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# Parks growing like the grass

By Randy McNutt  
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**ANDERSON TWP.** — The Anderson Park District is growing, and so are residents' options for good times.

"We're blessed with parks — our own and Hamilton County's," said Henry Dolive, township administrator. "We have a reputation. Some dynamic things are happening with the parks and our other spaces."

They include green spaces. Officials don't speak of parks without mentioning the township's unrelated green space program, which saves tracts so that development will never intrude. The two programs are considered equally important.

Anderson's innovative Greenspace Program began in 1990 when township trustees appointed a Greenspace Advisory Committee to develop criteria for land acquisitions. That year voters approved a levy — 0.9 mill — to acquire and preserve land in its natural state.

Officials say it was the first such tax levy approved by voters of an Ohio township.

"They renewed the levy in 1995. Since then, the committee has been actively obtaining small tracts throughout the community to preserve for present and future generations.

"The township trustees appoint the boards for green space and parks, but it's those folks who have made all of this happen," said Russell Jackson, president of the trustees. "We have highly respected programs. We got out in front of the market with green space, before it was too late to obtain it. Now, 12 percent of the township is green."

The township has about 58 green spaces totaling more than 518 acres.

The commitment to saving the land started with the park district, which has won numerous awards for its programs and high-quality recreation areas since its founding in 1976.

Park Board President Julie Stautberg said the board has been helped by its successful cultivation of partnerships with a dozen groups, including the Forest Hills School District and Anderson Hills Kiwanis.

The parks offer leisure activities as well as activities related to fitness, health, relaxation, learning and community fellowship. An arm of the district, the Anderson Foundation for



Laszlo Molner (left) with his dog Bone meets Anderson Township resident Jack Wakefield and his dog Gumbo as they walk the trails of Julifs Park.

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Parks and Recreation, helps raise money for parks and their projects.

The district now features 10 parks with more than 342 acres, and offers year-round programs. The township's parks are: Beech Acres Park, Clear Creek Park, Firehouse Fields, Heritage Center, Julfs Park, Kellogg Park, Lavery Park, Riverside Park, Veterans Park and Johnson Park. (The Hamilton County Park District operates Withrow Nature Preserve and Woodland Mound Park in Anderson Township.)

At 890 Eight Mile Road, township trustees bought 5.28 acres in 1993 and opened the Heritage Center during the township's 200th birthday. This spring, a new sidewalk is to be built along Forest Road from Merritt Grove and Veterans Park, which will link the park with Ayer Elementary School, the Heritage Center and some neighborhoods in the southeast.