

MEADVILLE AREA RECREATION COMPLEX

FEBRUARY 2019 REPORT ON PLACEMAKING



LETTER FROM COMMUNITY COORDINATOR

In 2018, a beloved friend, community leader, and MARC founding member Eleanor Davies passed away. Shortly after, Steve and Jack Davies, sons of Ellie, contacted the MARC to see how their mother's passion for this one of a kind public facility could be continued through their energy and talents. We decided the best thing to do was host a Placemaking Workshop hosted by Project for Public Spaces co-founder Steve Davies. Why a workshop? Because Jack and Steve, like their mother, know that the best ideas don't always come from committees. Great ideas come from dedicated patrons and community members who utilize the public spaces throughout our communities. Additionally, Project for Public Spaces emphasizes projects that are "lighter, quicker, cheaper" a necessity when considering development in our region. This shifted our paradigm at the MARC and allowed us to try new and innovative projects without much initial financial investment. In this way, we were able to test the waters and see what would stick while building on MARC assets and utilizing volunteers whenever possible and appropriate. A prime example of this is our new roller skating program. Started by volunteer Roller Derby enthusiast Shayna Morrison and staff member Aaron Rekich, this project started on a budget of \$0 utilizing skate donations from community members and our empty summer arena. Throughout the summer, we were able to showcase the desire for summer skating and receive a grant from the Crawford Heritage Community Foundation for new skates moving into the 2019 season.



Lee Scandinaro, Community Coordinator

NEW ADDITIONS



We are so fortunate to have hired Aaron Rekich as the MARC Ice Rink Manager. With a background in recreation and education, Aaron's expertise has proven to be invaluable in our continued success here at the MARC.

In addition, we are so thankful to have the continued dedication of our Meadville Area Recreation Authority.

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ONGOING PLACEMAKING

The statements below reflect the projects, designed by community members, that we have been able to implement since last February. We are confident that these projects reflect the common values we hold for the MARC because they were generated by community members.



DeArment Ice Arena

- There is no longer a spectator fee.
- There is currently an adult hockey league. We also offer adult learn to play hockey.
- We host Coffee Club every Tuesday and Friday morning. Admission is donation based. We even have monthly breakfast potlucks.
- Last season we piloted roller skating and asked the community to donate old skates. It went very well and we were able to secure a grant through the Crawford Heritage Community Foundation for next season's rental skates.
- Our new Ice Rink Manager is an ice expert having worked previously at the Lemieux Center. He has been able to secure us membership for professional organizations related to ice arena management.
- We partnered with the Meadville MOMS to host an indoor yard sale.

The Cafe

- We repainted the Cafe more neutral tones.
- We removed a lot of the unnecessary signage in order to declutter the space.
- We've tried to explore additional food options to see what the public would like to see. Some of these include pierogies, wings, and local coffee.

Barco Aquatic Center

- We removed the bee infested sand volleyball courts which created new space for lounging and playing.
- We hosted live music on the pool deck during our family festival.
- We've partnered with local Boy Scout troops to offer merit badges
- Allegheny College service leaders helped prepare the pool outdoor pool for the winter season.

The Lobby

- We updated our signage and removed the unnecessary signs.
- We moved around and repurposed our lobby televisions to now highlight MARC spaces, show our rink schedule, and play television. We have also been able to use the televisions during video game tournaments.
- We brought back the MARC pro shop which now is central to the lobby, offers skate sharpening, and other recreation supplies including rentable outdoor games and equipment.

Skatepark

- A grassroots group of community members known as Thankful Thursday with the City of Meadville hosted 3 paint days where we repainted the skatepark Meadville green and gold.



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The Front Plaza

- We are in the process of removing a lot of the additional "negative" signage and replacing them with fewer "positive" signs that still communicate the same message.
- Over the summer, we had sidewalk chalk and free games available for patrons to enjoy such as giant connect four and our imagination playground donated by the Going Places Project.
- We added perennial grasses that require low maintenance to the flower beds. These stay throughout the year and add color and texture to the plaza.
- We worked with the Going Places Project and a group of teens to install our little free library.
- CATA now stops regularly at the MARC. Take the Blue B route every hour at :40.

Community Garden

- We work hard to involve the garden in all MARC events. For instance, we included the garden in our ReMARCable family festival where community members painted pavers for the handicap accessible flower beds, and BBQ and Music Festival where gardeners sold plants as a fundraiser. We were also able to host workshops inside the MARC when weather was poor and advertise garden events through the MARC's facebook page.
- The Crawford County Career and Technical Center has been instrumental in maintaining the garden doing everything from harvesting potatoes to moving compost.

Nature Trails

- A grant was received by the Winslow Foundation to begin to design our very own disc golf course.
- At our ReMARCable Family Festival, we were able to incorporate many of the ideas brainstormed such as fairy gardens and live music on the trails.
- A grassroots group of community members came together to clean the trail over the summer.
- Our Allegheny College Davies Service leader is currently working to organize a local Meadville Running Club to utilize our nature trails more regularly.
- We hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the completion of the trails through the Community Wellness Initiative.



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?



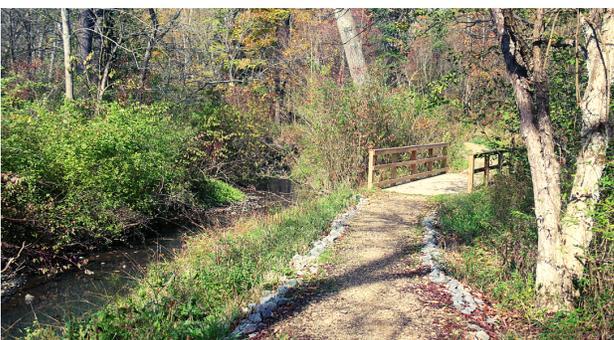
One of the most significant things we heard during our placemaking workshop is the need for pool locker room renovations. This project is one we estimate being anywhere from \$150,000 - \$250,000. Our Meadville Area Recreation Foundation (MARF) has now prioritized this need and is working hard to raise the funds needed. To support this work or donate, visit us in person, mail a check to the MARF 800 Thurstron road, or donate on our website www.MARC4FUN.com. We need all the help we can get to achieve this massive project.

WHAT'S ALREADY UNDERWAY?



In partnership with the French Creek Valley Conservancy, we will host kayaking classes at our indoor aquatic center. To sign up for a class, call the MARC at 814-724-6006. We are currently looking for life vest donations.

In collaboration with the Union of Allied Painters Association, the aquatic center will soon be getting a face lift in the form of an indoor mural. The plan is to have the project completed by May and will utilize volunteers. Funding for the paint is provided by PPG.



In response to the feedback we received about having a disc golf course at the Meadville Area Recreation Complex (MARC) we have started our first phase of development. We've raised some money through the Winslow Foundation and are looking for additional funds. The plan is to have the first phase of the course developed to play by Summer 2019.

**Find your
best friends here.**



814-724-6006 MARC4FUN.com