

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF GROWING GREAT PARKS



NEWS RELEASE

Desiree Stanfield  
Chief Marketing and Communications  
248-705-4108 | [stanfieldd@oakgov.com](mailto:stanfieldd@oakgov.com)

**Oakland County Parks marks Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month**

*Adaptive Recreation opportunities promote inclusion, community for people of all abilities*

**OAKLAND COUNTY, MI – March 19, 2026** – Throughout Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in March, Oakland County Parks (OCP) is celebrating the essential role its adaptive programming plays in the lives of individuals with intellectual, developmental and cognitive disabilities.

Equitable access to recreation is one of OCP’s core values and adaptive recreation ensures people of all ages and abilities can safely and comfortably enjoy spending time in the parks. As part of its commitment to providing memorable experiences for all, OCP is hosting its Starlight Gala for the first time. This prom-style event for individuals ages 16 and older with intellectual and developmental disabilities features dancing, a photo booth and an elegant catered meal.

“Prom is a highly anticipated milestone for many young people that offers lasting memories and shared experiences with their friends. The Starlight Gala celebrates personal growth and the strength of these social bonds,” Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist and OCP Recreation Supervisor Sandy Dorey said. “We’re looking forward to seeing guests make their grand entrance on the red carpet and dance the night away.”

Starlight Gala will be held from 6-8:30 p.m. Thursday, April 9 at the Glen Oaks Event Center in Farmington Hills. Formal attire is encouraged. Cost is \$22/person and registration is required by Thursday, March 26. Call 248-858-0916 to register or complete the registration form available at [OaklandCountyParks.com](http://OaklandCountyParks.com).

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month champions diversity and inclusion by promoting understanding and highlighting opportunities for inclusion. It seeks to offer support for those

with intellectual and developmental disabilities while sharing the unique contributions they make in the lives of their families and communities every day.

This year, OCP's adaptive recreation programming includes the award-winning Disability Dirt Days programming at Holly Oaks ORV Park and DiversAbility Days at Normandy Oaks Park and Independence Oaks County Park.

OCP also continues to offer its popular Quiet Zone space during larger, crowded events, providing a calming place to reestablish sensory regulation while participating in community activities like the upcoming Great Marshmallow Drop on April 3 at Worden Park in Royal Oak. There will be a dedicated drop for individuals with disabilities of all ages at 11 a.m. during this special event. Partnerships with local community agencies continue to expand programming throughout Oakland County.

For a 2026 adaptive recreation event calendar and more information, including the current Therapeutic/Adaptive Recreation Resource Guide, visit [OaklandCountyParks.com](https://OaklandCountyParks.com).

For information on other events, visit [OaklandCountyParks.com](https://OaklandCountyParks.com). Join the conversation on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).