

David Vaughn from Greenville is owner/president of a local construction company and a community member, who truly believes in the importance of recreation and parks. His efforts have made a tremendous impact for the youth and families of Pitt County. He began volunteering in the 1990s as a little league baseball coach. The flood of 1999 brought a lot of destruction to Greenville parks. David volunteered his time and resources to collect donations for park repairs. In 2006, he heard about a handicap-accessible baseball field. He gathered a group of baseball and recreation enthusiasts and began researching the concept. From there, he supervised a board that collected funds and created the Sarah Vaughn Field of Dreams. This \$750,000 project would not have been possible without David's leadership and tireless efforts. In 2008, he contributed \$250,000 to assist with the creation of Greenville's first fully-accessible playground. David managed the development of the facility. He was raised in Greenville and has given back to the community in many countless ways.

The Young Professional award was presented to **Paul Moore** and **Dennis Vestal**. Paul has nine years of experience in the field. Paul was hired by Salisbury Parks & Recreation as a recreation programmer at the Salisbury Civic Center after working with the Alamance County YMCA for two years. During his tenure in Salisbury, Paul was instrumental in bringing special events to the city, which included the Simon Says contest, the Wedding Extravaganza, the Threads of Love Quilt Show, the Carolina Artist Exposition, NC Cycle-Cross series races and numerous disc golf tournaments. In 2006, Paul was promoted to Recreation Coordinator and received his CPRP certification. He serves as the USTA-sanctioned Jr. Open Tennis Tournament director, NC Cyclo-Cross series race coordinator and Master of Ceremonies for many of the department's events. Paul has also served NCRPA as a conference speaker and as a member of the conference program committee. Paul

recently joined the staff of Statesville Parks & Recreation.

Dennis Vestal has been with Greenville Recreation & Parks since 2001. He has moved up in the agency from recreation program assistant to recreation manager. He is CPRP certified and has been an active member of NCRPA since 2000. Dennis represents the department throughout the community and state. He serves on the board of directors for Greenville Babe Ruth and Greenville Little League and is the department's liaison to local youth football and lacrosse organizations. Dennis serves on the Athletic Directors Workshop steering committee, the Statewide Athletics Committee as the baseball coordinator and is the current chair of the Athletic Section. He is a graduate of East Carolina University (ECU) and is currently working on his Masters in Recreation & Leisure Studies degree at ECU.

Each year, the Corporate/ Humanitarian award is presented to a business operating in North Carolina that has made a significant and statewide contribution to our profession. **Duke Energy** was selected as the 2008 winner for its partnership and financial gift of \$4.5 million to the Carolina Thread Trail. This project will be developed in eleven North Carolina counties and dozens of municipalities. Duke Energy is one of the largest and oldest planners of public recreation

in our state and is actively-managing public land and water resources, while providing no-cost public recreation facilities to the citizens of our state for over 50 years. Duke Energy works daily with more than 70 local government agencies to provide recreation land, easements and PARTF grant support for various types of recreation development. Duke Energy is committed to be a leader and holds a position at the forefront of recreation development for our citizens.

NCRPA also recognized five member agencies for successful Arts and Humanities programs and an Innovative Program Award winner.

The Arts and Humanities Awards were presented to Durham Parks & Recreation for their Hero Book project, Cary Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources for Cary Diwali 2007, Garner Parks & Recreation for their Independence Day Celebration, Morganton Parks & Recreation for their Red, White & Bluegrass Festival, and Black Mountain Recreation & Parks for the African American Dance Ensemble.

Hero Book is a multi-media arts project, designed to give teens an artistic way to explore their strengths and discover ways in which they are heroes in their own community. The first part was an art project where the teens produced a Hero Book, a

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Duke Energy Recreation Planning and Design Team – (Left to right) Joe Carriker, Steadman Sugg, Scott Jolley and Travis Sinclair.



Left to right: Rob Smith, Garner; Cindi King, Cary; Butch McSwain, Morganton; Jason Hurley, Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation; and Rhonda Parker, Durham.

series of pages, portraying various facets of their lives, people important, and memories through written words and drawings/paintings. The second part was a film, which documented the Hero Book creation process and included teens interviewing elders in their community, who shared memories and their own heroes. The teens were both subjects and camera persons for this portion of the project. The concept of the Hero Book project is based on the *10 Million Memories Project* (www.10mmp.org), designed to help the millions of victims of the AIDS crisis in Africa take their memories and life experiences and develop them into a picture of their contributions and accomplishments.

Diwali, also known as the Festival of Light, is a major Indian festival that celebrates the victory of good over evil in every human being. The Triangle area of North Carolina, and specifically Cary, has a large Indian population, due mostly to Cary's proximity to the high-tech industry in Cary, Morrisville and Research Triangle Park. Cary Diwali was established in response to the large growth of the Indian population. The other reason was the Town's desire to promote diversity and cultural awareness to its citizens and the broader community. Cary Diwali was first held in 2001 as a way to celebrate and share Indian culture to the community at large. From its inception, Cary Diwali was conceived as a partnership between the private

non-profit Hum Sub and the Town of Cary's Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Department. Now in its eighth year, Diwali has become a signature annual event.

Garner's Annual Independence Day Celebration is the town's largest event of the year attracting an average of 12,000 to 15,000 people. No other event brings out the sense of community and attracts people from throughout the region as this event does. Families of all sizes gather in the park hours before the Symphony performs to picnic, play and enjoy other forms of entertainment. Each year, organizers receive many positive comments that address the "close-knit" and "small town" feel of the event. This Independence Day Celebration was established to honor America's birthday and bring the community together for a family-friendly event, partnering with local non-profit agencies and churches to provide food and other refreshments to the patrons of the event as well as the NC Symphony, which provides most of the events musical entertainment. This event allows local non-profit food vendors to be more visible within the community aside from their normal business activities. The Parks and Recreation Department does not work alone in putting this large event together as Public Works, Police Department, and the Wake County Sheriff's office provide

specific services that enable the event to be such a success.

The City of Morganton and the Parks & Recreation Department is the host and location of The Red White and Bluegrass Festival. The annual event is one of the largest traditional bluegrass festivals in the nation. The festival continues four days and ends on the Fourth of July with the biggest fireworks show in Western North Carolina. The festival was founded in 2004. The incentive was to bring a stimulating festival to Morganton in the context of traditional bluegrass music, local art, craft and food vendors and quality family entertainment. Each year, the festival turns record numbers and is still growing. The Red, White and Bluegrass festival has been free for the past five years. The Festival hosts over twenty five vendors, local and regional artists. The festival also provides free tent and RV camping onsite. By the fourth day, the event caters to over 20,000 guests and 23 bluegrass bands.

The African Dance Ensemble performance was brought to life to celebrate Black History Month with an authentic African dance performance that entertains through dance, taught peace, as well as educates the audience about the history and culture of Africa. The Black Mountain Recreation and Parks Department was also hoping to succeed in bringing the Black Mountain community members to a performance, normally seen in larger cities. The agency reached out to the principles of the local elementary and primary schools. Immediately, they embraced the idea of an event that joined students and community members, young and old. The Black Mountain Old Depot Association, a non-profit and volunteer organization in Black Mountain, whose mission is to protect and maintain the 100-year-old train depot and support the teaching of mountain and heritage crafts in the local Swannanoa Valley Schools, provided funding for the event.

The Innovative Program award was presented to Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation for their Charlotte-