

# Friends of the Parks Initiates Endowment for Paducah Wellness Center

For Immediate Release

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Paducah, KY – Members of the newly organized Friends of the Parks Paducah have embarked on the creation of an endowment that will help to support the operations and the future of the Paducah Wellness Center.

“Communities thrive when their residents have access to parks and recreational facilities,” said Amanda Esper, President of the newly formed Friends of the Parks Paducah. “Well maintained parks and recreational programs are shown to increase the percentage of residents who exercise at least three times per week by more than 25%. I am extremely excited about the creation of this Wellness Center for Paducah. This is such a great city, and the fact that it’s not growing tells me that we need to make some changes. One change is to improve the activities for families. Many families travel outside of Paducah for their children to compete in sporting events, and I believe that this is a big miss for us. Let’s bring great sporting facilities here and watch what this can do for our local economy: hotels, shopping, and restaurants all stand to benefit. We also need to pay close attention to the physical health of our community: bringing a facility to Paducah that will feature a swimming pool, warm water therapy pool, recreation center, walking track, and group fitness will certainly aid in more people becoming interested in their physical well being.”

Kentucky ranks in the top 10 states in the country for obesity and in the top 15 for obesity among children 10-17 years old according to an article in the State of Obesity Report by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. “With statistics like these comes an increase in medical costs and health insurance, not to mention the toll obesity takes on the health and well-being of children and adults. If we can do anything to support the improvement of health for our children and the next generation, we believe that we are duty bound to do whatever we can,” said Melanie Patel, Vice President of Friends of the Parks Paducah.

The organization has formed to work towards creating an initial goal of \$10 million that will assist in supporting and maintaining the Paducah Wellness Center well into the future as well as other community needs that fit the mission. The mission of the group is to create an endowment that will further inspire, educate, and promote healthy living in Paducah.

The group has created a fund through the Community Foundation of West Kentucky, which will administrate the endowment. Friends of the Parks Paducah is independent of the city and county governments as well as the Paducah Swim Team. “This group is committed to building a future source of funding for the continued success of this community project,” added Dr. Blair Tolar. “This project is being

constructed to serve every segment of our city and county and beyond. This will be a facility that can bring together children and adults from neighborhoods in every corner of our community for the purpose of health, wellness and fellowship. We are very excited about the possibilities of how this new facility can become yet another valued asset for the current and future generations of Paducah/McCracken County citizens.”

Donations can be sent to:

Friends of the Parks Paducah, PO Box 7112, Paducah, KY 42002-7112.

Online donations can be made at [www.friendsoftheparkspaducah.org](http://www.friendsoftheparkspaducah.org).