

What's Behind the Name: District 2

Did you ever wonder what or who is the inspiration for the name of our parks, playgrounds, and recreation centers? In District 2, we took the initiative to share some knowledge. Here is what we learned...

BRIDESBURG – While Bridesburg is named for the community in which it sits, the community is named after Joseph Kirkbride (1662-1738), who came to the colonies with William Penn and served, among other duties, as a Justice in the county of Bucks.

COHOCKSINK – The facility at Cedar and Ann Streets is named for the Cohocksink Creek, formerly a stream running between what are now the Philadelphia neighborhoods of Northern Liberties and Kensington. It was a tributary of the Delaware River. Its name, spelled various ways, is said to come from a Lenape word for "pine lands."

CRUZ – The facility is named for Mrs. Narcissa Cruz, a member of the neighborhood (Ludlow), and an advocate that would come to represent, and become a resource for, the families and children in the Ludlow neighborhood.

DISSTON – This recreation center is named for Henry Disston (May 24, 1819-March 16, 1878), an English American industrialist who founded the Keystone Saw Works in 1840 and developed the surrounding neighborhood of Tacony in Philadelphia, beginning in 1872. He was the father of industrialist Hamilton Disston.

GAMBREL – Formerly Whitehall Commons, the name was changed in 2007 to honor Mr. Billy Gambrel, a longtime neighborhood leader as well as coach and developer of the Frankford Chargers youth football program.

SHISSLER – This facility, formerly known as both "Newts" and the Kensington Recreation Center, is named after Dan Shissler, a community activist and longtime coach with the Fishtown A.C. Mr. Shissler served on the soccer advisory councils. After his death, the facility was renamed in his honor and dedicated in 1994.

As more is learned about the naming of facilities in District 2, we will be sure to share! Many thanks to George Kilcullen, Art McQuiod, Andy McLaughlin and Alfredo Betancourt, for their help in gathering this information.

- John McBride (4/8/15)



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FRANK GLAVIN PLAYGROUND – Formerly known as A & W, as this playground is located at the corner of Almond and Westmoreland Streets, the Frank Glavin Playground is named after a longtime Philadelphia Parks & Recreation District Manager who mentored many leaders and who was especially important to programming for special populations, having founded the Jardel Special People program. His impact is still felt within Parks & Recreation today.

McILVAIN PLAYGROUND – McIlvain is named for Joseph McIlvain, an influential member of the Frankford Boys Club. Mr. McIlvain coached baseball, basketball and football, served as club president, and was also a ward leader and community activist. He lived directly across from the facility that now bears his name. It was dedicated in his memory in June of 1973, within a year after his passing.

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- John McBride (4/9/15)



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