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PARKS AND RECREATION

The magazine of the Illinois Association of Park Districts and the Illinois Park and Recreation Association

healthy lifestyles

PLUS: The Soaring to New Heights Conference Brochure

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FROM THE EDITOR

The New Year is a great opportunity to start healthy lifestyle changes. Healthy lifestyle improvements can mean something different for everyone. Some will modify their diet, while



others will begin an exercise regimen and certain individuals will even take the opportunity to stop smoking. For me, part of building a healthy lifestyle is diet and exercise with a friend. I find having a partner to work out with encourages me to stay motivated. I feel somehow accountable to her, even if we don't go to the gym together on a particular day. We report back to one another about our workouts and it keeps the momentum going. When we do work out together, it makes the time on the machines seem to go by faster with her by my side and the same goal in mind.

In this issue of *IP&R* magazine, we focus on healthy lifestyles for employees, the benefits of walking, modified exercise for special recreation agencies and senior fitness. These insightful stories should give you some ideas on how to make healthy lifestyles a goal at your agency or improve the programs you already have in place.

You will want to hold on to this issue and take it with you to the IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference on January 22-24. It has the information you need to get around the hotel and attend all the sessions you want to experience. It also contains the information for all the fun events that take place at the conference. I hope you enjoy this issue and I look forward to seeing you at the conference!

Rachel Laier

— Rachel Laier, Editor



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GET ON BOARD



IAPD Promotes Healthy Lifestyles with Resources You Can Use

Peter M. Murphy IAPD President and CEO

The New Year is upon us and with it typically comes resolutions for a myriad of improvements in our lives. The old adage, "practice what you preach," can be applied to the healthy lifestyles encouraged by park and recreation agencies across Illinois. For board members and park and recreational professionals, I prefer the thought of practicing what you provide and, in doing so, demonstrating your leadership to others in the community.

This year, IAPD members have never been better poised to provide solutions to some of the most pressing health concerns of children and adults alike. This is particularly true when you consider that according to the United Health Foundation, obesity is at an all-time high with about one-third of U.S. adults and 2.1 million children and adolescents categorized as obese. The health implications are startling:

- If things remain as they are today, one-third of all children born in the year 2000 or later may suffer from diabetes at some point in their lives, while many others are likely to face chronic health problems such as heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, diabetes and asthma.
- Studies indicate that overweight youth may never achieve a healthy weight, and up to 70% of obese teens may become obese adults.
- Even more worrisome, the cumulative effect could be that children born in the year 2000 or later may not outlive their parents.

Obesity isn't the only thing at an all-time high. In this digital era, the average American spends more than five hours watching television and 40 minutes a day on social media. Children are averaging at least three hours a day on electronic devices, often choosing video games and social media over athletics or other physical activities. Recent research shows that participation in youth sports is declining, as an estimated 70% of participants drop out before high school.

It doesn't take long to do the math and realize that the majority of leisure time involves sedentary activities. Research corroborates

this with approximately 12.5 million children and 2.1 million adults admitted to being physically inactive. This is unsettling considering that cardiovascular fitness is critical to preventing heart disease and stroke which are the nation's number one and number four killers.

The Illinois Association of Park Districts has been studying these trends, and we know that as with so many other societal ills, park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation and special recreation agencies are the answer. Our member agencies have the power to help people live longer, healthier lives ... but they have their work cut out for them. IAPD provides an array of resources to support your agency's efforts to revive physical activity through recreation and encourage healthy lifestyles among the citizens you serve.

"Time and health are two precious assets that we don't recognize and appreciate until they have been depleted." - Denis Waitley



IAPD's **PowerPlay! Beyond School Grant Program** is designed to initiate and support beyond-school programs that emphasize health, fitness and nutrition for children. IAPD member agencies can apply for this grant to obtain seed money to conduct a model beyondschool program or even to enhance an existing program. PowerPlay! grants are funded by the Park District Youth License Plate, a specialty plate made possible through IAPD's advocacy efforts. Since the program's inception, IAPD has awarded \$493,450 in PowerPlay! grants to our member agencies, and they are using that money to create programs designed to instill healthy habits and a love of recreation in the children of Illinois.

IAPD is currently accepting applications for the 2015 PowerPlay! grant cycle, so stop by our booth (number 503) at the *Soaring to New Heights* conference to pick up an application, or download one at ILparks.org.

In 2014, we developed the **IAPD Healthy Lifestyles Fitbit® Group** to create a community of park representatives committed to practicing what they preach by setting goals to move more through the use of a Fitbit®. The simplest, most positive change a person can make to effectively improving their heart health is to start walking. It's enjoyable, free, easy, social and overall great exercise.

A Fitbit® is a wireless-enabled wearable device that measures data such as the number of steps walked, flights of stairs climbed, quality of sleep and other personal metrics. The IAPD Fitbit® group has already taken nearly two million steps and logged nearly 800 miles! Together, this group is getting healthier, one step at a time. It is true that if you are going to 'talk the talk, then you've got to walk the walk,' and the IAPD Fitbit® Group is doing just that.

Of course, we are here to help our members 'talk the talk' with our *Healthy Lifestyles* section of the IAPD website and our **Fun Fact of the Week** in our weekly electronic newsletter, *e-News*.

The *Healthy Lifestyles* button on the Home Page of our website takes our members to a library of articles, links and tips about health, fitness and nutrition. We encourage our member agencies to pull information from *Healthy Lifestyles* to supplement health and wellness classes, use as content in program brochures or post this information throughout facilities. Likewise, the Fun Fact of the Week posting in *e-News* is offered as a downloadable .pdf so that it can be printed and shared with your employees and patrons at all of your facilities.

IAPD is partnering with other organizations statewide to increase our efforts to promote healthy lifestyles. We were an active participant in the 2014 **Illinois Youth Sports Summit**. This summit brought together key stakeholders throughout the state to set agendas for programmatic changes in youth sports that would reverse the current dropout trends by obtaining and retaining higher levels of participation. IAPD secured a Proclamation from the Governor, declaring September 23rd, 2014 as *Illinois Youth Sports Day* to bring further attention to this movement.

We often say that park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation and special recreation agencies are the hearts of their communities. It is fitting that these agencies strive to improve the 'hearts' of the citizens they serve. The parks, trails, recreation centers, sports leagues, fitness and nutrition classes that our agencies offer are doing just that. No other organizations can offer the breadth of affordable, accessible programs to improve lives.

Together, we are sharing the message that parks are the prescriptions citizens need to reverse the alarming trends of inactivity and obesity. IAPD will continue to provide the tools your agency needs to put the people of Illinois on a healthy path ... undoubtedly a path at one of our park, forest preserve or recreation agencies.

I wish you a Happy New Year.

2015 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 22-24, 2015 IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference Hyatt Regency Chicago

Thursday, February 26, 2015 **Board Presidents and Directors Workshop** Schaumburg Park District's Golf Club/ Chandler's

April-May, 2015 Flying for Kids Month Statewide Kite Fly

Tuesday, April 28, 2015 Parks Day at the Capitol Illinois State Capitol

Tuesday, April 28, 2015 Legislative Reception Illini Country Club

Wednesday, April 29, 2015 **Legislative Conference** Crowne Plaza, Springfield

Thursday, June 25, 2015 IAPD Summer Golf Tour #2 Deerfield Golf Club, Deerfield Park District Thursday, July 16, 2015 Joint Legislative Awareness Golf Outing White Pines Golf Club, Bensenville Park District

Saturday, August 22, 2015 **Park District Conservation Day** IL State Fairgrounds, Springfield

August 29, 2015 Legislative Awareness Picnic Inwood Park, Joliet Park District

September 15-17, 2015 NRPA Congress Las Vegas, NV

Friday, October 2, 2015 IAPD Best of the Best Awards Gala Chevy Chase Country Club, Wheeling Park District

Thursday, October 29, 2015 IAPD Legal Symposium McDonald's University/Hyatt Lodge

January 28-30, 2016 IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference Hyatt Regency Chicago



For the most up-to-date Calendar of Events, please visit the IAPD website at www.ILparks.org.

EYE ON THE **PROFESSION**

A CLOSER LOOK AT TRENDS AND ISSUES IN THE PARK AND RECREATION PROFESSION



See YOU at the IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference!

By Debbie Trueblood IPRA Executive Director

On behalf of the IPRA Board of Directors and staff team, we are eagerly looking forward to seeing so many of you at this year's "IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference!" For many of our members, the conference is the highlight of the year and the top rated member benefit. It is the culmination of so many volunteers coming together as one community, bound together in our passion for parks and recreation. I can't wait!

My thanks to the volunteers on the hard working Joint Conference Committee. This committee, which includes professionals from IPRA's membership and commissioners from IAPD's membership, are a passionate group of volunteers who work tirelessly on the conference for twelve months planning every detail to ensure the best conference experience. My thanks to them including IPRA Co-Chair Marty Walsh from the Vernon Hills Park District and IAPD Co-Chair Bob Schmidt from the Schaumburg Park District, and the committee: Matt Barber, WSSRA, Tom Barz, Frankfort Park District; John Curran, Tinley Park-Park District; Kevin Dolan, Mundelein Park & Recreation District; Tom Hartwig, Oak Lawn Park District; Mike Kies, Hoffman Estates Park District; Jerri-Lynn Kleina, Alsip Park District; Greg Kolinek, Advisor; Lili McGovern, Hoffman Estates Park District; John Robinson, Arlington Heights Park District; Mike Vogl, Bloomingdale Park District; John Wilson, Lan-Oak Park District; along with Conference Directors Leesa Johnson from IPRA and Sue Triphahn from IAPD.

My thanks to the dedicated Program Committee. This committee, which also includes professionals and commissioners, works to ensure that you have the best educational experience at conference. My thanks to the IPRA Program Chair, Matt Barber from WSSRA and IAPD Program Chair, Mike Vogl from the Bloomingdale Park District, and the committee: Nancy Aldrich, Arlington Heights Park District; Lisa Barrera, NEDSRA; John Chase, Bolingbrook Park District; Oralethea Davenport, Lan-Oak Park District; Matt Emken, Vernon Hills Park District; Lonette Hall, Harvey Park District; Theresa Kiel, Hoffman Estates Park District; Pat Klawitter, Arlington Heights Park District; Glen Nance, Wildwood Park District; Darleen Negrillo, NSSRA; Megan Pettit, Woodridge Park District; Jenny Porrevecchio, Lisle Park District; Dana Seehafer, NISRA; Rob Sperl, Wheaton Park District; Erika Strojinc, Buffalo Grove Park District; Stacey VanEnkevort, Arlington Heights Park District; Greg Vitale, Addison Park District; along with Conference Directors Leesa Johnson from IPRA and Sue Triphahn from IAPD.

Plus, conference would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of many onsite volunteers. We rely on their assistance in daily logistics, registration and Conference Headquarters.

This year's conference will be January 22-24 at the Hyatt Regency Chicago. There are a few exciting changes this year. First, all sessions are now 75 minutes (workshops are three hours) which will allow you a more convenient approach to choosing sessions for each time slot. There is also more dedicated time for you to visit the exhibit hall without having to miss CEU opportunities. There are 16 preconference workshops on Thursday and more than 180 sessions on Friday and Saturday, with over 325 exhibit booths.

As usual, we also have exciting entertainment planned to enhance your networking opportunities. On Thursday night, January 22, enjoy the Welcome Social featuring the band, 7th Heaven. No tickets needed, all conference attendees are welcome! On Saturday night, January 24, enjoy the annual Closing Social which will once again be at the House of Blues. If you were there last year, you remember what an exciting party it was! You don't want to miss it this year! Our band this year is Tributosaurus, a band that "tributes" all kinds of musical styles. You'll need a ticket to this exciting event.

"My thanks and congratulations to the Joint Conference Committee and the Program Committee on a successful conference. All your work is going to culminate in a successful and memorable conference that we will all remember. I look forward to seeing you all there."



And, be sure not to miss the Closing General Session on Saturday, January 24. This event called, "Apple Pancakes: A Simple Recipe for Everyday Excellence" will be presented by Kevin Brown. Kevin will be speaking on creating a culture at your organization which will motivate people to come to work with enthusiasm, joy and passion. He says, "How do you create meaningful relationships that promote transparency, trust and loyalty? How do you build an organization that defies comparison and defines world class service? The answer...Apple Pancakes!" Kevin's message is fresh, simple and entertaining. In his personal life, he is the father to an autistic son, he worked his way up to become the Assistant Vice President of Marketing for SERVPRO, an international franchise system with nearly 1700 franchise locations specializing in fire and water cleanup and restoration.

We want to thank our conference sponsors who help make the conference possible for us. Thanks to our Diamond Sponsor: Cunningham Recreation, Titanium Sponsor: W-T Engineering, Platinum Sponsor: Upland Design, our three Gold Sponsors: Links Technology Solutions, Inc., SOS Technologies, and Colonial Life, Silver Sponsor: Homer Industries, and Bronze Sponsor: SNI Consulting. We also have some other exciting events planned. We will have our annual silent auction. Proceeds go to the Illinois Park and Recreation Foundation (IPRF) to provide scholarships to professionals and college students all over the state. If you would like to make a donation or need more information, please contact Heather Weishaar at IPRA at heather@ilipra.org.

For students, we have a new special three session series called, "Future of the Field" professionals can join this session as a way to give back. We will be looking at the needs for the future of our profession. We are gathering educators, professionals and students who will engage in conversations and address the education and experience needed to successfully fill our professional positions in the park and recreation field in Illinois. We will identify and set a solid goal, objectives and assign strategies that will positively impact the future of the field.

We also have our annual event for students, "Professional Connection" where we connect students to professionals in the field to network, ask questions, and discuss ideas. Everyone who attends will enjoy complimentary pizza and soda. And, be sure to arrive early and fill out your raffle ticket for great prizes! Special recognition and sincere appreciation to IPRA's College and University Relations Committee for coordinating this year's Professional Connection. For students, we also have two opportunities to meet for Mock Interview and resume review as well as a session in "Tips in Resume Writing and Interviewing." Finally, through our Sponsor A Student Program, you can opt in to attend the All-Conference Awards Luncheon for free to network with high ranking professionals.

After the conference, our new board year will begin with Rick Hanetho as the 2015 IPRA Chair of the Board of Directors. Rick is already planning a busy year for IPRA. Additionally, we will have two new board members in 2015: At-Large Rep: Jeff Fougerousse from the Vernon Hills Park District and Southern Region Rep: George Bryant from the City of Mt. Vernon. I look forward to working with our new Chair and our new leaders.

My thanks also to Jan Hincapie, our outgoing Chair for 2014. During Jan's year as Chair, we began implementation of our new rolling five year strategic plan. We traveled together all over the state doing presentations to roll out the new strategic plan so that members everywhere could ask questions and learn about IPRA's direction. We also implemented a new governance structure which had the IPRA Board of Directors meeting in every region of the state, sharing meals with local park and recreation VIPs and regional affiliate groups. We passed out Frisbees together at the Illinois State Fair during Park District Conservation Day in Springfield and enjoyed family games at the IPRA/IAPD Joint Legislative Awareness Picnic in Joliet. We attended a Southern Illinois Park and Recreation Association (SIPRA) meeting in Mt. Vernon and enjoyed a lovely day at the Nicholas Conservatory, part of the Rockford Park District. Jan was a strong leader for us and IPRA is better today than when she started. Thank you, Jan, I enjoyed every minute of partnering with you!

I also want to thank the 2014 Board of Directors for all their time and commitment to IPRA this year: Chair Jan Hincapie, Lincolnwood Parks & Recreation Dept.; Chair-Elect Rick Hanetho, Northbrook Park District; Past Chair Allison Niemela, Batavia Park District; Secretary/Southern Region Rep. Mary Jeanne Hutchison, O'Fallon Parks and Recreation; Membership Council Representative Matthew Corso, South East Association for Special Parks and Recreation (SEASPAR); Central Region Rep Dawn Schaefer, Champaign-Urbana Special Recreation; Chicago Metro Region Rep. Rita Fletcher, Bartlett Park District; North West Region Rep. Molly Hamer, Geneseo Park District; and At Large Rep Michael Kies, Hoffman Estates Park District.

IPRA is thriving today because of the continued dedication and commitment of our volunteers. Again, my thanks and congratulations to the Joint Conference Committee and the Program Committee on a successful conference. All your work is going to culminate in a successful and memorable conference that we will all remember. I look forward to seeing you all there.

Save the Date for the Innovation Renovation Workshops

February 26, 2015 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM Innovation Renovation Workshop: Generations Chevy Chase Country Club

May 28, 2015 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM Innovation Renovation Workshop: Balance Oak Brook Park District, Central Park West

October 22, 2015 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM Innovation Renovation Workshop: People Skills Metro East Park & Recreation District

For the most up-to-date Calendar of Events, please visit the IPRA website at www.ILipra.org.

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STATEHOUSE **INSIDER**

ISSUES & INSIGHTS FROM THE LEGAL/LEGISLATIVE SCENE



Healthy Lifestyles Are a Key Part of Our Advocacy Efforts

Jason Anselment Legal/Legislative Counsel

These days, information about healthy lifestyles seems to be everywhere, though it is our nation's health problems and rising medical costs that are most often highlighted. Heart disease, childhood obesity and diabetes are just a few of the epidemics that we hear about almost daily. Recently, one of those stories caught my attention because it reminded me of a key point that we must continue to make in our advocacy efforts.

To briefly summarize the story, researchers were attempting to discover why heart bypass patients tend to have better longterm results than those who are treated with a procedure commonly known as angioplasty.' Both procedures are used to treat blockages that reduce blood flow in the heart, but a heart bypass is a major surgical procedure that requires a patient's chest to be opened, a new bypass artery to be constructed around the blocked artery and an extensive recovery period. Angioplasty is far less invasive and consists of treating a blocked artery by making a small incision and inserting a balloon to expand the vessel, thereby improving blood flow. Although there are other considerations, the more invasive heart bypass is often required for patients with more serious conditions.

With that background, why would the less healthy bypass patients be more likely to have better long-term results? Although the easy medical assumption is that heart bypasses are more effective at reducing blockages than angioplasties, these researchers discovered another possible explanation.

By looking at patients' post-surgery behaviors, they found that heart bypass patients were more likely than angioplasty patients to quit smoking and may also be more likely to begin exercising and improve their diet." In other words, patients who required a more invasive, painful surgery with a longer recovery period and a scar to remind them were more likely to change the behaviors that contributed to their disease than patients who may have had a less severe condition and had undergone a less intrusive procedure. These results are fascinating to me because they demonstrate the significance of human behavior in every aspect of our lives, including medical science. While the story is also a reminder of the critical role that local park and recreation agencies play in helping disease prevention and treatment, it contains another important lesson when it comes to our advocacy efforts and the messages we deliver. Local park and recreation agencies are best suited to meet the needs of Illinois communities when it comes to promoting healthy lifestyles because human behavior demands easy and affordable access to recreational facilities and programming. Without easy access, humans are much less likely to exercise regularly, get fit and stay healthy.

Let me share another story to illustrate. My own father survived a heart attack four years ago and had an emergency double bypass. Nearly every day since his surgery, Dad has followed his doctor's advice to exercise regularly. In fact, rarely a day goes by without him walking at least four miles. This regular daily exercise, which the CDC, the American Heart Association and others remind us may have prevented Dad's heart attack and helped his high blood pressure, was not part of his daily routine before the surgery. One significant reason was his lack of access to a suitable place to walk or exercise because there are no recreational facilities or accessible trails within proximity of my parents' home. Research shows that my father's behavior prior to his heart attack was typical. When there is not convenient and affordable access to recreational trails and other facilities, people are less active.^{III}

This is where local park and recreation agencies play a vital role. These agencies provide citizens with opportunities to change their human behavior and live healthy lifestyles by offering easy and affordable access to recreational facilities and programming. Not only does this help save lives, but the investments made in these agencies help save money by reducing the need for expensive medical procedures and other healthcare costs. When we do not make the necessary investments to ensure that programs and facilities are easily accessible and affordable, the end result costs taxpayers more in terms of healthcare expenses and, unfortunately, lives. Turning to advocacy, we cannot just assume that legislators and other community members will automatically make the connection between the accessible and affordable facilities and programming that our agencies provide and healthy lifestyles. It is important that we continue to make our role in promoting healthy lifestyles a key part of our messaging at the federal, state and local levels by taking every opportunity to remind lawmakers that convenient and affordable access to recreational programs and facilities make the difference because human behavior demands it.

While we are at it, improvements to physical health and wellness are not the only healthy lifestyle benefits that we should be touting. Mental health benefits are often disregarded, yet there is plenty of research to confirm that many of the mental health problems that plague our society could be improved through increased investments in local park and recreation agencies.^w

Likewise, I know from my many visits to member agencies and from reviewing member program guides that park and recreation agencies are making tremendous contributions to healthy lifestyles by providing access to community gardens where citizens have opportunities to grow their own healthy foods. These same agencies are also offering programs that teach healthy lifestyles through cooking courses. Learning how to prepare nutritional meals for families who lead increasingly busy lives while underscoring the importance of a healthy diet may be just as important as exercise, yet it would be easy to overlook the opportunities that park districts and other agencies provide in this area.

With the beginning of a New Year, many people will resolve to get fit and adopt healthier lifestyles. Park and recreation agencies will play a key role in helping people keep these resolutions by offering convenient and affordable access to recreational facilities and programming. As we make our own New Year's resolutions, let's commit to continuing to make our role in promoting healthy lifestyles a key part of our messaging, particularly in our advocacy efforts. Stories about health problems and costs may be everywhere, but we can ensure that our own positive stories about our role in helping to combat these problems are prolific, too!

2015 IAPD LEGISLATIVE AWARENESS SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

January 23	Soaring to New Heights Awards Luncheon
February 2	Legislative Breakfast Fox Valley Special Recreation Association
February 6	Legislative Breakfast Flagg-Rochelle Community Park District
February 9	Legislative Breakfast Park Ridge Park District
February 10	Legislative Breakfast Berwyn Park District
February 23	Legislative Breakfast Rockford Park District
March 2	Legislative Breakfast Tinley Park Park District
March 6	Legislative Breakfast Lake Bluff Park District
March 7	Legislative Breakfast Schaumburg Park District
March 9	Legislative Breakfast Urbana Park District
March 13	Legislative Breakfast Bloomingdale Park District
March 16	Legislative Breakfast Joliet Park District
March 20	Legislative Breakfast Geneseo Park District
March 23	Legislative Breakfast Decatur Park District
April 28	Parks Day at the Capitol State Capitol, Springfield
April 28	Legislative Reception Illini Country Club, Springfield
April 29	Legislative Conference Crowne Plaza, Springfield
July 16	Legislative Golf Outing Bensenville Park District
August 29	Legislative Awareness Picnic Joliet Park District

¹Vedantam, Shankar .November 18, 2014. Invasive Surgery May Motivate Patients to Adopt Healthier Behaviors. (accessed December 8, 2014 http://www.nor.org/2014/11/18/364889103/nvasive-surgery-may-motivate-patients-to-

http://www.npr.org/2014/11/18/364889103/invasive-surgery-may-motivate-patients-toadopt-healthier-behaviors).

^a Margolis, J., J. Hockenberry, M. Grossman and S. Chou. September 2014. Moral Hazard and Less Invasive Medical Treatment for Coronary Artery Disease: The Case of Cigarette Smoking (accessed December 8, 2014 http://ttp.iza.org/dp8492.pdf).

^{III} The Power of Trails for Promoting Physical Activity in Communities, Active Living Research, January 2011. (accessed December 8, 2014

http://activelivingresearch.org/files/ALR_Brief_PowerofTrails_0.pdf)

¹ Wolf, K.L., & K. Flora. 2010. Mental Health and Function - A Literature Review. In: Green Cities: Good Health (www.greenhealth.washington.edu). College of the Environment, University of Washington.

BY ERIKA YOUNG, ST. CHARLES PARK DISTRIC

WALKIIG WORK5:

SIMPLE EXERCISE BRINGS GREAT REWARDS

What would you do if someone told you there was a low-cost, easy way to feel great that didn't involve a lot of fancy equipment or expensive club memberships or personal trainers? What if someone told you that this could help you lose weight, lower your blood pressure and improve your brain power? What if someone told you this also could be a great way to get together with friends or just take some very important "me" time for yourself?





Well, you'd run right out to do it! Only, you don't have to. You can just walk to get all these benefits. Literally.

Walking for as little as a half-hour a day, five days a week can improve muscles and bones, attitudes and intelligence, according to medical experts in diverse fields, ranging from the American Public Health Association to the U.S. Surgeon General. Research conducted by the University of California, San Francisco, reports that age-related memory decline was reduced in people who regularly walked for exercise, while the Arthritis Foundation extols the virtues of walking as a balm for everything from sleeplessness to depression.

And while walking is something one can do simply by heading out the front door and putting one foot in front of the other, merely walking around the neighborhood can breed an air of familiarity and a physical repetitiveness that becomes less than stimulating. Sometimes, it helps to pick up the pace, both mentally and physically.

That's where the park districts step in. With several hundred miles of hiking trails, park districts provide many different paths from which to choose. From the urban ambiance to the woodland wilds, there are dozens of delightful places in Illinois to stroll, saunter, stride and sashay to one's heart's content.

One of the joys of walking is the sense of solitude it affords -- a chance to unwind and take stock, to consider topics both personal and global and set the world to rights with every footstep. Being out of doors in any setting provides an opportunity to reflect and reconnect with nature. Whether you bop to the beat of a motivating mix tape or set your pace to the sounds of songbirds, walking is an ideal way to turn one's focus both inward and outward.

But an equally attractive aspect of a walking regimen is the ability to do it in the company of a good friend or group of companions. Many park districts have walking groups organized for community participants. The St. Charles Park District has two such groups that meet regularly to walk and talk. They meet once or twice a month, depending on the time of year, for an hour of exercise and socialization. Each walk covers a different trail within the park district's system, and has even conducted field trips to great walking trails within the area.

Participants ages 50 and older also benefit from walking, which addresses both the physical and emotional benefits that a regular walking regimen can provide. Tips about proper form and trail etiquette can be offered. Some trail systems even provide guides, in the form of paper or a live person, to highlight its specific features. Walking in a group is a great outlet for people who don't feel comfortable walking along a public trail by themselves. Indeed, many new friendships form among the regular participants who appreciate not only gaining intimate knowledge of the park district's highways and byways, but also get to visit areas they wouldn't discover on their own.

Walkers are immersed in nature and the variety to be found in natural paths helps older walkers develop a sense of balance and sharpens their focus on their surroundings.

Many people take the same routes while walking around a park district property, but while the environment may be consistent, the experience never is. Walkers really enjoy seeing the seasons change. From wildflowers in the spring to fall foliage, there are changes to look for every time you go out.

Walking groups foster opportunities for socialization among regulars and newcomers alike. Walking is an activity that just seems to lend itself to camaraderie. St. Charles staff have seen many friendships develop throughout the years.

Lilian Sostak, an enthusiastic walker who has been a part of one St. Charles group since it's inception, appreciates not only the stimulation walking outdoors brings, but also the chance to meet new people.

"I didn't know anyone in the group when I started," says Sostak. "Now, we're friends and we'll sometimes do things together outside of the group, like field trips to area parks and nature sites, for instance." The variety of walking experiences in St. Charles also appeals to Sostak, who looks forward to seeing the changes from season to season and year to year. "It's never the same walk twice."

Sostak is on to something. From Alzheimer's to arthritis, medical specialists tout the benefits walking in nature can bring. Being in daylight helps improve one's mood and general sense of well-being, maintain proper circadian rhythms that reduce stress, and boost mental energy, especially after prolonged periods indoors.

But walking in a wild, jungle-like setting – either urban or Amazonian – won't necessarily do the trick, since danger can pop up out of nowhere. Environmental psychologists say people feel most comfortable walking in spaces that combine grassy areas and trees.

So, what are you waiting for? Lace up those sneakers and go take a walk!

.ILparks.org January/Febru



Our mission is to encourage healthy physical activity in people of all ages, and reverse the consequences of a sedentary lifestyle in order to improve the health and well-being of the country. Walk with a Doc was created by Dr. David Sabgir, a board-certified cardiologist who practices with Mount Carmel Clinical Cardiovascular Specialists—at Mount Carmel St. Ann's. Dr. Sabgir's walking program is dedicated to each one of you and your commitment to improve your health and well-being.

Walk with a Doc is a grassroots effort begun in 2005 and organized by physicians to bring the benefits of regular exercise and healthy nutrition to the general public. Walk with a Doc programs consist of a brief introduction and educational talk by a physician/health care provider (HCP) followed by simple refreshments and a walk on a public trail or in a park where the pace/distance is self-determined. Sites are tailored to the local team organizing the chapter, however, many organizers check blood pressures, provide pedometers, and answer questions prior to the walk. The sites around the United States are primarily weekly, some however, are biweekly or monthly.

Physicians engaged in this program have found that participants increased their level of regular weekly physical activity, gained knowledge (from both the talk and a national educational newsletter), and became empowered to take care of their own health. Additional benefits reported by Walk with a Doc guests include a high level of camaraderie, increased energy, and they feel safer when walking in their communities. The participants feel they are happier and feel motivated to make a difference.

The need to reduce obesity and to promote the benefits of regular exercise and healthy nutrition have never been greater. National studies have repeatedly shown the sharp rise in chronic overweight and obese conditions in the American public, and these well-documented health conditions continue to grow, increasing the impacts of related chronic disease conditions. One provable, workable solution to addressing this health crisis is the Walk with a Doc program, a nation-wide effort led by volunteer physicians and health professionals to encourage regular physical activity and walking for health. In 2013, WWAD held 2392 walks and reached close to 100,000 walkers. The physicians who have committed to this program and the many additional volunteers found in a recent 3-month study that before participating in Walk with a Doc: 55% of participants were active 2 or less times a week, 45% active 3 or more times a week, and 24.2% were doing additional activity.

After participating in the program 88% were doing additional activity and 82% were active 3 or more times a week with additional activity. In addition, our participants decreased their BMI by 1.4% and less participants were in Hypertensive Stages 1 and 2. This program is a measureable, workable solution to addressing individual and community health concerns. According to the American Heart Association, walking has the lowest dropout rate of any physical activity. Think it doesn't do any good? Think again. Walking for as little as 30 minutes a day can have the following health benefits:

- Reduce the risk of coronary heart disease
- Improve blood pressure and blood sugar levels
- · Maintain body weight and lower the risk of obesity
- Enhance mental well-being
- Improve blood lipid profile
- Reduce the risk of osteoporosis
- · Reduce the risk of breast and colon cancer
- Reduce the risk of Type 2 diabetes

Walking is low impact; easier on the joints than running. It is safewith a doctor's ok - for people with orthopedic ailments, heart conditions, and those who are more than 20% overweight. In addition, research has shown that you could gain two hours of life for each hour of regular exercise! That quick stroll around the block seems a little more worthwhile now, doesn't it? Make walking part of your regimen!

For more information on Walk with a Doc, visit www.walkwithadoc.org or email at contact@walkwithadoc.org to receive a weekly newsletter.

Top 25 Reasons to walk:

- 1. Reduces blood pressure
- 2. Lowers cholesterol
- 3. Increases high-density lipoprotein (HDL or "good" cholesterol)
- 4. Reduces heart attacks (by 86% combined with other factors)
- 5. Increases efficiency of heart
- 6. Makes our heart muscle stronger
- 7. Lowers heart rate
- 8. Strengthens lungs
- 9. Improves respiratory function
- 10. Improves cardiovascular endurance and performance
- 11. Provides more oxygen to body, including organs and muscles
- 12. Provides more nutrient supply to the body
- 13. Reduces strokes (by up to 50%)
- 14. Helps to alleviate varicose vein pain
- 15. Increases your metabolism
- 16. Stimulates digestion
- 17. Makes digestion more efficient
- 18. Stimulates intestinal movements, resulting in better elimination of wastes
- 19. Reduces chances for colon cancer
- 20. Strengthens and develops muscles
- 21. Increases efficiency of muscles
- 22. Benefits joints due to stronger muscles
- 23. Helps maintain cartilage health in the joints
- 24. Eases muscular tension
- 25. Alleviates back problems

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-Oakbrook Terrace Park District

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By **Anna Broccolo**, South Suburban Special Recreation Association

Lifestyles for Everyone

South Suburban Special Recreation Association (SSSRA) is proud to offer a variety of programs that focus on healthy lifestyles and activities. Our programs are available for children and adults with special needs.

Our early childhood and youth participants have the opportunity to register for ice skating lessons or adapted dance, which focuses on dance basics and positive peer interaction. Parent-tot swim is a great way for parents to exercise with their child, while the child learns basic skills such as paddling, kicking and blowing bubbles.

Our early childhood and youth participants have the opportunity to register for ice skating lessons or adapted dance, which focuses on dance basics and positive peer interaction.



Junior Hoopsters and Junior Strikers are two transition programs that prepare our younger athletes for Special Olympics basketball and Special Olympics soccer. These programs teach techniques through a variety of drills, and assist in developing skills such as shooting a basketball, kicking a soccer ball and dribbling up and down the court or field. Another early introduction to sports and to the world of Special Olympics is Young Athletes[™], a unique sport and play program for children with intellectual disabilities. The focus is on fun activities that are important to mental and physical growth. Children enjoy games and activities that develop motor skills and hand-eye coordination.

Our summer day camp also highlights physical activity, with campers enjoying swim days, completing morning stretches and playing outdoors. In SSSRA's Adventurer's Camp, campers ages 9 - 13 practiced yoga each morning.

Adults are able to sign up for exercise and cooking programs, such as Healthy Eaters. Each week, the group prepares healthy snacks, while discussing the importance of diet and exercise, and how to choose food that will provide the best nutrition. This fall, Healthy Eaters made many delicious snacks, including turkey and cheese wraps with fat free turkey and low calorie, low carb, high fiber wraps. Wraps were filled with cucumbers, lettuce, tomatoes and a dash of lite ranch dressing to show the participants that the more vegetables you add, the more it will fill them up. Healthy Eaters has also prepared grilled turkey burgers, fruit salad, turkey tacos, chewy granola bars and candy corn parfaits for a sweet treat. These parfaits were made with sugar free pudding, lite cool whip, mandarin oranges and 5 pieces of candy corn. Participants learned that dessert can taste great even when it is low calorie, and eating candy is fine when in moderation.

SSSRA also offers yoga classes. Our yoga program helps increase flexibility, balance, and overall physical and mental wellness. Poses and breathing techniques are taught. Whether a participant is completely new to yoga or if they have practiced for years, this class welcomes all levels.

Weight lifting and water aerobics is a great program that leaves participants feeling energized and in shape. Half of the time is spent in the pool, working on core muscle strengthening and overall body conditioning. The remaining time is in the weight room, working on cardiovascular exercises as well as overall strength training. Kickboxing is a great way to get fit, by combining martial arts and aerobic exercise. Kicking and punching combinations will tone muscles and increase cardiovascular endurance. Using the trail around the SSSRA office, Couch to 5K participants get fresh air, while enhancing endurance and achieving longer run or walk distances. The goal at the end of the season is to participate in South West Special Recreation Association's 2015 Walk, Run, or Roll 1/2 mile race. Our first place winner from 2013 was asked, "How does it feel to be the fastest runner at the event?" He responded, "It feels great, but it feels even better to be part of such a great team."

SSSRA has partnered with Step Up Dance Academy and their experienced instructors to offer Zumba® this spring. Zumba® combines high energy music with dance and aerobic moves that allow participants to have fun while getting a workout. Zumba's® choreography includes hip hop, salsa, mambo, martial arts and many others. This is a fun and easy class that requires no dance experience.

Gym Walkers is one of our fitness programs for adults with severe and profound disabilities. The gym is a perfect place to get moving and release some energy, while having fun in a structured environment. Warm-ups, stretching and walking to music are the main activities in this program. In addition to exercise, Gym Walkers also enhances socialization and gross motor skills.

Adults with physical disabilities have a new opportunity this spring with adapted swimming. Each week, swimmers will work to complete a workout schedule in the water. Basic strokes such as free style and back stroke will be incorporated so swimmers can work to enhance their strokes while getting a low impact workout.

SSSRA is proud to be offering a program to support injured veterans of all armed forces. Through a partnership with the Homewood-Flossmoor Park District, Oak Forest Park District, Tinley Park-Park District, and SSSRA, Healthy Minds Healthy Bodies has been offered since 2013. This program gives a fitness center membership to a veteran with a disability rating of 10% or higher for one year, a membership for a training partner for one year, and ten personal training sessions for the veteran. During the first year of the program, nineteen (19) veterans have participated. Along with the goal of improved physical fitness, the program assists the veteran with reintegration into the community and building self-esteem.

Our office staff also work together to maintain a healthy lifestyle. A salad club has been organized to keep our lunches healthy, and many of our staff use their lunch break to utilize the walking trail around our office. Our friendly competition around the office helps keep one another accountable for making better food choices, increases motivation and enhances a positive work environment.

We are also excited about the SSSRA volleyball team that is made up of several full-time and part-time staff. Making the commitment for some friendly competition each week has encouraged and supported our goal of being "All one team."

SSSRA is a therapeutic recreation program that is an extension of eight park districts and three recreation and parks departments. It is organized to provide individuals with disabilities or special needs, the opportunity to be involved in year-round recreation. The association celebrated 40 years of service to the community last year.

SSSRA Mission Statement

To promote the power of choice and to enhance the quality of life of individuals of all abilities, by providing accessible recreation in an environment that promotes dignity, success and fun.

Please call 815-806-0384 or visit www.sssra.org for more information about South Suburban Special Recreation.

WebXtra

Gearing Up Your Senior Fitness Programming

By Jennifer Peldrack, Palatine Park District

Where do most adults over age 65 go for exercise classes? Where do most adults over age 65 go to exercise on their own? What percentage of Illinois adults over age 65 are looking to begin an exercise program next year?

In the park district community, it should not come as a surprise that 80% of independent adults over age 65 exercise with local park districts and senior centers. Although only about 44% of those independent adults exercise now, almost 70% of them plan to do so in 2015.

Read the Full Stories Online

Go to ILparks.org and select Publications/IP&R Magazine/WebXtras from the left column.



Also read additional articles on healthy lifestyles online

Go to ILparks.org and select Publications/IP&R Magazine

Employee Wellness Programs – Practice What You Preach

By Janet K. Zatto, Fountain View Fitness at the Carol Stream Park District

Wellness for Life By Traci Munkvold & Kristin Knutson, Channahon Park District

Clark County Article By Charity Murphy, Clark County Park District

Mundelein Article By Margaret Resnick, Mundelein Park & Recreation District

The Staff That Plays Together, Stays Together By Maddie Kelly, Oak Lawn Park District

Beyond the Strolling Garden: Wellness Parks for Older People By MM Tyson, Upland Design





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Promoting Wellness & Fighting Obesity One Community at a Time."

How Park Districts fire Promoting Healthy Lifestyles Through Their Employees

PARK CENTER HEALTH & FITNESS

Park districts are in the business of providing healthy recreational opportunities to the public. From expansive community-based fitness facilities to spirited youth sports leagues to beautiful parks and walking paths, our industry is continually focusing on how to promote happy and healthy lifestyles. However, what about our fellow team members who are behind the creation and management of these programs and facilities? How are those people being encouraged to live a healthy lifestyle? Those people, by the way, are the thousands of parks and recreation employees, like you and me.

By Beth Gosnell, Glenview Park District

The Glenview Park District (GPD) takes great pride in the many healthy lifestyle offerings it has for its local participant's right in our community. This includes active youth and adult sports programs, boasting 6,500 participants. We have a bustling fitness facility with 5,000 members, 120 group fitness classes per week and an average of 1,000 personal training hours per month. There are also the 25 miles of paved scenic walking/running paths throughout the GPD's numerous outdoor parks.

While GPD has had many community health and wellness successes, our leadership team wanted to create a new initiative for the district; to become a leader in the area of employee health and wellness. This initiative helped spark the creation of the Glenview Park District's employee based Fun Committee and Wellness Team. What was unique about these groups is that they would be tasked with creating continual employee health to wellness programs, not just short-term events. The goal was to have GPD employees buy-in and truly live the healthy lifestyle that they were so successfully programming and facilitating for the community. "Some districts might shy away from creating employee based groups like this," says Executive Director Chuck Balling. "I believe they're beneficial because they help create healthier employees who can better serve our community and build camaraderie among different facilities and departments."

Head of the Fun Committee, Superintendent of Special Facilities, Cheryl Deom, is in agreement with Chuck. "I think one of the biggest problems in our field is that everyone is so busy programming for the community and others, they don't find time to be healthy for themselves." The Fun Committee had an objective to help solve this problem. Its objective was to promote fun in the workplace and create a sense of fellowship through planned events, which would get employees active and engaged. "Almost every Fun Committee event has an active, healthy ingredient to it," says Cheryl. "We want employees to have fun and socialize, but we don't want to have events that facilitate only sitting around and talking." Some of the Fun Committee events include soccer, broomball, paddle tennis lessons, 9 hole golf foursomes, dodgeball, softball, ice skating, relay races, employee picnics and more. "What's great about these events is that they expose employees to active opportunities they may have never had the confidence or time to try," says Cheryl.

Another unique focus of the Fun Committee is to expose employees to the different facilities within the GPD. The committee makes it a point to plan events that can be held at changing venues throughout the year. According to Cheryl, "one of the great things to come from the Fun Committee is that it has taken down the silos between different facilities. Employees have a better understanding of our facilities and each other."

Some additional fun facts about the Fun Committee are:

- With the exception of one event, all events are open to both full and part-time employees.
- It is a committee of eight members, which consist of at least three supervisory employees and three hourly employees, from various park district facilities.
- Members are rotated out every two years to encourage fresh ideas and expose different employees to being actively involved in the committee.

The Fun Committee at the Glenview Park District is complimented by the Wellness Team, which creates events focused on overall employee well-being, both mentally and physically. Human Resource Manager, Laila Bashia, heads the Wellness Team GPD. "By creating a Wellness Team, it has helped us to create customized wellness programs for our employees. We can focus on their specific needs, wants and requests," says Laila.

One of the more popular customized Wellness Team programs was "Reach for the Rings!" Reach for the Rings was an employee wellness program, themed after the 2014 Winter Olympics. Throughout the five-month program, employees would learn about five different health rings: fitness, food, mind/balance, finance and social. The goal was to have employees build upon their overall health by putting together each ring to create or maintain a healthy lifestyle. Prior to the start of the program, employees were surveyed on the five rings to determine the GPD's overall health medal; silver, gold or bronze. After participating in the various health ring programs, employees were surveyed again to see if the district earned a higher medal. So did they? They did!

According to Laila, "The Wellness Team has definitely helped start a conversation about wellness that carries through our workday. We have put wellness on the radar for our employees and helped change behaviors." The Wellness Team has helped promote and introduce wellness screenings, employee only fitness classes, lunch & learn seminars and healthy recipe exchanges. Since the GPD is a PDRMA Health Program Member Agency, the Wellness Team also facilitates to the district's employees many of the new and engaging PDRMA wellness programs, such as Walktober and P.A.T.H.

Some additional fun facts about the Wellness Team are:

- It is a team of five full-time employee members from various park district facilities.
- Employee wellness ambassadors have been appointed throughout the district at various locations, making health and wellness more accessible to employees.
- The team focuses on constant wellness communication, via email, seminars, programs and events to create and maintain a healthy lifestyle mindset for employees, not just a short-term fad.

The GPD has had significant long-term success with the creation of the Fun Committee and Wellness Team. Almost seven years later, yes seven, both groups are still providing ongoing healthy lifestyle programming and events for their fellow employees. Employees are more active and educated on maintaining healthy lifestyles. Employee relationships are stronger and there is a greater sense of belonging to the GPD, for both full and part-time employees. If we as parks and recreation employees are not living healthy and balanced lives, how can we successfully promote and program that lifestyle for others? There is something to be said about being actively involved in what you are promoting and the Fun Committee and Wellness Team have brought that to life, a healthy one, for the GPD employees. Think about taking their lead and doing the same for your district's employees and make it fun too!

PEOPLE & PLACES



Robert O'Shaughnessy Named as Worth Park District's New Director of Parks and Recreation

Robert O'Shaughnessy graduated from Eastern Illinois University with a B.S. in recreation administration. At Eastern, Robert was active with the recreation club and was the IPRA student section director his senior year. Robert was presented with the William G. Riordan Award in recognition of being the outstanding student in the department.

Robert's experience spans over 25 years. He has worked at all levels with the Morton Grove, Havana, and Dixon Park Districts and the Munster (Indiana) Parks and Recreation Department. Robert also worked for the Northeast DuPage Special Recreation Association (NEDSRA), and considers that one of the most rewarding experiences in his career.

Robert has developed and managed quality and profitable programs and services. He has written and secured various grants in the millions of dollars; and has supervised and overseen park development projects and renovations. Robert also experienced government from the "citizen side of the fence," having served once as a city Alderman. Robert was also the recipient of the 2011 Distinguished Alumni Award by the Department of Parks and Recreation Administration, Eastern Illinois University.



Buffalo Grove Park District Names Ryan Risinger as New Executive Director

Ryan Risinger has been named the executive director for the Buffalo Grove Park District. Prior to his promotion, Ryan was the deputy director. Ryan has been with Buffalo Grove since 1992 where he previously held positions of recreation supervisor, superintendent of recreation and director of recreation and facilities.

Ryan earned his bachelor's degree in parks and recreation from Illinois State University, and will earn his master's degree in public administration from Villanova in the summer of 2015.

Ryan has attended Indiana's Executive Development program, North Carolina State's School of Sports Management at Oglebay, Disney Institute's Keys to Success and Customer Loyalty programs and he is a Certified Park and Recreation Executive. Ryan is also a member of the Rotary Club of Buffalo Grove.



Golf Maine Park District Welcomes John Jekot as Their New Director

John Jekot has over 16 years of parks and recreation experience along with 7 years of working in a corporate environment. He came to the Golf Maine Park District from St. John Brebeuf where he served as their event coordinator and also held a similar position at St. Michael in Old Town. John was also the superintendent of recreation for the Lindenhurst Park District, athletic and facility supervisor for the Niles Park District, where he was promoted to assistant superintendent of recreation. John also spent time with the Forest Preserve of Cook County and was the assistant manager at Brunswick Zone-River Grove. He also was sales manager for Awards International.

John earned a bachelor's degree in leisure studies from Northeastern Illinois University. He is also a Certified Parks and Recreation Professional and attended Revenue Sources Management School at Oglebay Park/Wilson Lodge along with Executive Development School at Indiana University. John also serves the Village of Niles as a trustee. Prior to being a village trustee, John served 14 years as a member of the East Maine School District Board of Education. John is currently the president of the Optimist Club of Niles, a position he has held for many years.



Community Park District of La Grange Park Welcomes Aleks Briedis as **Executive Director**

After working extensively with the Illinois Association

of Park Districts, the Board of Commissioners of the Community Park District of La Grange Park has hired Aleks Briedis to serve as its next executive director. He will begin employment in early January 2015. Aleks has more than 14 years of experience in parks and recreation. He served as the recreation director for the City of Rifle, Colorado for 14 years and most recently as the director of community recreation for the Batavia Park District for six months.

Aleks holds a bachelor's degree in leisure studies from the University of Illinois. During his tenure at Rifle, he was instrumental in formulating visionary concepts and creating successful and fiscally vibrant projects for the community. With his diverse experience Aleks is eager to lead the Community Park District of La Grange Park.



Lindenhurst Park District Announces the **Retirement of Tom** Lippert

Tom Lippert has served as the executive director since 1992. Prior to that, he served as director of parks

and recreation, superintendent of recreation, and superintendent of parks, in Niles (twice), Deerfield, Skokie, and Hickory Hills Park Districts; spanning 38 years. Lindenhurst Park District, established in 1988 and one of the youngest park districts in the state, started with a few inherited Village parks and no facilities. During Tom's tenure in Lindenhurst he increased parks with many different recreational amenities by 75%, added a variety of facilities, including a 26,000 sq. ft. phased community center without referendum, under a tax cap, and limited EAV. Tom was able to do this by securing over \$7 million dollars in grants, several million in impact fees from residential developers, large community support and intergovernmental cooperation. Lindenhurst Park District was one of the fastest growing park districts in Lake County, Illinois during the 1990's and early 2000's, under Tom's leadership. Tom was active early on with IPRA and MIPE, serving on various committees, including director of the PNRM Section and president of MIPE. Tom also received MIPE's Professional of the Year Award.



Pekin Park District Names Cameron Bettin as Executive Director

After conducting a search with the Illinois Association of Park Districts, the Pekin Park District has hired **Cameron Bettin** as its next executive director. Cameron began employment on December 8^{m} .

With more than 25 years of experience in the park and recreation field, he worked nearly 10 of those years at the Plainfield Park District. He also held positions with the Wheaton and Waukegan Park Districts. In 2013, Cameron received the Professional of the Year Award for Parks and Natural Resource Management.

He holds a master's degree in landscape architecture from Ball State University and a bachelor's degree from Southern Illinois University. Cameron has attended the NRPA Directors School as well as Indiana University's executive development program.



Roy Cripe Retires from the Community Park District of La Grange Park

Roy Cripe, began his retirement on January 1st after serving six and a half years as executive director for the Community Park District of La Grange Park. Prior to La Grange Park, Roy served as executive director for the Darien, Lisle, Oak Brook and Burr Ridge Park Districts. His career started in 1973 as a recreation supervisor for the Downers Grove Park District. He also served as the superintendent of recreation for the Westmont Park District.

Roy said that he is grateful and very lucky to have met and worked with wonderfully dedicated colleagues, visionary board members and especially supportive residents while positive initiatives were being accomplished. He wishes all who promote the parks and recreation movement continued success as the lives of constituents are enriched through quality programs and services.



Pekin Park District Announces the Retirement of Bob Blackwell

After 36 years of devoted service, **Bob Blackwell** has retired from the Pekin Park

District. From 1978 to 1983, he served in various capacities as arena and pool manager, special facilities manager, and superintendent of recreation and facilities manager. From 1983 to 2014, Bob worked as the executive director where he made great strides in meeting the needs of a growing community by providing valuable recreational programs, facilities and open space that have enhanced the quality of life for residents of all age groups and abilities.

Under Bob's leadership and guidance, the Pekin Park District was expanded to include the development of Dragonland Water Park, Coal Miners Park and, most recently, the new 80-acre Pekin Park Sports Complex. In 2003 and 2012, he sought to protect the McNaughton, Dirksen and Independence parks. Bob will be remembered as a dedicated professional who built a district with his vision and leadership.



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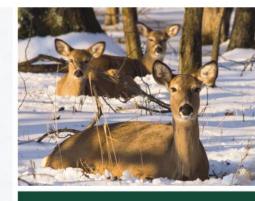


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