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Big Lake holds on to Chamber parks challenge trophy

Jim Boyle
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Kristi DeCamillis at River Oaks Disc Golf in Big Lake.

Photo: Sherburne County United Way

The Big Lake Chamber of Commerce will be hanging onto the traveling trophy after the completion of the second annual Sherburne County Area United Way Chamber of Commerce Parks Challenge.

This year's event, which is run in partnership with the chambers of commerce in Elk River, Big Lake and Princeton, ran from April 1-22 and featured a chilly backdrop that included wind, rain and even snow flurries.

“Even though the weather didn't cooperate, we're glad you all did,” Kim Young, executive director of the Princeton Chamber of Commerce, told a Facebook Live audience. “We have such beautiful parks in our area.”

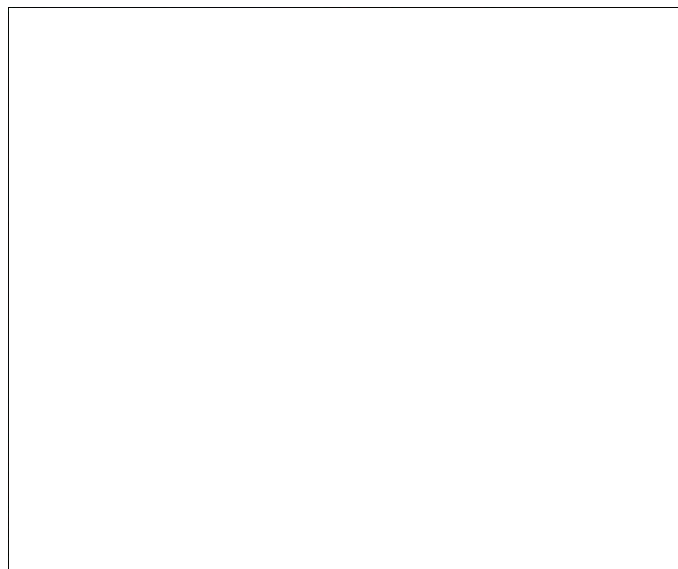


Young came up with the idea for the challenge after seeing a Facebook page showing another chamber partnering with a United Way chapter in another part of the country. Young made some calls and the first challenge was issued last year by three chambers in partnership with the Sherburne County Area United Way. The weather could have cooperated more last year and this year, but it didn't prevent people from rising to the challenge.

“People were brave,” said Lina Sadeddin, marketing coordinator for the local Sherburne County chapter of the United Way who helped coordinate this year’s event. Thought had been given to pushing the event off in favor of warmer temperatures, but the conclusion was holding it later would interfere with too many other activities in the communities.

The groups challenged people to go out and take selfies of themselves and their families in the parks and post them to Facebook with the chance of winning prizes. Parents and children are popular subjects in the pictures, and so are residents and their dogs. The SCAUW website includes maps to locate parks in each of the three cities.

The chambers gave out weekly prizes that were provided by area businesses, health care organizations and individual cities. The executive directors for the three chambers – Debbi Rydberg, of Elk River; Young; and Gloria Vande Brake, of Big Lake – with Kat Sarff, executive director of SCAUW; Sadeddin; and Allie Nylund, member support for the Elk River Chamber, gathered to do the grand prize drawing on April 26. Nadianna Scepurek was the winner of the grand prize.



This year's sponsors included New Age, ProFusion CBD and Wellness, Debbie's Cleaning Service, Ride MN and Explore Minnesota as well as the cities of Princeton and Big Lake.