



# Parks, Recreation, & Youth Services

PRESTON CONNECTICUT

Dedicated to Serving Families, Seniors, Adults, & Youth

## 2025 Year in Review





## **A Year of Community, Connection, and Growth**

2025 was an incredible year for Preston Parks, Recreation & Youth Services, marked by growth, innovation, and strong community participation. Six of the community events held this year were brand new to the Town of Preston, introducing new traditions and opportunities for residents to come together.

These inaugural events, alongside returning favorites, helped expand engagement and brought fresh energy to our programming.

From camps and classes to signature town-wide events, residents of all ages showed up, demonstrating continued support for recreation, enrichment, and community connection in Preston.

## **Department Updates**

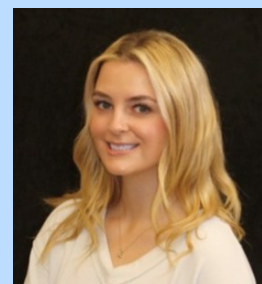
2025 also brought important changes within the Preston Parks, Recreation & Youth Services Department. We said goodbye to Recreation and Senior Programs Coordinator Blake Brackett, whose contributions and dedication helped shape many successful programs and events.

We were pleased to welcome Eve Pelletier as a Recreation and Senior Programs Coordinator, filling the role and bringing new energy and ideas to the department.

The department now consists of four dedicated Full-time and Part-time staff as well as dozens of seasonal employees and volunteers.

- Mark Simmons, Director
- Allison Bruehwiler, Recreation and Senior Programs Coordinator
- Eve Pelletier, Recreation and Senior Programs Coordinator
- John Shannon, Community Park Maintainer

Together, this team continues to work collaboratively to provide quality programs, services, and community events for residents of all ages.



# By the Numbers



1,727 Total Program Registrants



Opportunities spanning youth, adult, and senior programming



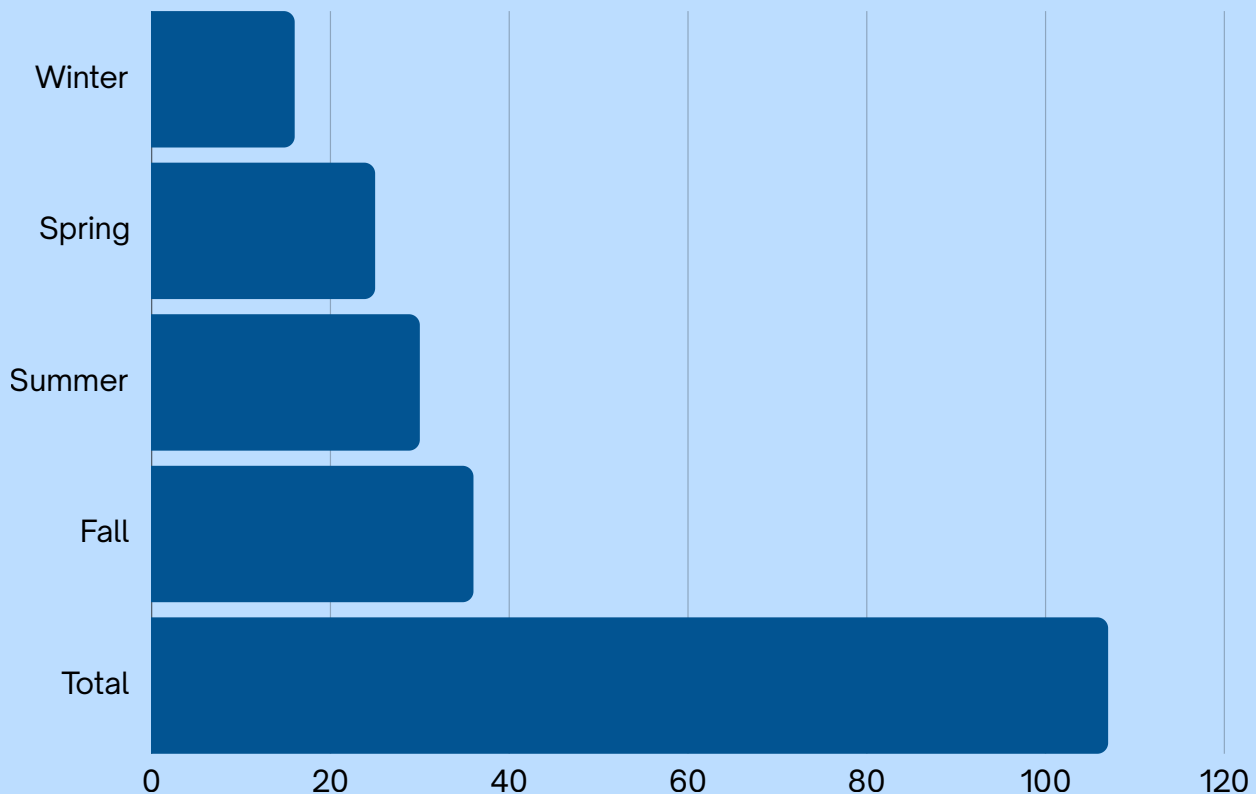
11 community events throughout the year



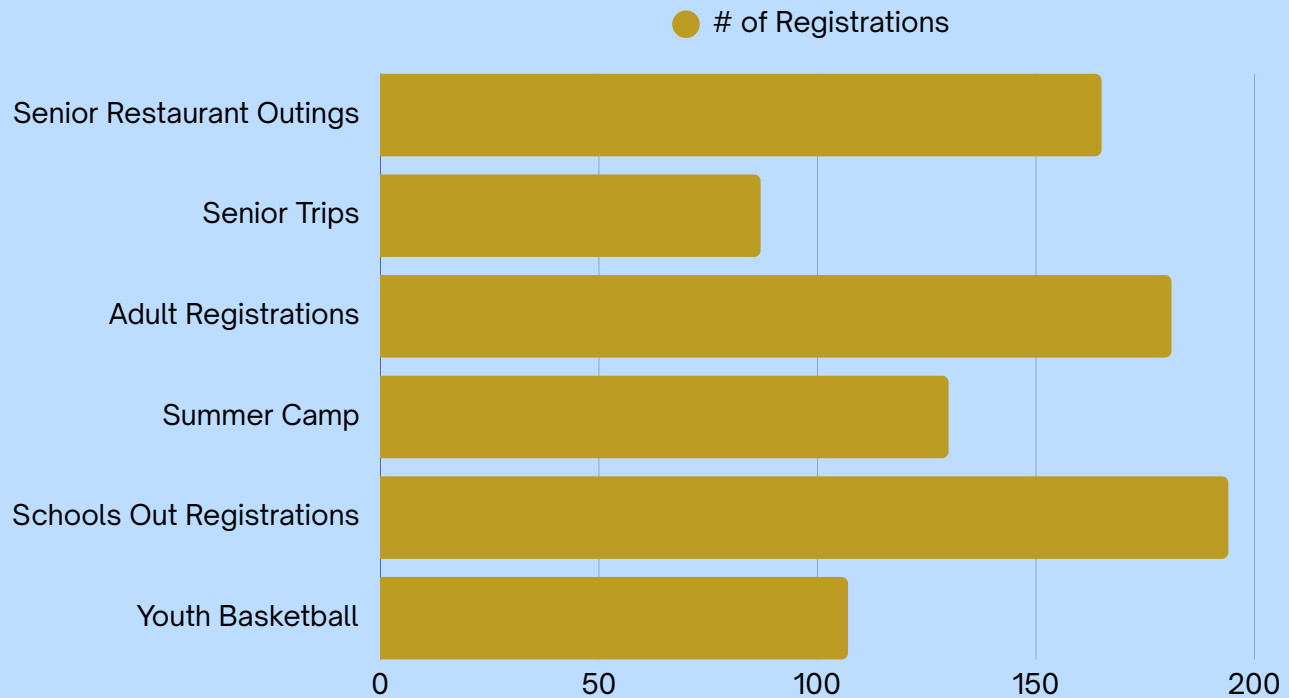
109 Total Number of Activities



## Number of Activities by Season



# Standout Registration Numbers



## Youth Services Highlights

◆ Presents for Preston supported 44 children in need, with 25 families willing to adopt a family or child.

◆ Screen Free Week welcomed 100 registrations, as participants embraced unplugged fun together.

◆ Distributed \$600 worth of school supplies to children in town.

◆ Worked in partnership with both schools to offer multiple assemblies throughout the year.

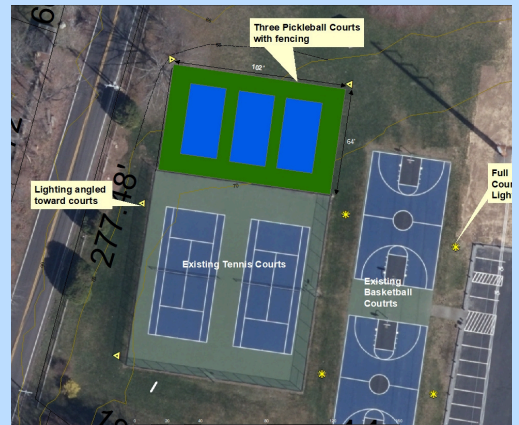




# Grant Highlights

## STEAP Grant

In July the Town was awarded \$450,000 from the State of CT STEAP Program for Community Park Improvements. Using various funding sources an additional \$90,000 - \$100,000 will be added for a total project budget of \$550,000. Improvements to the park will include three new pickleball courts, sports court lighting, a permanent band stand, and improved park drainage. Work is expected to begin Summer of 2026.



## Eastern Region Tourism District Passport to Preston

In March, the Department was awarded \$6,000 from the Eastern Regional Tourism District to help launch the “Passport to Preston” program for the first time. This initiative encouraged residents and visitors to explore and support local businesses throughout the community by collecting stamps and receiving exclusive offers. The passport highlighted Preston’s local businesses and reinforced their importance as the backbone of our rural community.



We also created a tri-fold guide showcasing Preston’s events, destinations, and local business highlights. The guide included a map designed to inspire residents to explore the community and enjoy its unique experiences.

## Grants Continued

### **Community Foundation of Eastern CT**

Awarded \$3,500 for a women and girls grant to implement an after school girls program and women's kickboxing program

### **Chelsea Groton Foundation**

\$6,500 to implement after school programming

### **Urban Green & Community Garden Grant**

Awarded \$15,000 to add a rain garden to the Town Hall parking lot

### **Preston Community Fund**

Awarded \$609 to support summer camp inclusion aids

### **Jewett City Savings Bank**

Awarded \$1,500 to start a 12 week farmers market in town

### **CT Housing Authority Resident Program**

Collaborated with the Preston Housing Authority to get \$10,000 for residents to participate in social, physical, and exciting activities





## Community Events

This year, we proudly hosted 11 community-wide events that brought the community together and created lasting memories:

- Easter Egg Hunt
- The Wicked Picnic\*
- Senior Picnic\*
- Community Yard Sale
- Summer Concert Series\*
- Preston Summer Carnival\*
- Spooktacular Speaker Series\*
- Trunk or Treat
- Tree Lighting
- Stuff a Cruiser / Santa & Sirens
- Luminary Walk\*

\*New Event



## Looking Ahead

As we look ahead, we are excited to continue expanding opportunities that bring people together and enhance the quality of life in Preston. A 12-week Farmers Market will go hand in hand with the 6-week summer concert series. We will continue to add new programs as community needs arise, enhance existing events to make them better each year, and pursue grant opportunities to support the continued growth of the department.

