

I'm an intern for Montgomery Parks through the Teens Engaged & Empowered in Nature Stewardship, and a local resident. My dog enjoys playing at the dog park at Cabin John Regional Park. I also volunteer with Weed Warriors to remove invasive plants, and this volunteering experience with Parks is really enjoyable, but also really important. Weed Warriors, with limited access to tools, are fighting a losing battle against invasive plants, which provide a massive threat to ecological health. Invasive species are overrunning our parks, and taking away native plants that insects rely on, insects that we need to pollinate our crops to increase food production. Across the county invasives run rampant, and Parks is trying its best to help the community by removing them. The more certified volunteers, the more of these invasives can be removed, but the online training module to train new volunteers has been down, so Parks could use more resources to help all of the hard-working people do their part. In my internship, everytime we encountered children participating in Parks programming, they seem to be having an incredible time. The young generation is being taught values in nature stewardship and is getting opportunities to be kids without always looking at brain rot on energy-intensive screens, and we want to cherish these opportunities to give them a good time. Times in the world are getting stressful, and Parks programming also offers adults a refuge so they can have fun and help the community. All these programs offer good opportunities for hard-working employees as well, who are consistently doing their best. Park Maintenance is important as well, the trail and creek at Cabin John Local Park has sometimes been filled with trash, which has been improved, and it is important for Parks to continue to be able to work to improve conditions. More new parks means more green space to provide a refuge for threatened wildlife, and provides lots of fun to both children and adults. The renovation of Caroline Freeland Urban Park in downtown Bethesda has been a massive success, all of the families and other visitors have been having a great time. It's good to offer Parks and programming for kids and teenagers to give them a good time and keep them out of trouble. Adequate funding is also important to keep Parks in compliance with the ADA to ensure that facilities are accessible for people with disabilities. Lastly, Montgomery County Parks work is important for combating climate change at a dire time. Montgomery County Parks has been doing a great job, and it would not be a great time for them to have to scale back their efforts. This county is very special for its Park services. Thank you for providing extensive funding to Parks throughout many years, and helping to make

our county special for its services to the disadvantaged, youth, and in the conservation of the environment.