AARP Opens New Outdoor Fitness Park in Buffalo at Horace ‘Billy’ Johnson Park to Commemorate Association’s 60th Anniversary

BUFFALO, N.Y.—Today, AARP New York State Director Beth Finkel opened an AARP sponsored outdoor fitness park in Buffalo’s Horace “Billy” Johnson Park, the fifth such park to open in the United States and the only one planned in New York.

Over the next several years, AARP plans to sponsor a fitness park in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands to commemorate the association’s 60th anniversary.

AARP is working with FitLot, a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to helping communities find the resources they need to plan, build and program outdoor fitness parks, to construct over a dozen parks in 2019. Each park will include FitLot™ exercise equipment that can be adapted to meet a wide range of fitness levels and abilities.

“We couldn’t be more thrilled to open this outdoor fitness park, right here in Buffalo,” AARP New York State Director Beth Finkel said before joining Buffalo Mayor Byron W. Brown and other officials to cut the ribbon. “This is a space to play and stay healthy, free to the public, including our members. It’s my sincere hope that this park will get good use and bring together Buffalo in a new, healthy way for years to come.

“These outdoor fitness parks represent AARP’s commitment to supporting health and wellness and livable communities all across our country,” Finkel added.

Erie County’s population is aging; the number of residents 65 and over jumped by 19 percent from 2007 to 2017, while the county’s under-65 population declined by 2 percent, according to a 2019 AARP-commissioned study by the Center for an Urban Future.

In addition to Finkel and Mayor Brown, the AARP opening ceremony included Andy Rabb, Buffalo’s Deputy Commissioner for Parks and Recreation; Adam Mejerson, Founder and Executive Director of FitLot; Ann Monroe, Western New York representative on AARP New York’s volunteer Executive Council; and about 50 volunteers and community members.

Today’s event featured free healthy food, giveaways* and FitLot™ exercise equipment demonstrations.

“I thank AARP for selecting Buffalo for the first AARP-sponsored outdoor fitness park in New York State,” said City of Buffalo Mayor Byron W. Brown. “I am proud to lead an Administration that prioritizes the health and wellness of our cherished senior residents. As an Age-Friendly City, the City of Buffalo values successful relationships with stellar organizations like AARP to ensure we are building a City of Opportunity for all residents, including members of our older population.”

The next outdoor fitness park sponsored by AARP is scheduled to open Saturday in Cincinnati, Ohio, and more than a dozen parks are planned for 2019 in locations across the country.
About AARP
AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering people 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With a nationwide presence and nearly 38 million members, AARP strengthens communities and advocates for what matters most to families: health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment. AARP also produces the nation's largest circulation publications: AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. To learn more, visit www.aarp.org or follow @AARP and @AARPadvocates on social media.

*While supplies last