a difference in kids’ lives.”



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