



*The*

# MAYOR'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 2016

Dear Residents and Stakeholders:

I am proud to announce that both the City of East Orange and Essex County have made significant investments in our parks, making them places where residents and visitors can engage in play, exercise, compete, and interact while enjoying nature's beauty.

Recognizing that nearly 30% of our population is made up of children under 18 years old, it has always been my administration's priority to enhance recreational programming and to improve the quality of our parks infrastructure for safe and productive play. We often talk about using our parks for physical activity, but park play also can help increase the social and emotional development of our young people. Think about how many rules are involved in navigating proper playground etiquette. Who goes first? Who will be the leader? Research shows that rough and tumble play activates the parts of the higher brain which regulate emotions, ultimately helping children to better manage their emotions while being physically active.

### New Skate Park

On July 15th, the city, in conjunction with the American Ramp Company, hosted a Pop-Up Pump Track Demo to provide residents with a sneak peak of the upcoming Skate Park, which will be installed at Memorial Park, along with renovated basketball courts and an outdoor reading area adjacent to the East Orange Public Library.

### New Tennis Courts at Soverel Park

The tennis courts at Soverel Park, which had been closed since 2012 due to heavy damage from Super Storm Sandy, are now open for play and better than ever! The renovations include four new tennis courts and two new handball courts. Renovations are set to begin on Elmwood Park tennis courts in September.

### Watsessing Park Improvements

In December 2015, I met with Essex County Executive Joseph DiVincenzo to discuss efforts to enhance Watsessing Park, which we share with our neighboring Township of Bloomfield. Within days of our meeting, Mr. DiVincenzo sent me a follow up letter to outline what changes would be made and assured me that the project would be completed by July 2016. Today, Watsessing Park now has over \$600,000 worth of improvements, including a renovated basketball court, a refurbished running track and replacement sidewalks on Glenwood Avenue, Dodd Street and Cleveland Terrace. Thank you to the County Executive and Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders for investing in East Orange and helping to enhance the quality of life and access to recreational opportunities for our residents.

Throughout the summer, our parks have been home to a host of programs, including camps, Movie Nights sponsored by the East Orange City Council and the House Music in Da Park Series. For more information on upcoming events, visit our website at [eastorange-nj.gov](http://eastorange-nj.gov) or call the Department of Recreation & Cultural Affairs at 973.414.4141. As the summer comes to a close, **I look forward to seeing you during our Annual Mayor's Community Cookout at Soverel Park on August 27, from 12-6PM.** It will include field games, music, food trucks, vendors and more! Please come out, bring a friend and enjoy a day of community and family fun!

Mayor Lester E. Taylor III