



# *The City of Steubenville*

## *Parks and Recreation Department*

Martin Luther King Community Center ▪ 905 Market St ▪ Steubenville, Ohio 43952

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OPRA Foundation  
1069-A West Main St  
Westerville, Ohio 43081

“Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change we seek.”  
President Barack Obama

On behalf of the Steubenville Parks and Recreation Department I would like to thank you for your support in helping us bring computer access to our community. The Martin Luther King Recreation Center exists to serve our community and build a better tomorrow for all of our citizens. This grant has helped us play a crucial role in bringing programs and activities to an underserved population of our community. Thanks to your generous grant, our organization was able to purchase five computers for the community to use free of charge.

Enclosed with this letter you will find our grant report pertaining to our project and the ways this funding has been used to help our community. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to reach out to me and I will get back to you as soon as I can.

*Lori Fetherolf*

Steubenville Parks and Recreation Director

## Grant Report

With the Martin Luther King Recreation Center nestled in a low income area of Steubenville, the parks and recreation staff have seen firsthand the challenges people have had accessing the internet which only seemed to be made worse by the challenges of Covid 19. So to address is shortfall, staff were able change an available space to accommodate computers and other games for the community to use. Our new community room has a designated computer space along with a foosball table, large connect four game and air hockey table that members of the community are able to access on a daily basis.

This grant allowed us to purchase five Chrome Books along with locking devices that are set up in a designated of our new activity room. The only challenge that we faced with this project was related to Covid as at the delivery of the computers was delayed due to supply issues. However, our wonderful IT department was able to successfully secure the devices and the space was ready to go.

Looking back on this project our outcomes were not always what we imagined them to be. However, as most parks and recreation departments you learn to adapt for the benefit of the community. Here is how our objectives panned out:

1. Area youth will become more engaged in the learning process.
  - a. This objective was easily met as kids still come to the recreation center to use the computers on a daily basis. There has been some learning curve as it relates to elementary kids as staff have had to teach some students basic computer skills as many of them only know how to find games in Google Play. So time has been spent teaching them things such as how to access the internet or how to do a google search.
  - b. In 2019 the Steubenville Parks and Recreation Department was awarded a grant from NRPA to be part of a pilot youth mentoring program targeting children who were affected by family opioid abuse. Thus we were also able to make sure the students in this program received homework assistance which ultimately helped to improve their grades.
2. Computer availability will help with employment opportunities.
  - a. This objective was not as easily met as Covid and other obstacles have made it a little more difficult. However, we have recently partnered with Urban Frontier Organization, a local non-profit, to offer coding programs to those who are unemployed or underemployed. This organization has also agreed to help those who need assistance in developing or updating their resumes.
3. Computers located that the Martin Luther King Recreation Center will help guarantee equitable access
  - a. This objective was the most important as the Martin Luther King Recreation Center sits next to two low income apartment complexes so access to computers is not something that everyone has. And because

our recreation center is free to use many of their tenants make use of the computers. In addition, we have several staff who are employed through Goodwill Industries and we have made sure that they have time every day to access the computers as needed

- b. We have also experienced a positive, unexpected outcome by having computers available to the community. For many years we have offered an aerobics class that targeted minorities and those with existing health conditions. When Covid came along the class was postponed until everyone could meet again. However, many of the participants were concerned and continue to be concerned about meeting in person so the instructor has been holding class via Zoom. And to date this class continues to meet both in person and via Zoom, which would not be possible if we did not have computers available for everyone's use.
- c. During the summer of 2022 we started a day camp program. This program was a huge success as most weeks were full. Planning for 2023 we are planning to incorporate some STEM programs that will include usage of the computers. We hope that by bringing in the use of computers for things other than video games, we can help cut some of the learning loss that happens during the summer months.

While not everything worked out the way we had planned, having computers available has been a huge asset to our community. One of our biggest goals has always been to help those who are marginalized. By having computers we have helped bring accessibility to the forefront and helped enrich the lives of those living in some of our most vulnerable neighborhoods.