


SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY OFFER: [Now you can own an original first issue of Sports Illustrated!](#)

THE WEB  SI.com
 

[NFL](#) [NCAA FOOTBALL](#) [MLB](#) [NBA](#) [NCAA BASKETBALL](#) [GOLF](#) [NHL](#) [RACING](#) [SOCCER](#) [TENNIS](#) [MORE](#) [FANTASY](#) [SCORES](#)



↓ ADVERTISEMENT ↓

## New Jersey's Sportstown: Piscataway

### City stands out because of commitment to free youth sports programs

By Jody Woodman



In Piscataway, N.J., parents leave their checkbooks at home when they register their children for recreational sports. The programs are all provided free of charge.

The Piscataway Recreation Department has worked hard to maintain free programming that also meets high standards for quality and diversity. It is this dedication to its 51,000 residents that has earned Piscataway the *Sports Illustrated* Sportstown title.

"Still a place where youth play sports for free, Piscataway has gone out of its way to guarantee quality facilities, well-trained volunteer coaches and inclusion strategies that make sports accessible to everyone," the five-person Sportstown judging panel said in announcing Piscataway's selection.

Piscataway's Recreation Department is funded entirely by the municipal budget, allowing director Kevin Donovan and his staff to offer free youth programs and free or affordable adult activities. The credit, Donovan said, goes to Piscataway mayor Brian Wahler and the township council for supporting the department with their annual budget -- and to the taxpayers who fund that budget.

"We want (sports programs) to be free of charge, and available to all, but also good quality," Donovan said. "The community has supported and endorsed free recreation programming. I think that above all separates us from everyone else, from other communities."

While the department offers programs in everything from youth and adult sports to trips to New York City to take in Broadway plays, its success is based largely on volunteers. With only six paid staffers, the department's dependency on their help cannot be overstated -- and those volunteers are usually familiar with the programs.

"I've been around long enough to see those who had positive experiences in the program growing up turn into fine adults and parents, and bring their kids into the programs that they participated in," Donovan said. "That's our sense of community building; we have so many people who have been involved and want to give back and make it better."



[SI Media Kits](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Customer Service](#) | [Press Room](#)  
 Copyright © 2003 CNN/Sports Illustrated.

A Time Warner Company. All Rights Reserved.

[Terms](#) under which this service is provided to you. Read our [privacy guidelines](#).

THE WEB  SI.com
 