

Cans for Kids Program

Submitted by Duane Randall
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Way back in the year of 2001, Vinton had a little dilemma on their hands. The last of the Redemption Centers had closed their doors. This meant the only places you could take those nickel refundable cans and bottles were the grocery stores and convenience stores. A good friend bounced the idea off of me to have the Park & Recreation Department collect cans and bottles from the community and use these funds collected for our youth programs. So that's how **Cans for Kids** got started!

There are a lot of people out there that don't mind bagging or boxing up their cans and bottles but they aren't keen on running them through a machine or waiting to have them counted. They are also a lot of people that love to help out the youth of our communities.

Since the inception of this program in 2001, the VPRD has averaged between \$3,000 to \$4,000 dollars per year. We have two drop spots for residents to bring their cans and bottles, one being the Vinton Recreation Center and the other our park maintenance building. We also we pick up larger quantities for businesses or residents all over the community.

After we receive the bags of cans and bottles, we separate them into bags of plastic bottles, cans and boxes of glass products. The one good thing is we have volunteers who occasionally help or community service individuals who have been assigned hours through the judicial system which assist with this duty. If none of the above are available, then our park staff handle the separation task. We have a small garage that is our designated separation area that has an eight foot separation counter. This was built with scrap wood and fencing by our staff and the room serves as the holding area for the bags.

Every two weeks, a company comes in and removes all of the separated bags and boxes. We receive four and a half cents per bottle or can and within a week we get our check from the company. Sounds pretty basic and easy, well it really is that simple.

Listed below are some of the items that have been purchased with the funds that we have received from this program:

- Soccer Goals, nets & equipment
- Scrimmage Vests, balls & equipment for all sports
- Tennis Ball Machine
- Adjustable Basketball Wall Mount Set for Recreation Center
- Annually prizes for Winter Carnival
- Little League Equipment & bags
- Playground Equipment

At this time our legislature is looking to increase the deposit to ten cents and we feel this will not only be a positive for funding programs such as REAP, keep our parks & communities free of some waste but also will be a bigger resource for our youth programs. At a time in our budget that every little bit helps, this **can** really help.

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