

= Sweetums (Parks and Recreation) =

" Sweetums " is the 15th episode of the second season of the American comedy television series Parks and Recreation , and the 21st overall episode of the series . It originally aired on NBC in the United States on February 4 , 2010 . In the episode , the Parks and Recreation Department hosts a public forum to discuss a sponsorship agreement with local candy manufacturer , Sweetums . Leslie and Ann warn the public of the dangers of supposedly nutritious snack bars called " Nutriyums " , which are filled with simple sugars , notably high fructose corn syrup .

The episode was written by Alan Yang and directed by Dean Holland . " Sweetums " addressed several issues including the politics of corporate sponsorship , the use of propaganda and free gifts to manipulate public opinion , and the dangers of corn syrup @-@ related products , which are regularly available in vending machines at public places , such as schools , parks or municipal buildings .

The episode featured a guest performance by Justin Theroux as Leslie 's boyfriend , Justin Anderson . According to Nielsen Media Research , " Sweetums " was seen by 4 @.@ 87 million households , and drew the season 's highest rating among viewers aged between 18 and 49 . The episode received positive reviews from critics .

= = Plot = =

The Pawnee Parks and Recreation Department considers a potential sponsorship deal with Sweetums , a local candy manufacturer hoping to market " nutritious " snack bars to park visitors . Ron (Nick Offerman) supports the deal as he advocates governmental privatization and emphasizes consumer choice over public safety . Leslie (Amy Poehler) initially supports the deal as well , until Ann (Rashida Jones) informs her they are filled with unhealthy corn syrup . Leslie arranges a public forum for Pawnee park visitors so they can make an informed choice about Sweetums products . Ron is unhappy with the arrangement , and gets angry with Leslie worrying about how much he is drinking during a recent outing , feeling she is stifling his personal freedoms . During the forum , Sweetums representatives screen propaganda films , highlighting consumer satisfaction , while Leslie responds by screening a 30 @-@ year @-@ old Sweetums film which discusses how corn syrup and other snack bar ingredients make cattle unhealthy . At the end of Leslie 's screening , Sweetums brings in its commercial 's primary actor , the company 's CEO Nick Newport Jr . (Gary Weeks) and his son and daughter , Denver and Dakota . Denver instructs the forum audience members to look under their seats for candy . The forum audience exclaims with excitement and ultimately votes in favor of the sponsorship deal . Ron taunts Leslie by eating two unhealthful servings of steak (" turf and turf ") , but she remains genuinely concerned for his health . Ron later apologizes to Leslie for having " been a horse 's ass " .

For the B @-@ plot , Tom (Aziz Ansari) attempts to move out of his home after his divorce from Wendy (Jama Williamson) . Tom again hesitates to reveal his feelings for his ex @-@ wife , whom he married to protect from deportation . Mark (Paul Schneider) reluctantly helps Tom through the process as he is a truck owner and could not think of a " valid excuse " . Donna (Retta) , April (Aubrey Plaza) , Jerry (Jim O 'Heir) and Andy (Chris Pratt) join to assist Tom move his many boxes to his new home , while Tom himself works very little . At the end of the episode , Tom learns that his new home has a gas leak and that he is unable to move into his new home until Monday . Tom asks the department members to take the boxes into their own homes , but they ultimately bring his possessions and leave them in the Parks and Recreation Department office . Throughout the move , April continues to develop romantic feelings for Andy , who remains oblivious to her affections . When April 's boyfriend Derek (Blake Lee) and his gay boyfriend Ben (Josh Duveneck) arrive at Wendy 's house , they mock Andy , which prompts April to refer to their behavior as " really gay for a gay couple . " In their final appearance in the episode , Andy asks April to watch him roller @-@ blade after work , but April declines his offer , implying that the comments of her boyfriend and his boyfriend may have confounded her feelings towards Andy .

= = Production = =

" Sweetums " was written by Alan Yang and directed by Dean Holland . The episode addresses the supposed dangers of corn syrup @-@ related products , which are regularly available in vending machines at public places , such as schools , parks or municipal buildings . The issue has been the subject of several town meetings like those featured in the episode , and companies use propaganda videos similar to that used by Sweetums in the episode . " Sweetums " featured one of a string of slated guest appearances by Justin Theroux as Justin Anderson , a love interest for Leslie , although Theroux only appeared in the cold open scene of " Sweetums " . In one scene , Ron builds a wooden harp to prove to Leslie what he is capable of doing while drinking alcohol . This element of Ron 's character was inspired by actor Nick Offerman , who in addition to comedy runs an independent carpentry business called Offerman Woodshop . Michael Schur , co @-@ creator of Parks and Recreation , said he planned to incorporate it into Ron 's character soon after learning about Offerman 's carpentry skills . A Sweetums stand is visible during a scene in the future Parks and Recreation episode " Park Safety " , a reference to the outcome of the " Sweetums " episode .

= = Cultural references = =

During one scene , Leslie visits the library and is treated in a hostile manner by the librarian . This is a reference to the previous second season episode , " Ron and Tammy " , which established a long @-@ standing feud between the Pawnee parks and recreation department and the town 's library system . Ron commented that all government should be privatized and parks should be run by Chuck E. Cheese 's , a chain of family entertainment centers . This is a reference to the Parks and Recreation pilot episode , in which Ron said all government should be privatized and follow the Chuck E. Cheese business model . Tom creates what he describes as a moving robot that plays music called " DJ Roomba " by attaching an iPod music player to a Roomba , an autonomous robotic vacuum cleaner .

After Jerry accidentally steps on DJ Roomba , Tom and April arrange for the " ghost " of DJ Roomba to follow Jerry around the Pawnee town hall playing an infinite loop of music by the hip hop band The Black Eyed Peas . After expressing excitement that he got DJ Roomba to play music by Dave Matthews Band , Andy sings the line , " Little baby " from the band 's song , " So Much to Say " . During one scene , Andy is impressed with Tom 's Canadian DVD version of the 1999 thriller , Deep Blue Sea . Tom says the disc includes 22 extra minutes and a commentary track in which actor LL Cool J , who appears in the film , raps all his dialogue . Leslie tells Ron she had already written a eulogy for him and it starts , " Oh captain , my captain ! Ron Swanson : a swan song " , a reference to the Walt Whitman poem " O Captain ! My Captain ! " . While Tom is trying on various articles of party clothes , Leslie comments that he looks like Encyclopedia Brown , a young detective from a series of Donald J. Sobol children 's novels .

= = Reception = =

In its original American NBC broadcast on February 4 , 2010 , " Sweetums " was seen by 4 @.@ 87 million households , according to Nielsen Media Research . It marked a 15 percent increase over the previous week 's episode , " Leslie 's House " . " Sweetums " drew a 2 @.@ 3 rating / 6 share among viewers between 18 and 49 , which was the highest rating of its kind for a second season episode at the time , although the season premiere episode " Pawnee Zoo " drew a slightly larger viewership of about 5 million households . During its original broadcast , " Sweetums " ranked third in its 8 : 30 p.m. , behind Bones on Fox , which drew 12 @.@ 64 million household viewers , and Survivor on CBS , which drew 8 @.@ 39 million households .

" Sweetums " received generally positive reviews . Matt Fowler of IGN called it a " fantastic episode " , and called the world of Parks and Recreation rich , lively and " a beautiful mosaic " . Fowler praised individual comedic moments , like the DJ Roomba jokes and portrayal of the easily fooled

Pawnee citizens , as well as the development of storylines like that of Tom and Wendy , and Andy and April . Steve Heisler of The A.V. Club praised the episode for revealing more about the mythology of the town of Pawnee , such as the strong influence Sweetums holds over the residents , and the ongoing feud between the parks department and the library . He also praised the character development of characters like Tom and April , adding , " It 's amazing to me how in such a short time , Parks & Rec has taken the most one @-@ note characters and made them truly three @-@ dimensional . "

The Star @-@ Ledger television columnist Alan Sepinwall declared " Sweetums " one of the episodes he would suggest to newcomers seeking to become familiar with Parks and Recreation . Sepinwall enjoyed the main story with Leslie and Ron , which he said " returned to a goldmine for the series : the civil servants having to deal with the insane questions and complaints from their constituents " . He also felt Tom 's subplot was impressive because it made him feel sympathy for Tom due to his problems with Wendy , despite the fact that Tom was being so inconsiderate to his friends . Sandra Gonzalez of Entertainment Weekly particularly praised Aziz Ansari and Ron Swanson , as well as the moving subplot , which she said spotlighted the show 's impressive supporting cast . Gonzalez felt the main plot " fell a little flat " , but was helped by the conflict between Leslie and Ron . Steve Kandell of New York magazine praised the episode , and said the script keeps the characters grounded without making them into caricatures .

= = DVD release = =

" Sweetums " , along with the other 23 second season episodes of Parks and Recreation , was released on a four @-@ disc DVD set in the United States on November 30 , 2010 . The DVD included deleted scenes for each episode .