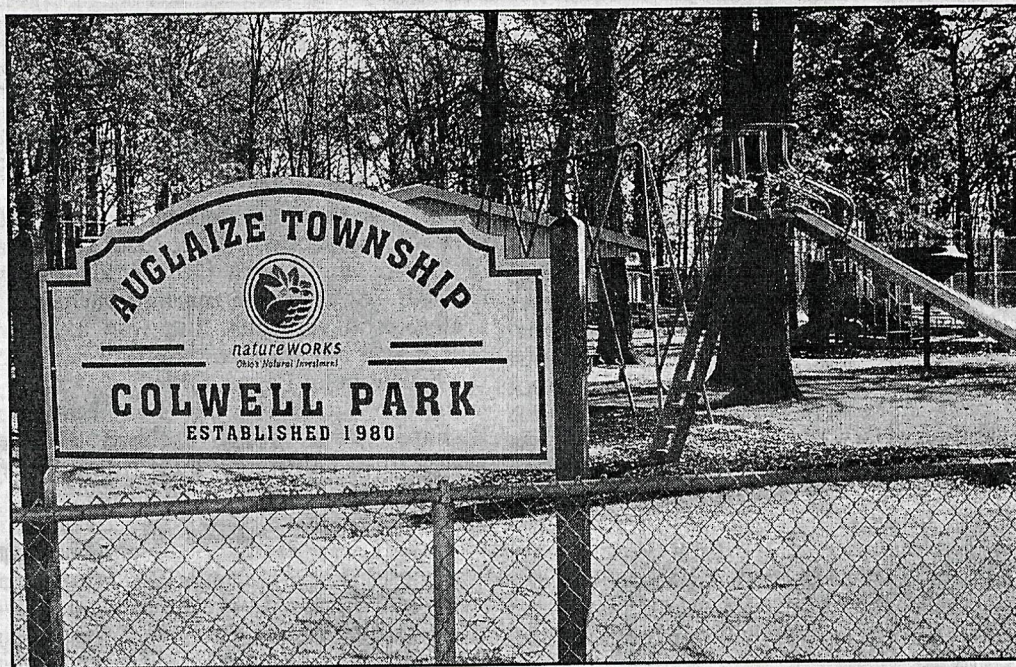




Chuck Martinez-Brandon/C-N Photo

Colwell Park in Auglaize Township has recently received an upgrade thanks to the help of community volunteers. The park received new playground equipment as well as a half-mile walking trail.

A new walk in the park

Volunteers step forward in Auglaize Township

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The recent updates at the Colwell Park in Paulding County's Auglaize Township will allow residents to also take a step forward.

The park, located behind the Auglaize Township Fire Department at the southeast corner of the intersection of Ohio 637 and County Road 169, was founded in 1980 on lands donated to the township by Ted Colwell.

Previously, the park was home to a ball diamond complete with concession stand and lighted scoreboard as well as shelter houses and basketball courts. But earlier this month, the park received an upgrade.

Through donations and hours of volunteer work, the park is now the home of a half-mile walking trail as well as additional playground equipment.

"The big thing is that no tax money went into this," explained Sue Becher, the township's fiscal officer about the \$8,000 project. "That's a big thing nowadays, and everyone should know that this was done with donations and volunteer efforts and it includes the updates to the playground."

Donations came from various park fundraisers as well as yearly donations from Cooper's Hatchery, while free-will offerings from the use of the park's shelter houses also helped expand the park's amenities.

Meanwhile, park board member Art Carpenter, township trustees Les and



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Les Weidenhamer (left) and Art Carpenter take a break by sitting on one of the benches that line the new walking trail at Colwell Park in Auglaize Township. The benches were made from the park's ash trees that needed to be cut down due to emerald ash borers.

Gene Weidenhamer and Bill Wiles and volunteer Dave Kuhlman spearheaded the project, turning the park's wooded area into a scenic pathway where recycling played a key role.

The path itself consists of gravel as well as recycled ground-up asphalt and the benches that set along the trail were created from trees that once grew on the park's property. The benches, created by George Hunt, were a result of the emerald ash borer infestation that Ohio is experiencing.

During the trail's creation, the park also had to cut down 28 ash trees and instead of discarding the wood, it was used in the creation of several benches. Many of the tree stumps also remain for use along the trail.

The playground also received a boost thanks to a newly erected jungle gym that boasts a pair of slides.

"Being a part of the Buckeye Trail, we had access to a DR mower," explained Les Weidenhamer. "Anybody from Toledo to Spencerville along the Buckeye Trail can use it and one day we went and got it and knocked down the brush to start this (the park's trail)."

Added Carpenter: "It didn't take very long once we got started, it think it took us a little less than a week."

Local business owners Laura Riehle and Dennis Bennett of the Cabbage Patch along with Baughman Tile and township individuals like Aaron Carpenter, Rick Altheide, Dan Agler and Larry Allen also committed time and funds into making Colwell Park a Paulding County asset.

"It all came together with volunteer help," explained township trustee Bill Wiles. "Volunteer help and a lot of community pride."