

# McClure named to park presidency

ANDERSON TWP. - While Bush and Kerry have aspirations to become president of the United States on Election Day 2004, Molly McClure has already achieved the presidency for which she was striving.



McClure

In February, McClure became board president of the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association (OPRA).

OPRA is a statewide, non-profit organization representing and supporting more than 1,800 professionals and citizen board members. Its roots date back as far as 1934 in providing leisure facilities and opportunities to all Ohioans and to the tourists who visit our state each year.

McClure is a certified park and recreation professional with more than 25 years of parks and recreation experience, 18 of those years as executive director of the Anderson Park District. As an active member of the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association and last year's board finance chairperson, she will have no problem stepping into the role as Ohio's park and recreation president.

"Molly's focus is always on how she can improve the quality of life in Anderson and throughout the country through her involvement in local, state and national organizations," said Dale Bartholomew, the president of the Anderson Park District's board. "She pays close attention to trends and movements in parks and recreation, gathering knowledge and experience to implement beneficial change to whatever she's involved."

OPRA has recently created a Healthy Kids Task Force to develop resources and tools for park and recreation agencies. The task force hopes to connect community health initiatives with local park and recreation resources, programs and support that encourage physical activity.

"Nearly half of American children are not vigorously active on a regular basis, according to the Centers for Disease Control," said McClure. "More frightening is that participation in all types of physical activity declines strikingly as age increases."

The goals of the OPRA board complement the intentions of the Anderson Park District. In addition to providing more parks and amenities, the park district has added more health-related programs, just in time for spring.

Jr. Jazzercise, beginning March 25, introduces children

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**DALE BARTHOLOMEW**

PRESIDENT OF THE ANDERSON PARK DISTRICT'S BOARD.

to the lifelong benefits of exercise by making exercise fun. Sports of All Sorts, begun March 15, teaches 4- and 5-year-olds a variety of sports and backyard games designed to keep children off the couch. There are also unstructured, open gym opportunities for pre-school and high school aged children.

"These programs will hopefully motivate children to become active now and stay active as adults," said McClure.

The Youth Sports Task force, the other primary focus of the

in its second year with this national program.

Ongoing OPRA projects include as many presentations as possible to health-related audiences describing how public park and recreation agencies

can assist with local health initiatives.

"I look forward to my role as president," said McClure "I feel I can make an impact on a state level and benefit my neighborhood of Anderson as well."

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During her term as OPRA board president, McClure will carry out a 3-5 year plan involving an ongoing focus on health and wellness issues. The OPRA board of directors has recognized this as a special area of concentration and directed OPRA staff to advance statewide efforts, projects, agencies, coalitions and more. The primary health and wellness issues that McClure will tackle involve expanding the Healthy Kids Task Force and the Youth Sports Task Force.

Ohio Parks and Recreation Association, is an effort to change the culture within our communities regarding the behavior of parents and coaches of youth sports. The OPRA task force is looking into a multi-discipline approach to make sports fun and safe for kids by training coaches, parents, and league administrators. One aspect of this approach includes PAYS, the Parents' Alliance for Youth Sports. The park district's youth basketball program is presently

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