

Kids' lantern parade sets City Park aglow

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Reading Eagle: Jeremy Drey | Participants in Reading's eight-week summer playground program mark the end of the season with a traditional lantern parade Wednesday night in City Park. About 300 children took part in the program.

By [David Mekeel](#)

As the children wound their way through City Park and across the stage of the bandshell, their path was illuminated by the glow of homemade lanterns.

It's a sight Reading is used to seeing this time each summer.



Reading Eagle: Jeremy Drey | Kids from Hillside Playground line up for the lantern parade Wednesday night in City Park.

The route may be different from the march down Penn Street when it first began in the 1930s, and real candles are no longer used. But there's no mistaking the annual Lantern Parade.

Held by the Reading Recreation Committee for its seven summer playground programs, the event serves as a

tranquil and enjoyable sign that summer is almost over.

"It's a Reading tradition," said Daphne Klahr, rec commission executive director. "It's a really fun tradition." In the past, 5-gallon ice cream tubs and real candles served as lanterns. Wednesday night those were replaced by 2-liter soda bottles, ice tea jugs and even paper mache-covered balloons - covered with glitter and ribbons and whimsical designs - illuminated by glow sticks.

This is the third straight year the parade was held after a two-year hiatus in 2010 and 2011.

The parade was preceded Wednesday night by a storybook carnival. Each playground program created its own carnival game, and dozens and dozens of kids turned up to try them out.



Reading Eagle: Jeremy Drey | Kids from Keffer Park used the theme of Dr. Seuss's The Lorax for their parade entry.



Reading Eagle: Jeremy Drey | The parade led the kids across the stage of the City Park bandshell.



Reading Eagle: Jeremy Drey | The Reading Recreation Commission hosts the annual lantern parade Wednesday night in City Park.

And each game was decked out in a storybook theme - from "Where the Wild Things Are" to "The Lorax" to "How the Grinch Stole Christmas!"

There was even a Curious George game in which kids got a chance to throw whipped-cream pies at some of their playground leaders, as well as City Council members Christopher Daubert and Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz.

The youngsters who visited the carnival also got to munch on their choice of cotton candy, a snow cone or popcorn. And there was even a dance contest on the bandshell stage, with representatives from each playground program facing off to the delight of their cheering friends.

About 300 children took part in this summer's playground program, Klahr said. It ran for eight weeks, ending today.

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- See more at: <http://readingeagle.com/news/article/kids-lantern-parade-sets-city-park-aglow#sthash.UOt8edR8.dpuf>



Reading Eagle: Jeremy Drey | Jandiel Zayas Morales, 6, takes a turn at one of the games.



Reading Eagle: Jeremy Drey | A glow stick lantern added color to the parade.