

The month of May began with Mayor Buddy Dyer being sworn into his second full term in office. Commissioner Patty Sheehan, District 4 and Commissioner Sam Ings, District 6 were also sworn-in after being re-elected. And in District 2, we welcomed a new commissioner to the Council, Commissioner Tony Ortiz who was also sworn-in during the ceremony.

On May 2nd and 3rd, Baldwin Park and surrounding communities came together for the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life event, a 24-hour team relay event that raises both money and awareness for cancer, its patients, its survivors and the life saving research toward which the funds raised at events such as this one support. I was honored to be a small part of this great event by speaking to the relay participants and encouraging them during a special candlelight ceremony called the Midnight Mission. This event reminded each of us how important fundraising events like these are to those who are going through the darkest times of cancer treatment. If you haven't done so already, please consider participating in this worthwhile community event next year.

Then on May 10, 2008, we held the inaugural District 3 Picnic along with the dedication ceremony for our newest green space, Orlando Cultural Park in the Loch Haven area and the designation of Orlando's first "Play Day." Thanks so much to all those who came out to enjoy the festivities. The park, which covers more than 3 ½ acres, will serve as the gateway to Loch Haven, and in the future, will also be a one-of-a-kind hands-on sculpture park. The first sculpture, a 14½ foot tall, two-thousand pound bronze piece aptly named the Family of Acrobats has been installed and will remind passers-by that the Loch Haven area is a great place to spend quality time outdoors with friends and family.

The City was also excited to hold the first "Play Day" as a part of Orlando's goal of becoming a nationally designated "Playful City." It is important that our City provides "Play Days" and parks such as Orlando Cultural Park and the other 112 parks and green spaces throughout the City so that our children and their families have the opportunity to take part in active, unstructured play and to remind our residents about the importance of unstructured play for our City's youth. Play helps children learn to use imagination, teamwork, decision-making, and more. Cities are invited to do their part by providing parks and green spaces that serve as gathering places for family reunions and picnics, locations for pick-up games of football, or Frisbee, as well as just plain fun.

The month of May ended on a very high note, with the 2nd Annual Baldwin Park Arts Festival taking place on the last day of the month, Saturday, May 31st. Thanks to all of the Baldwin Park merchants, especially Pat Jones-Petrick of Trish's Teas for coordinating the event again this year. Thanks also to all of the local artists who displayed their work or performed at this year's event to make it even better than last year. I am so proud to be the Commissioner of an area like Baldwin Park that works hard to hold events throughout the year that bring the community together to enjoy their neighborhood and their neighbors.

As always, thank you for your continued support of our Great City, your District 3 staff and me.