

City Commissioner Van W. Johnson, Sr.
Apalachicola Battery Park - Family Fun Day Speech
July 25, 1998

On behalf of the City of Apalachicola, its Mayor and Commission. I welcome each of you to the second annual Battery Park Family Fun Day. In addition, I like to take this opportunity to share with you a vision for the future. As you know by now, the purpose of Family Fun Day is to establish a means by which money can be raised to build a safe and vibrant park system throughout the City of Apalachicola. Your presence here today, shows that you are a part of that commitment. Without such a commitment, the success of this project would be unlikely and those that will pay the ultimate price are our children.

Without safe and functional parks, our kids and teenagers will ultimately find other alternatives to occupy their time. Such as experimenting with so called recreational drugs, or committing criminal acts. This is why we as concerned parents, have a stake in the building of safe and vibrant parks in this City.

However, in order to obtain such a park system and improve the community in which we live. We need a strong sense of community, where we cross the lines of race, gender, age, and social class to build a brighter future together. Right now, all across this nation, people just like you are coming together and are making a difference in their communities.

In addition, we cannot afford to sit back and leave this job for our local government to do alone. Although, local government has a critically important role, the broader community must come together and work in true partnership with local government. In addition to collaborating with the community, local government must realize that the key to building safe parks is empowering individuals and organizations within the community. Such organizations like the group of young mothers who are spearheading the restoration of our park system. Without partnerships, efforts by government alone, often fosters lack of trust and frustration.

This is why your presence here today means so much to this project and your future participation is so greatly needed. By working together, we can realize a safe, vibrant, and sustainable park system where all of our kids can learn to live and play together. This is my vision for the future!