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## Georgetown County Parks and Recreation: Goal 3

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Goal Number 3: Georgetown County Parks and Recreation

Aaliyah Thomas and Kyle Bailey. 2021.

## **Introduction**

This summer we have had the pleasure of interning with Georgetown County Parks and Recreation. Our internships consist of different roles that lead us to be engaged with people throughout Georgetown County. Loren Wallace is the Recreational Manager for the county of Georgetown, he was our supervisor throughout the duration of our internship. One of our many tasks was working with a new software called CivicRec. CivicRec is the software which we are using to advertise the different parks and recreation centers throughout the county. The plan for this software is for it to become the catalog that helps outline all the parks, recreation centers, and programs that Parks and Rec put together. In this software we oversee, our main job is making sure the parks and recreation center have content and photos. This software allows you to register for events and rent facilities spaces, this allows people to look up everything online and find information without calling or going to your local recreation center. The software that was previously used recently got hacked and lost all records and data that they had. Civic Rec is the new software that we will use to help file all paperwork and records of people signing up for programs and sports. While working with Civic Rec we were also asked to help with our social media and advertising. We also had the pleasure of creating flyers and helping advertise different summer programs and fall sports. This was something we really enjoyed doing because we got to be creative and put our own touch on things. Throughout our internship we realized that there are so many SDGs related to Parks and Recreation for Georgetown County. For our report, we will be focusing on goal number 3: Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all ages. The overall goal can easily be connected to Parks and Recreation with all the different facilities and programs that they offer.

Our report will talk about the connections relating to SDG goal number 3 indicator number 3.4. Indicator 3.4 states: By 2020, reducing premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promoting mental health and well-being. Throughout the report we will be focusing on how to market parks to the public and facilities for their wellbeing. We strongly believe that this indicator connects to Parks and Rec with all the different programs, challenges, and facilities that they offer. In Georgetown County there are 21 parks. They are located throughout the four different regions: Waccamaw, Georgetown, Northwest and Andrews. There are four different recreation centers in Georgetown County where you can go visit or attend a program that relates to your health and wellbeing. Choppee, Andrews, Beck, and Waccamaw all have a recreation center where you can go in and attend a cardio class, an aerobics class or even stop by the weight room. All these locations are available to help with your wellbeing.

### **Marketing:**

Throughout the summer Parks and Rec are working on programs that are tailored towards each age group. The senior citizens will have events going on that will involve them in outside events where they can go out walking and build their endurance. For the younger generation we have all the fall sports coming up where they can sign up for the sport they like. The different fall sports that we are using are Cheerleading, Tackle Football, Cross Country, and Flag Football. From playing adult soccer to kickball with younger kids, we want to make sure everyone is included when creating programs. Each week there is a new program for each age group to get active and get them to engage with other people in Georgetown County. Here at Parks and Rec, we want to make sure we keep our community engaged in as much activity as possible.

When marketing events for the county we share them through the county news and make a public post on our social media pages to invite everyone to the upcoming events. We believe once the residents of the county understand all the different programs that we offer and how it can relate to them then we will get more people engaged through the different facilities. Our main project this summer was to help market their programs to the public through social media and CivicRec. For the marketing part of the project, we wanted to analyze how to make sure we are connecting to each target audience. When we do this, we will know exactly how to get each audience engaged in all our events in the facilities and parks. Putting out our information on social media and getting parents and children to follow us on our accounts will make a big change in the communities. Parents will know what is going on and kids will be able to share and tell friends. The generation today is mainly involved in technology, once we post our programs on social media, we will be able to reach the target audience in each region. When we market effectively and make sure we are including our community in our activities. This will help gain our community support in our events. Recreation marketing is unique because we are not advertising physical items but experience. A few marketing practices that we are working on include making sure we post content that is relative to the type of event or program we are hosting. We want to make sure we are using the same social media platforms and that we are consistent with our posting. When we host an event maybe we can create incentives for people, so this can help encourage them to join. When we are making public posts, we want to make sure we are gaining community support in all events. With the different programs and activities that we have for each age group. We need to make sure we are marketing all our events for each age group. If we are going to post only specific flyers on our social media page to attract a certain target audience then we are not getting any closer to reach our goal. Moving forward when a new

program is created, we need to advertise it in the community and via social media. We need to start posting photos of the community and show our appreciation for their support in all our programs and events. If we can market effectively and make public posts about all our programs, we will get better turnouts. The impact of marketing when we do this will help reposition our parks and recreations so that the outcomes we create are understood and valued. This impact will also help grow the local economy and create economic development opportunities with all the different marketing aspects we will need at the different regions.

### **Programs & Health:**

Throughout the summer we helped create 6 different programs for the community to be involved in. The six different programs we helped create this summer were Waccamaw Recreational Volleyball, Georgetown County Parks and Recreation GO



Series, Sports Program, Nature Walk, Wilderness Survival, and Parks and Rec Olympics.

Throughout all the 6 events that we helped create only a few events were decent that had people come out and participated. Our Volleyball Program had a great turn out every Tuesday and Thursday, we had Teach My People Middle Schoolers come out and participated with us. Our GO Series and Nature Walk were not as consistent with participation, but we did get some individuals to sign up. The other programs didn't have the great of an outcome due to lack of management and advertising. The programs that we help create were designed to get people active and engaged with each other.

We are working on programs to help people with their mental health. With everyone starting to come out from COVID 19, and school getting out, mental health is a very important thing in our communities. We want to make sure we have programs that help with every part of well-being and mental health. "Research shows that South Carolina ranks 42nd among all states when it comes to the overall health of its residents, earning poor rankings for its obesity and physical inactivity rates (Healthy People, Healthy Carolina.). This website that we found explains what each county in the Carolinas needs to work on that will help with people's overall health. "Healthy People, Healthy Carolinas (HPHC), an initiative funded by The Duke Endowment, recognizes that health and well-being are created and sustained not just through individual and clinical efforts, but through the cooperation and support of the extended local community (Healthy People, Healthy Carolina.)." Georgetown, SC was added to the list in 2018. The organization is focusing on "specific areas of focus (healthy weight, diabetes, heart disease, etc.) and work to improve physical health and nutrition (Healthy People, Healthy Carolinas)." All the different activities that we are trying to include in parks and recreations are helping with our goal for global health. In our research we found that today's global issues are struggling to both tackle COVID-19 and provide people with vital care (10 Global health Issues to Track)". "Slowing progress in many health areas, such as in reducing maternal and child health (10 Global Health issues to Track)". We need to make sure we have all the correct access and information to provide our citizens when they have a question about our health. In the county we offer different services based on what you need. When you visit Hands-on Health for South Carolina and look up Health Facilities Services for Georgetown County. They provide you a list of services that connects you with the organization.

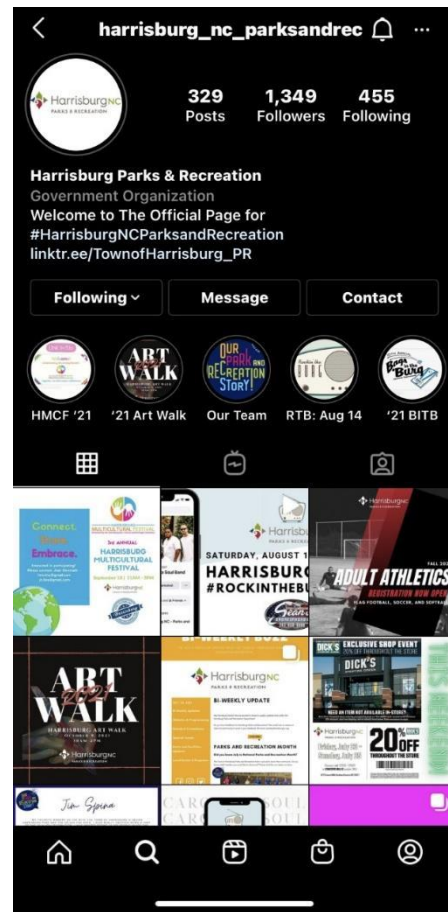
## **Empirical Evidence**

Throughout our research, we have found that many counties use social media to market events in their counties. We have found that it has become very effective posting things via social media such as Instagram. With many people on social media, this allows us to market directly to people using this platform they already have. For our research we have decided to look at two counties' social media platforms and see what they do to market and get people engaged in their communities and programs. The first government organization I looked at is called "Harrisburg Parks and Recreation". Harrisburg is a northeastern suburb of Charlotte and is a town in North Carolina. When visiting their profile on Instagram I was very amazed. "From the way they have different stories published from their residents' posts and community engagement". The Harrisburg Parks and Recreation post on a regular basis and make sure the people in their communities know the important information that needs to be published. For this organization page that just started in June of 2020 they have posted over 270 photos. Created 19 different stories that help categorize each activity, event, and facilities they are using. They have communicated with their communities that any time they use a facility or a park to tag them in using their personalized hashtag to keep them in the loop of what they are using the facility for. For the Harrisburg Organization just getting started using Instagram in just a year they have used this platform effectively. Communicating to the community, posting about events, and just creating programs to make the community come together shows all pros of the proper way, what



happens when you use a social media platform correctly, and the turnout when marketing to your target audience.

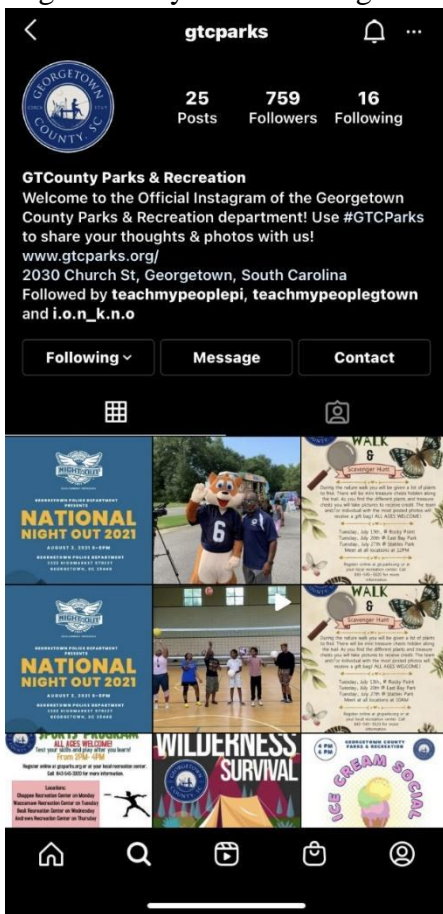
Another profile that we looked at on Instagram is called "Georgetown Parks & Recreation". This government location is in Georgetown, Texas. They do not have as many public stories as Harrisburg profile does but they have made a lot of initial post. They have over 700 posts where they have communicated about programs, events, park openings, job offers, Covid 19 information as well as online programs. They have done an amazing job communicating with their community. They talk about all the different parks, trails, different pools, and splash pads that they have available for the community. The Georgetown Parks and Recreation Center has done a great job getting their community involved in all the different facilities, trails, and outdoor activities that they have. We know the community is involved by looking at the organization profile and looking at what people have tagged them in. You see families having fun and different parks and activities that the county has put together. They are using Instagram to show their appreciation for the different facilities and parks that they offer for their residents.



From looking at two profiles on Instagram we analyzed all the things that we saw and looked to see what we can do to help make the Georgetown County Parks and Recreation page very similar. When going to the Georgetown County Parks and Recreation page for Instagram it

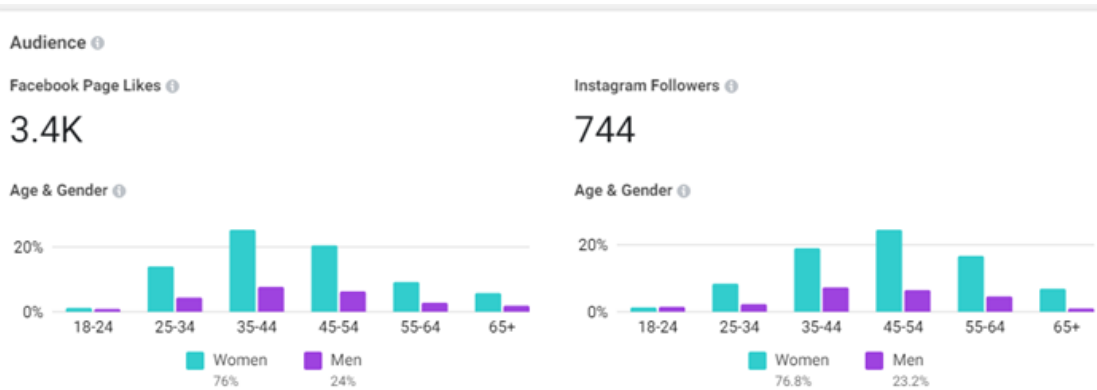
is very blunt. Not much information about the different parks and facilities is published. You do not see much advertising of the different events and programs that they have. From the first post being in 2017 and the latest post in 2021 we have a total of 25 post. We need to do better job marketing. How are we supposed to make all Georgetown regional areas come together if we cannot communicate effectively on one platform that everyone uses?

Georgetown Parks and Recreation needs to make some changes to their profile on Instagram. They need to change the way they approach things if they want to gain more attention

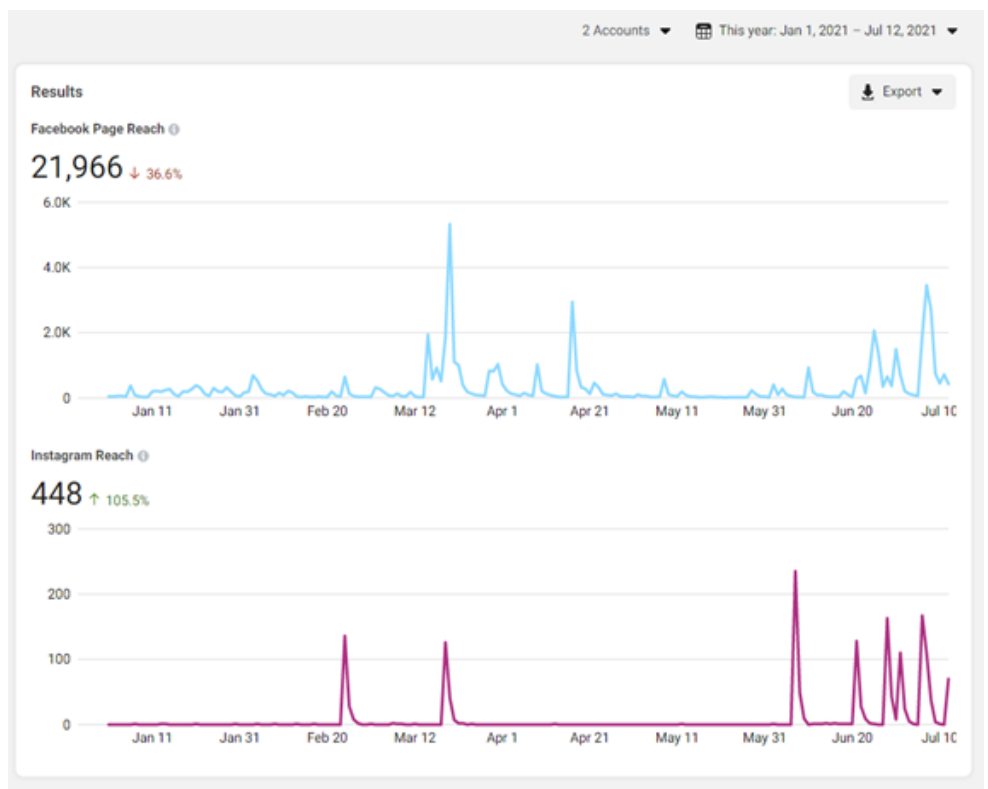


and attendance when they are hosting events. When looking at the social media results from the previous month we realize how many people are looking at the public post. We need to change the way we advertise and make sure we reach each age group. The graph below is our Audience report from our current post that we have been posting on Facebook and Instagram. As you can see, we are not really getting much attention from the younger generation when we are using the two social media platforms. If we can change the way, we post things or even try a different social media platform maybe we will be able to get the attention of the 18-24 age group. This

graph shows not only the ages but where people are liking things and where we can help to get more people engaged across the county.



This graphs to the right show our impact on the social media side of marketing, respectively. The graphs clearly show that we are making huge strides in the social media outreach aspect, with Instagram outreach seeing a rise of over 105% during our time working on the project.



” According to studies by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, creating, improving, and promoting places to be physically active can improve individual and community health and result in a 25 percent increase of residents who exercise at least three times per week. (Importance of Parks and Recreation)” Parks are places people go to stay fit and healthy. “Access to park and recreation facilities leads to healthy lifestyles for people of all ages. Strong evidence shows that when people have access to parks, they exercise more. Every time sedentary people

walk a mile, they add 21 minutes to their life. On average, every hour you spend exercising increases your life expectancy by two hours. Exercise increases the brain's capacity for learning” (Benefits of a strong Parks and Rec System).

Our country is not where it needs to be in terms of physical condition. According to the CDC only about 1 in 4 American adults and 1 in 5 high school aged kids meet the guidelines for physical fitness. This physical inactivity can be attributed to 1 in 10 premature deaths in this country as well. The problem is apparent, people just aren't as active physically as they should be. This can be attributed to many things, including our recent pandemic, but this is also another place where parks and recreation helps motivate people. Many people cite their reason for not being active as not having a place where they feel safe to carry out these physical tasks such as going for a walk or playing a game or sport of some sort. This claim is also backed by the CDC which states that only 40% of school aged students have a safe way to walk to school. This also highlights another problem that parks, and recreation helps to fix, infrastructure. Parks and recreation play a huge role in helping the community, by providing a place where people can be active, thus improving their quality of life. The question can often arise, why should we even care about this inactivity? If not for the risks that being inactive pose for a person's health, we can look at the fact that this lack of activity is hurting us as a country. In more ways than one in fact, our military is being impacted by the way average American citizens are not deciding to get physical activity. The military demands top notch physical shape, many people are not fit enough to meet these demands

An organization called the “National Recreation and Parks Association is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to building strong, healthy, and resilient communities through the power of parks and recreations. They use their parks and recreation centers to make a change and tell a

story throughout their communities (Why Parks and Recreation are Essential Public Services)”. Their mission is to advance parks, recreation, and environmental conservation efforts that enhance the quality of life for all people. Their vision is to seek a future where the full power of parks and recreation is widely recognized for creating a better life for everyone by building strong, healthy and resilient communities (Why Parks and Recreation are Essential Public Services).” The Parks and Recreation Association in Ashburn in Virginia believes that there are three values that make their parks and recreation essential services to communities. The three values that they believe are important are Economic Value, Health and Environmental Benefits and Social Importance. The association goes into detail about each value and the importance of how it relates to their parks and recreation. Economic Value of the parks is very significant. “Parks improve the local tax base and increase property values. “It prevents private property values from increasing the value of privately owned land the closer such land is to parks (Why Parks and Recreation are Essential Public Services)”. “The increase in private property value due to the proximity to parks increases property tax revenues and improves local economies (Why Parks and Recreation are Essential Public Services)”. Parks and Recreation generate revenue from their services and fees that they charge when they rent out their services to organizations or members in the communities. Some of the different facilities allow the recreation centers to really make profit due to what each facility has to offer. Health and Environmental Benefits they focus on the importance of the environment. Parks and recreation are places people can go to stay healthy and fit. These parks are a way they can enjoy mother nature and enjoy their time outdoors. The different parks and recreations offer programs and services to help with the health of all ages from seniors to children. “The association has also found that parks and public lands are proven to improve water quality, protect groundwater, prevent flooding, and provide a place

for families to connect with nature and spend time together outdoors (Why Parks and Recreation are Essential Public Services)”. Parks and Recreations help provide a gathering place for families, friends, and community. They allow you to come together no matter the ages, all ages and economic status are welcome. With the different programs and services that recreation has it allows you to bond with people in your community and build that social value with each other.

## **Recommendations**

A few recommendations for Georgetown County Parks and Recreation Center to help promote their programs and help make the community a union. Right now, they have one instructor teaching this class, so for future recommendation get someone that can teach different classes at different times throughout the day at each recreation center. Another thing they could do is host workshops to inform people about different diseases that impact our residents in Georgetown County. First, we make sure that you have someone that can create programs and events for different age groups. This person should understand each age group. Not only have they created a program and event but make sure you are doing something that would want them to come back and bring a friend. Do not have people working just to say they did something but to love what they are doing and having a meaning to it. Anybody can create an event, but can they really connect and get everyone to come together and do something. So, the first would be to have a program director for each age group or even better each facility. Next, we would make sure you have someone in charge of your social media platform that works in the actual department of Parks and Rec. This way you can get photos of events, and stories right there at the different facilities and parks. You want to make sure you are getting someone that knows how to effectively use the different social media platforms and not someone just posting things. Someone that knows how to use the different platforms.

From looking at different parks and recreation centers around the state. Georgetown Parks and Recreation center can work on a lot of the marketing aspect and communicating with their community. Their main goal that they need to work on is get their audience attention depending on the age group and communicating their services they have to offer. They need to make sure that they are using what works for that age group to get information out about events that are coming up. Having someone with experience in marketing and understanding their potential audience in the different communities is important. Once the county understands how to communicate efficiently with these different towns in Georgetown there will not be so many problems. Communicating with the community is great but they also need to make sure they are community between the different recreation facilities. Each facility should know what's going on with all the different events and sports. If parks and rec can work on these few changes then things would be so much better. Programs and services will have more attendance when there is an event schedule. Social media would have better attraction from all age groups, and we would have a great relationship with the different communities in all our regions. Parks and Recreation Centers work together to make the community a better place to help build your health and wellbeing. From providing different exercise equipment at facilities and walking paths and stretching equipment at parks they do their best in provide services for everyone. For the children in the community, they build basketball courts and fields for them to go out and enjoy while playing their favorite sports. When they host their fall sports and winter sports, they look toward the community to see what kids would like to play to keep them active within the community.

Once we market effectively on social media and communicate to our community, we will be able to get individuals into our facilities and ensure a healthy life.

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