

# Youth Employment in Parks

## Successful First Year

By Sarah Kinderknecht, AmeriCorps Vista, YEP Program Developer

Anchorage Parks and Recreation is pleased to report the successful completion of the pilot Youth Employment in Parks (YEP) program. This summer the YEP program employed 25 diverse Anchorage teens, ages 16-18, as Crew Members and 7 young adults in leadership roles from May 29th-August 10th, 2007. The program featured a Parks side and a Recreation side.



The Parks side of the program, done in partnership with Alaska Youth for Environmental Action (AYEA), a program of the National Wildlife Federation, taught 20 youth about a variety of community and environmental topics. Parks Crew Members also participated in exercises which strengthened their teamwork, leadership, public outreach and customer service skills.



For three days a week these youth worked in a total of 37 Anchorage parks and trails, maintaining and improving existing resources. Every Friday the Parks Crew joined together for recreation activities and community service. The Parks side of the YEP program concluded with a mentorship experience in which youth attended a unique career fair,

gained knowledge on unions and obtaining future employment and participated in tailored, a one-on-one job shadowing. As a result of their participation in YEP Parks Crew Members report substantial growth in their ability to use resources, tools and technology, as well as in their ability to think critically, communicate and work with others.

The Recreation side of the program brought youth into a three-day-per-week neighborhood play program, which 5 Crew Members led, guided by full-time Recreation Division employees. This side of the program came about through the diligent efforts of Anchorage Faith & Action Congregations Together (AFACT) and St. Anthony's Catholic Church in the Russian Jack neighborhood. YEP Recreation Crew Members learned important lessons about how to structure quality and safe recreation programs through organization, planning, teamwork and leadership.



The YEP program was made possible through the help of 67 outside organizations and individuals and many others working within AYEA, AFACT, St. Anthony's Church and the Municipality of Anchorage. We look forward to expanding YEP to employ 50 Anchorage youth for the summer of 2008! If you are interested in providing support or learning more about the YEP program and its partners, visit the following



websites:

- [www.ayea.org](http://www.ayea.org) (Alaska Youth For Environmental Action)
- [www.nwf.org](http://www.nwf.org) (National Wildlife Federation)
- [www.muni.org/parks/YEP.cfm](http://www.muni.org/parks/YEP.cfm) (Anchorage Parks & Recreation)
- [www.AnchorageParkFoundation.org/projects/YouthEmploymentInParks.htm](http://www.AnchorageParkFoundation.org/projects/YouthEmploymentInParks.htm) (Anchorage Park Foundation)



YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN PARKS YEP

What's Up ↑  
What's Down ↓

Park & Trail Safety ↑

Graffiti ↓

Leadership & Job Skills ↑

Carbon Emissions ↓

Invasive Plant Species ↓

Ownership & Civic Responsibility for Parks ↑

Trees Planted ↑

Civic Awareness ↑

Educated Tax Payers & Voters ↑

Youth Mentorship ↑

Future Career Opportunities ↑

Youth Fitness ↑

Healthy Parks Healthy People! ↑