

Healthy Communities in West Feliciana

The LSU AgCenter and the Healthy Communities Coalition are excited to announce to the citizens of West Feliciana that there are two new parkettes for the people of West Feliciana. One cul-de-sac in Turner Subdivision in Solitude now houses picnic tables, benches, a shade structure, and a slide structure. At the West Feliciana Community Center in Independence, you will find a basketball court and goal, benches, picnic tables, a shade structure, a playground structure, and BBQ grills. You might be curious, how did these parkettes come to be? Well...let me tell you.

Back in 2017, West Feliciana LSU AgCenter was chosen as the third Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Parish in the state. The West Feliciana LSU AgCenter office received the grant for two years. Forums and coalition meetings were held in St. Francisville and Solitude. Discussions of the needs of the parish followed. It was determined by the coalition members that they wanted more opportunity and access for physical activity via parkettes or green space.

Buy-in from the parish government and council members was strong. Parish-owned land in the form of a cul-de-sac in Turner Subdivision and land adjacent to the West Feliciana Community Center was offered by the West Feliciana Parish Government. The coalition worked on their vision for both Solitude and Independence and developed a plan. CDC approved the projects for both sites and equipment was ordered. Due to changes in staffing not to mention the grant ending, the equipment remained in boxes until July 2019.

With the help of the new Parks & Rec Director, Jason Kinchen, and coalition members, Sara Wilson- Rogers and Nicole Carter Harris, the projects were restarted. And, just as the projects were gaining speed, COVID-19 happened. Slowly but surely, the projects resumed. It was because of the tireless dedication and work ethic of the Parks & Rec staff that I can share such good news. Without the help of the Parks & Rec staff, the equipment might still be in boxes.

If you have not been out to Turner Subdivision in Solitude or the West Feliciana Community Center in a while, stop by and check out the finished CDC Healthy Communities Projects.

Special thanks to the Parks & Rec staff: Jason Kinchen, David Cummings, Charlie Dixon, Herman Dixon, Scott Pittman, Robert Stevens, Mark Bryant, Casey Cleveland, John Norflin, Lorie Grezaffi, and Erin Sykes Hoffman and coalition members, Sara Wilson-Rogers and Nicole Carter Harris for their efforts in making these projects in West Feliciana possible!

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