



Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson plays basketball with Gary Splash player Chris Wesby after a news conference Wednesday to announce Gary's Adopt-A-Park Program at Rees Park.

JONATHAN MIANO PHOTOS | THE TIME

GARY SEEKS HELP GROOMING PARKS

New program allows groups, residents to restore, maintain facilities

BY PAUL DAILING
Times Correspondent

GARY | City officials and community leaders gathered Wednesday in the newly restored Rees Park — now with slides and basketball hoops — to talk about enhancing Gary's declining green space.

The Adopt-A-Park program lets groups and individuals maintain and restore the 57 parks the city can no longer keep up.

"This is another prime example of what happens when our community comes together," Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson said.



Braeden Briggs, 3, of Gary, taks a nap on the shoulder of his father, Keith Briggs, during a news conference announcing Gary's Adopt-A-Park Program on Wednesday at Rees Park.

At Rees Park, Catholic Charities paid the nonprofit Neighborhoods Inc. to do renovation including untwisting a vandalized slide and replacing a fence that fell years ago.

Parks Superintendent Caren Jones said groups can volunteer to maintain a park or just do a one-time project such as painting or weeding.

"Parks are labor-intensive," she said. "Computers don't do parks. People do

parks." Declining property tax values means the city can't maintain its parks, Freeman-Wilson said.

Councilwoman Marilyn Krusas, D-1st, said parks are public gathering places and are key to revitalizing Gary.

"Parks are our catalyst for rebuilding our communities," she said.

To adopt a park, call the Gary Parks Department at (219) 886-7099.

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