



## Monon Myths

In the course of serving our guests, we receive a variety of questions about The Monon Center. Following are the most frequent misconceptions about The Monon Center along with clarifications to ensure everyone is well informed.

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**MYTH #1:** You must be a member to use The Monon Center

**REALITY:** No membership is required to visit any portion of The Monon Center or register in the many classes and programs we offer. As a community recreation center, everyone is always welcome!

While it is true that we offer annual and monthly passes, commonly referred to as memberships by our guests, we also offer day passes and 10-visit value passes (providing a 50% savings off our daily rates). Regardless of how frequently you wish to use The Monon Center, there is a convenient pass option for you.

If all you want to do is participate in a program or class, we have got you covered. No membership or pass is ever required to participate in a program offered at The Monon Center – including our popular group fitness classes. Registration for all programs is open to everyone at the same price on a first come, first served basis.

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**MYTH #2:** The Monon Center is an exclusive, privately-owned facility.

**REALITY:** The Monon Center is a public facility operated by the Carmel/Clay Board of Parks and Recreation. The Park Board is a political subdivision established under Indiana law and created through an Interlocal Cooperation Agreement between the City of Carmel and Clay Township. The Monon Center is a public service provided jointly by your city and township governments.

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**MYTH #3:** The Monon Center is in financial trouble and will have to close.

**REALITY:** There is absolutely no threat of The Monon Center closing. The Park Board, City of Carmel and Clay Township are dedicated to ensuring The Monon Center's ongoing operation and success.

While it is true that The Monon Center's finances have been a topic of discussion, its actual financial performance is consistent with projections made in 2003 prior to the facility's construction. It was anticipated that annual subsidies would be needed to fund the start-up of the new recreational amenities in Central Park. The actual 2008 subsidy for The Monon Center was \$538,000. This subsidy was covered with existing cash reserves held in a Park Capital Fund.

Through its first 19 months of operation, The Monon Center achieved 86% cost recovery (calculated by dividing total operating revenues by total operating expenses). As a point of comparison, from 2004 to 2008, Plainfield, IN's successful and highly regarded Recreation and Aquatic Center achieved between 61% and 68% cost recovery.

To minimize the annual subsidy needed to operate The Monon Center, the Park Board is currently developing a Business Plan to identify the true cost recovery potential of the facility. The Business Plan will not only identify opportunities for additional revenue, but also explore places where operating expenses can be reduced. The Business Plan is anticipated to be completed by April 2009.

**MYTH #4:** My taxes have been raised to subsidize The Monon Center's operation.

**REALITY:** There are currently no plans to raise taxes for the purpose of subsidizing The Monon Center's operation. Under Indiana law, the Park Board has no legal authority to levy taxes. Only the City Council and Township Board have the authority to levy and appropriate tax dollars for this purpose.

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**MYTH #5:** Funds from the before and after school program are being used to subsidize The Monon Center.

**REALITY:** Beginning with the 2006/07 school year, Carmel Clay Schools awarded the Park Board a contract to operate the Extended School Enrichment (ESE) before and after school program within each of the school district's 11 elementary schools. Since its inception, ESE's revenues and expenses have been tracked and accounted for as a separate and distinct cost center. ESE funds have not, and are not, being used to subsidize The Monon Center. To date, all net revenues generated from the before and after school program have been retained for ESE operations and reinvested in the program.

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**MYTH #6:** During busy times, there is no place to park at The Monon Center.

**REALITY:** When designing the parking lots for Central Park and The Monon Center, the Park Board was very conscious of its mission to be good stewards of the natural environment. Instead of creating a single, massive, environmentally unfriendly parking lot, three distinct parking lots were built adjacent to the West Building, Outdoor Aqua Park and East Building. While the parking lot in front of the West Building can at times be very busy, there is usually ample parking in the east parking lot (accessible only from the park entrance off Rangeline Road/Westfield Boulevard). All of the amenities in the West Building can be accessed from this parking lot.

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**MYTH #7:** There are an awful lot of weeds in Central Park and within the parking lot islands.

**REALITY:** All of the "no-mow" zones in Central Park, including those within the parking lot islands, are planted with native prairie. Prairie typically takes 2-3 years to properly mature and during this timeframe can look rather unkempt and weed-like. Once the prairie is fully established, visitors will witness a variety of wildflowers in bloom throughout the growing season. Prairies also require less maintenance compared to manicured grass, minimizing operating costs by saving on the labor and fuel needed for routine mowing.

In keeping with the theme of being environmentally sensitive, all of the parking lots within Central Park are designed so no water is discharged in the storm sewer system. All surface water from the parking lots is diverted into the islands containing prairie, which serve as part of our network of natural bio-swales. The water is then directed to the on-site wetlands and further scrubbed before entering the Central Park Lagoon.

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**MYTH #8:** It is difficult to register for programs at The Monon Center.

**REALITY:** The Monon Center offers five convenient ways to register for our classes and programs: 1) call 317.848.7275, 2) drop off registration form in-person at The Monon Center, 3) fax registration form to 317.573.5254, 4) mail registration form to 1235 Central Park Drive East, Carmel, IN, or 5) register online at [www.carmelclayparks.com](http://www.carmelclayparks.com).



We do recognize that our online registration process could (and should) be more user-friendly. To better serve our customers, we are currently working with computer programmers to significantly enhance our on-line registration process. Our goal is to make registering for programs through our website as easy as purchasing from your favorite on-line retailer. We hope to have a new web registration process operating soon. If you do experience any problems, please call us at 317.848.7275 and we will be glad to take your registration over the phone.

Have you heard something about The Monon Center and want to know if it is true or false, please call us at 317.848.7275 or email [support@carmelclayparks.com](mailto:support@carmelclayparks.com). We are more than happy to address your questions.

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