

A Message from Our General Manager about Vandalism...

I love summer for the hiking and biking, bbq's and pool parties, tan lines and concerts. Unfortunately, during summer break we see a huge increase in all types of vandalism throughout the community. We notice spikes in vandalism every time there is a break from school (winter, spring, and summer), but we get hit the hardest during the summer since the weather and daylight is conducive to being outside even late into the night and not all kids have a set routine with early morning alarms and homework to keep them occupied.

We see everything from spray painting on overpasses, streets, sidewalks, tunnels, and tot lots, to the breaking of light fixtures in the tunnels and tennis courts, setting fire to things, knocking over light poles on the walking trails, breaking into the pools and throwing the furniture into the deep end, putting firecrackers into and smashing mailboxes, tipping over or stealing portable restrooms, and stealing fire extinguishers from Broadlands Live tents. We've even had instances of people breaking into the pools overnight and defecating in them, which is not only repulsive for those having to clean up the mess, but disrupts the on time opening of the pools to the rest of the residents or swim teams.

These acts of vandalism costs the association in valuable resources, from staff time contacting the sheriff's department and filing police reports to paying contractors to clean up the messes. These efforts take resources away from other association funded activities and improvements. Nobody wants to take their young child to a tot lot for a play outing only to find the slide covered in phallic symbols.

The association has and will continue to press charges against those caught in the act, and will cooperate with the sheriff's department in these cases. I have been subpoenaed as a witness for hate crimes that have taken place on association property. I have called parents who thought their children were safe at a sleepover but snuck out and have been caught trespassing in the middle of the night. I have taken calls from residents who have heard the teens yelping when jumping off the diving board into the chilly waters of the Southern Walk pool in September after the pools have been partially drained, which could easily lead to a broken neck or back.

The association contracts with an independent security company to help patrol the community and they have caught several vandals in the act over the years; however, they cannot be omnipresent. We rely on our residents to help keep an eye on our precious assets, and speak to and know the whereabouts of their children and teens. If we make ourselves aware of the issues affecting our surroundings, we can keep Broadlands a vibrant and safe community. To report suspicious activity, contact the Loudoun County non-emergency number at 703-777-1021.