

From:]

Sent: Thursday, October 10, 2013 9:07 PM

To: ParksSurvey

Subject: Re: Your Opinion Matters! Please rate your recent experience with Bellevue Parks & Community Services

I have a note by my computer to write you a note expressing our gratitude for the programs for the DD adult population at The Highland Center.

Our daughter Annie had a great time at the picnic/dance. This is one of the highlights for the summer for her and her long time friends.

Most people don't realize how isolated this population is in the community because they need socialization in a safe and fun environment.

Our daughter was born with down syndrome having multiple health challenges. Her education in Bellevue Schools was so important for many reasons. However, many of the opportunities for peer contact and interaction often ends after graduation.. In order to keep balance in the lives of these young folks, recreation is essential. Unemployment is very high for many of these folks, parents burn out, and opportunities to relate to friends becomes very limited.

Dan Lasitor, is the best possible coordinator of these programs, with Kim Indurkar supporting him in this roll. Monica, at the desk is just perfect. This team along with the staff who offer thoughtful programs making such good experiences for the participants. Everyone is treated with respect and dignity while modeling good boundaries. Some of the participants live unassisted in the community and don't have the ability to have meaningful lives outside of the recreation programs.

How do I know this? I have been advocating for this population for 45 years, beginning when there were very few services for disabled children and adults. My role as a young parent was to work as a liason between the school district and families. We had the support of the school district at that time went into high and college class rooms to help create positive change. We worked with universities to put on workshops, had a program unique to the nation at that time.

Now, our adult children have different needs. The Highland Center is a great place for participants to work on social skills while enjoying fun activities. Dan Lasitor is the best coordinator of the programs, with the very skillful Kim Indurkar as his assistant. Monica at the desk is a natural working at the desk and understanding the complex needs of the participants who are treated with respect an dignity while establishing appropriate boundaries. There is no other place in society for our population to have fun, enjoy peers in a safe environment.

I just want to say that these are very unsettling times for our country, but our adult children are so lucky to have this wonderful opportunity.

Sue Parks

mother/guardian of Annie Parks

Sue Parks

