**RECREATION COMMITTEE TOWN REPORT 2015-2016**

The Recreation Committee continues to be at full strength! The members of the committee are Diana Hardina, Doug Martin, Emily Schoelzel, Julie Dubreuil and Norman Beebe. Emily Crehan completed her third year as Director of the Cowell Gym, and she continues to provide caring oversight. Emily’s input on both the Cowell and recreation in general continues to be invaluable to the committee.

The primary responsibility of the Recreation Committee is to provide and facilitate recreational opportunities within our community.  This past year, the Cowell Youth Basketball Program for grades K-6 ran on four nights with coed groups for grades K-1 and 2-3, and separate evenings for boys and girls for grades 4-6. Shelburne Falls Girls Softball had teams for both grades 2-3 and 4-6, and thanks to the effort of Lindsay Warger, offered a free month-long summer softball program for girls aged 7 to 12. West County Soccer for grades K-6 held another successful season in the fall, and hosted a week-long *Challenger Sports™* Soccer Camp in the summer.

During the fall and winter months, we offered the following ongoing activities at the Cowell Gym: a senior walk three mornings a week, volleyball on Wednesday evenings, adult basketball three nights a week (both competitive and relaxed), and pickleball (new this year). All of these activities are open to the public. The senior walk was free and the other activities had a $3 per child or $5 per adult session fee. We also continued to sponsor open gym for the community during school vacation weeks and on school snow days.

The Cowell has been rented by outside groups for many uses, including indoor soccer, birthday parties, school team practices, a memorial service, and a monthly playgroup for children from birth to age 5 plus siblings and guardians. The playgroup, offered by the Mohawk Trail Regional School System Coordinated Family and Community Engagement, runs from 5 to 7 pm on the first Friday of every month and is free to the public.

Additionally, two events ran successfully for a third time at the Cowell:

* a Halloween dance for adults, which was co-sponsored by The Art Garden, and
* a New Year’s Eve celebration, Early Night, for families with pre-K and K-6 age children.

The Art Garden also plans to sponsor the second annual 12-hour Draw-around this April. Last year’s inaugural Draw-around drew ☺ hundreds of people to the Cowell.

The West County Emergency Food Pantry completed its first full year of operation in the basement of the Cowell Gym. This permanent presence has allowed the Food Pantry to be open three Wednesdays a month from 12 to 6 pm and to serve 372 individuals in the Shelburne area. This past October Trinity Church opened a clothes closet in the Cowell Gym basement adjacent to the Food Pantry. It is open the same hours as the Food Pantry, and generally sees 30 to 40 people each day it is open. Residents can contribute clothing in good condition by putting the clothing in bags, and dropping the bags off at the clothing shed by the Cowell Gym entrance.

As part of our ongoing communications strategy, we maintain a Facebook page, and the Cowell Director sends out regular email updates to folks who have asked to receive them. If you like to receive these emails, please email [cowellgymnasium@gmail.com](mailto:cowellgymnasium@gmail.com) . You can also like us on our Facebook page by going to [https://www.facebook.com/ShelburneRecreation](https://www.facebook.com/ShelburneRecreation/) .

The outdoor courts at the Cowell continued to be used for both basketball and tennis. The latter proved tenuous as a result of the continuing deterioration of the courts’ surface. The committee is planning to apply for grant money to get the courts repaved.

The Recreation Committee would like to thank the people of Shelburne, in particular the Select Board and Shelburne Highway Superintendent Mark Shippee, for their ongoing support.