

The next time you enjoy the beauty of Mill Creek Park, you may be admiring the efforts of Justin Rogers, a 1998 alumnus of CMHS and 2002 honors graduate of the Knowlton School of Architecture at The Ohio State University. In 2006, he was licensed in Ohio as a **Registered Landscape Architect (RLA)**.

### **Professional Accomplishments & Awards**

Today, Justin combines his interest in architecture, design, and horticulture with his love of the outdoors as he creates spaces and integrates people into the natural environment in his role as **Planning & Operations Director for the [Mill Creek MetroParks](#)**. The daily challenges, diversity of projects, and commitment to preserving and improving this community gem drove Justin to work his way from intern to Director of the MCMP's largest department.

Justin is continuing the work of extraordinary individuals from 130 years ago by creating park and recreation opportunities for future generations. During his twenty-year career, Justin has had an integral role in developing and managing projects focusing on historic infrastructure preservation, natural resources restoration, and new recreational construction. Many of Justin's projects have received awards from the Ohio Parks & Recreation Association, Mahoning Valley Historical Society, Heritage Ohio, and others. In total, Justin has secured over \$9 million in grant funds, preserved over 1,500 acres, and managed projects totaling over \$20 million including the Ford Nature Center redevelopment, Lily Pond restoration, and establishment of the Collier Preserve.

Justin has also assisted agencies and communities with various improvement projects including Austintown Township Park Celebration Grove, the Youngstown Firefighters Memorial in downtown Youngstown, and the Public Library Market/Midlothian Branch site design and planting plan. Recently, Justin has dedicated himself to [The Walnut Grove](#) – **A Field of Opportunity**, which provides a place where individuals of all abilities can learn through play and enjoy the freedom to interact with their peers. He has established the master plan, designed site improvements, managed projects, and maintained the grounds for The Walnut Grove.

In the community, Justin has held leadership positions in the Great Ohio Lake-to-River Greenway Coalition (GOLRG), the Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition (IHTC), the Alliance for Watershed Action and Resource Education (AWARE), Natural Resources Assistance Council (NRAC), and the Mill Creek MetroParks Employee Association. He has also served on the City of Youngstown's Design Review Committee, graduated from the Mahoning Valley Local Government Leadership Academy, and served as a Henry M. Halstead Field of Opportunity (Walnut Grove) Board member since its inception. Recognized as a **Mahoning Valley 40 Under 40** honoree and MVP (1 of 5), he also was inducted into the **CMHS Athletic Hall of Fame in 2015**.

### **Mooney Reflection**

Justin feels the tradition of sanctity, scholarship, and discipline shaped his experience at Mooney and influenced his approach to each day, both professionally and personally. The lifelong friends, involvement in sports and student organizations, high-quality educational opportunities, and immersion in the "Mooney Family" have been positive influences for Justin.

His greatest memories include sharing the soccer field with his brother, Jordan ('01), serving as captain, being awarded All-State Academic honors, and being mobbed after the team's first-ever win against Boardman. He fondly remembers competing on the speech team alongside his amazingly talented friends, serving as a liturgical minister, and volunteering for numerous community service opportunities with his mother, CHMS teacher Mary Lou Rogers ('69). Looking back at English/speech classes with Miss Bacha and Mrs. Mastro-Nard, along with a mechanical drawing class with Mr. Roncone. Justin can draw a direct line to his professional success with grant and contract writing, public speaking, and preparation of construction drawings. These experiences at Mooney, along with the unflinching support of family and friends, instilled in Justin the importance of strong leadership, hard work, commitment, and applying one's God-given abilities to serve others.

### **Personal Life**

Justin, his wife Melissa, and children Isabella and Nico reside in Boardman and are active at St. Luke parish, Applewood Swim and Tennis Club, Boardman Soccer Association, and the Walnut Grove. The family enjoys spending time together traveling, cooking, painting, hiking, riding bikes and playing games, and sharing those experiences with friends, neighbors, and extended family.