



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Community cookout brings together Beaufort Police, downtown residents for food and fellowship

The summer scent of grilling hot dogs carried across Beaufort's Washington Street Park as a church dinner 'Night at the Park' brought together downtown residents and the Beaufort Police Department for fellowship and food.

Downtown churches joined hands to bring side dishes, sweet tea and desserts, while the police grilled hot dogs and hamburgers in the newly refurbished park.

"We all had a great time and especially enjoyed having our police department there for the evening," Richard and Kathleen Graig wrote in an email to Eliza Hill, park superintendent for Beaufort.

They added: "Also wanted to say how nice the park looks. The play equipment looks great with the new paint job and the grounds are just beautiful. We all are thankful for the results of your hard work. Please let us know if we can help you in any way at the park."

The event, held Friday July 9, showcased improvements to one of Beaufort's many neighborhood parks. A group of downtown churches regularly coordinates cookouts in Washington Street Park, which is how Kathleen Graig became involved.

"I'm one of the people who help coordinate who's doing what each Friday for our neighborhood get-together, which church is handling the food, that sort of thing. It's a wonderful way to get out and meet your neighbors, people you might not otherwise get to know when everyone is so busy," she said.

To celebrate the park upgrades, made for less than \$1,000, the Beaufort Police offered to bring the hot dogs and hamburgers for community outreach.

“It’s something we like to do to stay connected with the neighborhoods, plus it’s a lot of fun and the food is always good,” Beaufort Police Chief Matt Clancy said. “Making these connections, letting people know we are all working together for a safer and better City, is what we are all about.”

The police department paid for the food using money from a private donation earmarked for community and anti-drug efforts, Clancy said.

Steve Brown, a familiar name to Beaufort and known for his community service, said the group has been reaching out to the neighborhood for more than two years.

“We average 65 to 85 meals served at the park on Friday evenings and there has never been a Friday missed in about two and a half years,” he said. “A fantastic team of dedicated, weekly volunteers, backed by their churches in the downtown sector, have done a remarkable job giving of their time and money to maintain this mission. This was all started by Henrietta Goode, who lives two blocks from the park.”

The City’s improvements to the small park included replacing a basketball hoop, painting the existing metal playground equipment and adding mulch, said Eliza Hill, parks superintendent for Beaufort.

“It’s a wonderful little park, and we were happy to make these improvements that didn’t cost much but really make it look nicer and be safer,” Hill said. “To have the community come together for a cookout is part of what makes these neighborhoods, and the City of Beaufort, so special.”

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