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ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Hidden away from the city is a small community of its own in Campbell Park.

The 33.3 acres of land known as Campbell Park is located at 601 14 St. S., St. Petersburg, Fla., and features a playground, recreation center, outdoor pool with slides, outdoor fitness zone, a lit football/soccer field, 4 lit outdoor basketball courts, lit racquetball/handball courts, lit regulation sized baseball field, lit youth size baseball field, 4 lit tennis courts, 10 picnic shelters, a playcamp site, and restrooms.

The Campbell Park Recreation Center is where park and community merge.

The Recreation Center has a variety of programs available for everyone in the community including; elementary & teen camps, teen room activities, an art room, gymnasium, TASCO teens program, therapeutic recreation, tae kwon do classes, open gym Mondays from 6-8 p.m., and utilization or rental of Campbell Park facilities for cookouts, celebrations, or other events.

Park visitors can rent out shelters, the gym, pool, and sports courts.

Before and after school programs provide families with the child care needed to help families with working mothers and/or fathers who otherwise would have to find alternate transportation methods for their children to get to school. The children meet at the center for morning check-in and activities at 7:00 a.m. and are walked to school by a supervisor at 8:30 a.m.

The after school program is a little different. The children are picked up at school and checked in by the supervisor and then the group as a whole walks together back to the center. They have a designated book bag area with a no stealing policy.

A pool table, ping pong table, foosball table, arts and craft tables, a reading area, and video game area are some of the indoor activities the kids can choose from. Many days the group will do outdoor activities such as utilize the playground or play sports on one of the many fields. Some days they even take field trips to museums, Cici’s Pizza, or downtown. Vans are used for field trips. The after school program also includes snacks.

Verline Moore, Recreation Supervisor at Campbell Park Recreation Center, says “We like to give them a little say in what we do here,” so kids meet with an advisor at the center for ideas on how to spend their money and what kinds of activities to plan. Moore points out that Dance Dance Revolution, a video game that requires you to move around and dance, is definitely a favorite among the kids.

There is financial assistance available for those who qualify. The Early Learning Coalition Agency pays a certain amount of the cost, or grants are available for those families receiving DCF, reduced lunch, and other programs.
Teens are encouraged to use the workout zone and also work on homework.

Terrance Henderson, a frequent user of the workout zone says, “It’s not completely ideal because everything only uses your own bodyweight against you, but it sure beats paying a gym membership.”

TASCO Teens provides kids with learning and coaching experiences outside of school. It stands for Teen Arts, Sports, and Cultural Opportunities. Teens from grades 6 all the way through high school gather together for events, sports, technology, and other activities.

Their 6 core concepts; drug resiliency, community service, purposeful and meaningful activities and social opportunities, positive family interaction, educational and career development, and adult role and leadership models are meant to inspire and encourage the St. Petersburg youth, helping them on their way to success. There is a TASCO teen lounge at Campbell Park.

Although Campbell Park is not the main office for Saint Petersburg’s therapeutic recreation, you can learn more about it from the rec center and some activities do take place at the park. The goal is to provide citizens of all ages with positive and constructive activities to alleviate stress, reduce boredom, experience new things, gain emotional support, feel better, and become more of a community.

On the St. Pete website it says, “Education and recreation services help people with illnesses, disabilities and other conditions to develop and use their leisure in ways that will enhance their health, functional abilities, independence and quality of life.”

The outdoor pool – though now closed to the public – is open for swim lessons. During the summer, the pool is open to the public. Admission is $4.00 for an adult, and $3.50 for a child.

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