



Courtesy of Daphne Klahr | The Reading Recreation Commission and Berks County Parks and Recreation Department were award winners at the recent Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society awards banquet. Representatives in attendance included, from left, Matthew Lubas, RRC recreation supervisor; Judy Thompson, RRC program leader; Jennifer Brooks, county Parks and Recreation program leader; Daphne Klahr, RRC executive director; and James Washington II, RRC board member. The organizations won three awards; two of the four pictured are duplicates.

County recreation departments take three state awards

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By [David Mekeel](#)

Berks County had an impressive showing at a recent statewide Parks and Recreation Awards banquet, with local programs hauling in three of the 10 state honors.

The Reading Recreation Commission earned two Excellence in Recreation and Parks Awards from the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society. The Berks County Parks and Recreation Department won one.

"We were just so honored and proud that the work we're doing is not only having an impact in the city, but is being recognized statewide," said Daphne Klahr, executive director of the Reading Recreation Commission. "We couldn't be prouder."

Klahr said the commission's two awards are the first a city recreation organization has won. The commission won for a girls leadership program and a joint program with the Reading Public Museum.

Girls Leadership Program

Last fall, the Reading Recreation Commission debuted a program to teach leadership skills to Reading girls ages 12 to 17. Meeting once a week, the program focused on topics like positive identity, self-expression, life skills, career development and life choices. The program was funded with a \$20,000 grant from St. Joseph Medical Center.

Egyptian art and culture

Partnering with the Reading Public Museum, the commission arranged for about 300 children who were part of the 2013 summer program to learn about Egyptian art and culture.

Museum educators visited the commission's seven playground programs. A day later, the kids got to check out the museum, viewing the ancient civilizations gallery, seeing the mummy Nefrina and creating a scarab to take home.

Students also visited the natural history gallery, watched a show in the planetarium and made boats to float in the creek while they learned about the Nile River.

Preschool science adventure

The Berks County Parks and Recreation Department was honored for a program that helped children learn about science and nature.

"Roots to Wings: A Preschool Science Adventure" aims to get children unplugged, offering hands-on interaction with nature through science and unstructured outdoor play. Some of the activities included collecting macroinvertebrates in a stream and studying soil.

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