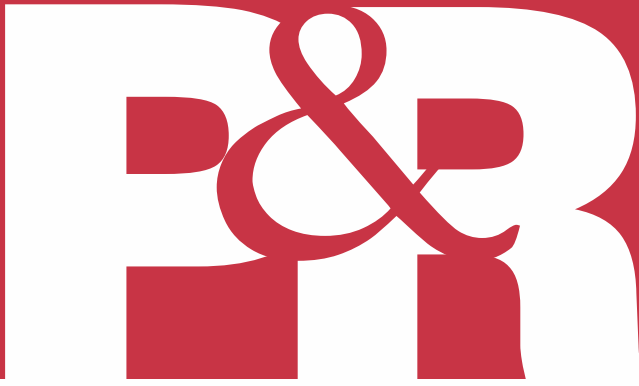


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PARKS AND RECREATION

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

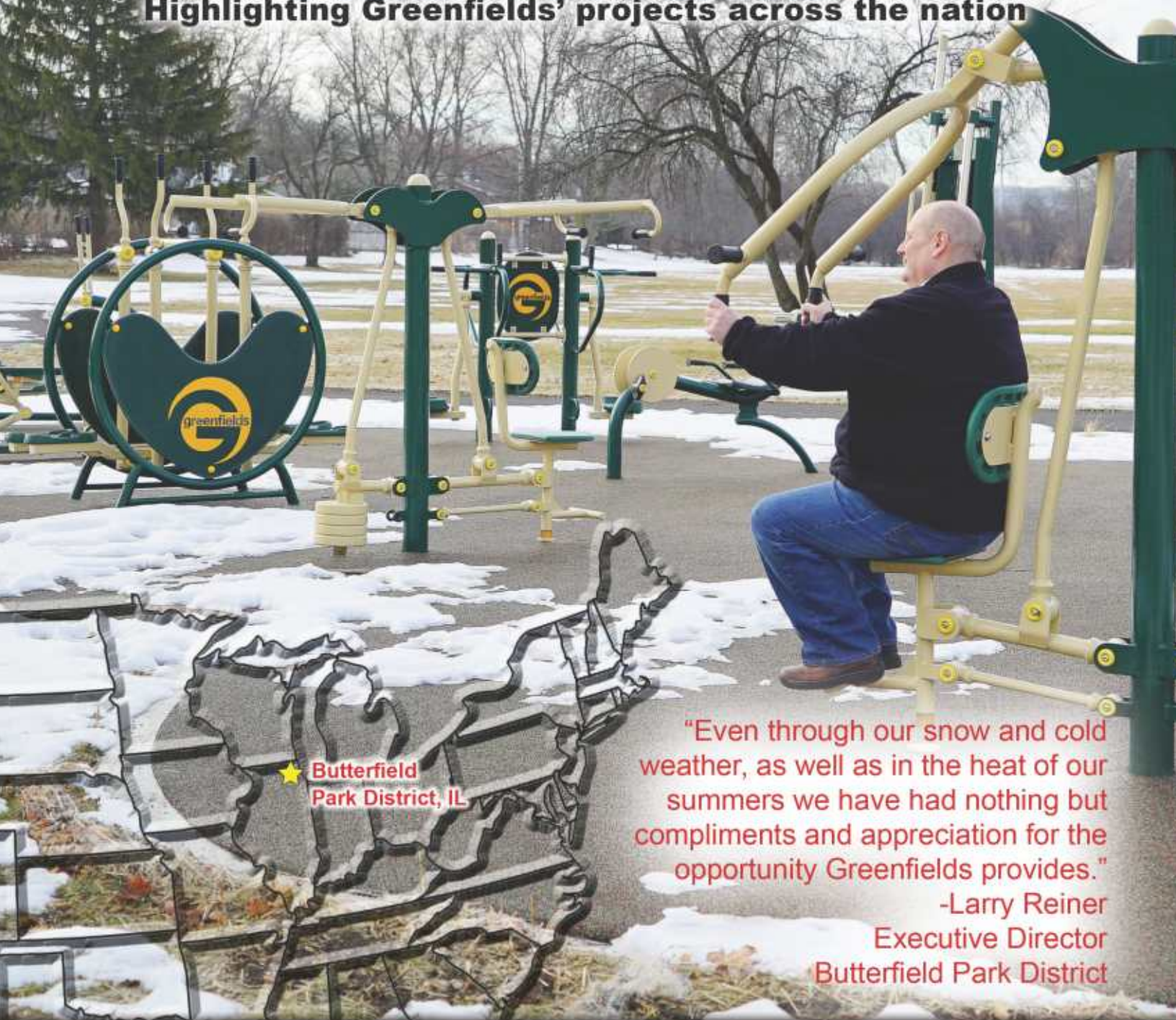


hot fitness trends

PLUS: 2018 Soaring to New Heights Conference Program

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-Larry Reiner
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Use this program to plan your conference experience and bring it with you to Chicago!



FROM THE EDITOR

Our parks and the amenities they offer are at the heart of the communities they serve. The programs and activities have many benefits, but perhaps none more important than the opportunity to encourage healthy lifestyles. As the residents of our communities are setting New Year resolutions and fitness goals there is a great opportunity to showcase the parks, trails, recreation centers, sports leagues, fitness and nutrition classes that our agencies offer. Whether encouraging people to just go outside or providing structured programs and activities, our parks can be an important part of achieving fitness resolutions, and now is your time to shine!



One of the keys to successfully keeping fitness resolutions is finding healthy activities that your guests truly enjoy and are passionate about. For me, working with a personal trainer was the motivation I needed to get going and keep moving! Working together, my trainer was able to help me recover from an injury and also develop a real passion for working out that I had never had before.

Many park districts offer personal training programs and this is a great way to establish realistic fitness goals and then methodically work to attain them. A personal trainer can help people of all levels of ability and fitness work at their own pace and offer inspiration to stay on track with whatever program is established.

This issue is stuffed full of hot trends in fitness, nutrition and even new ways to exercise these are all fun ideas for agencies may be able to use! So, New Year fitness resolutions might be as simple as getting outside more and enjoying what nature has to offer. Illinois' parks and trails are full of adventure waiting to happen and beautiful sights welcoming exploration. We have so much to offer that keeping fitness resolutions truly can be a walk in the park.

Warm regards,

— Rachel Laier, Editor

P.S.

Don't forget to save this issue of the magazine --- the long-awaited, much anticipated, premier, original version of the Soaring to New Heights Conference Program is located within these pages --- So, please, bring this to Conference! (Trust me with all the great info in here you will be glad you did.) See you at the conference!



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Peter M. Murphy, Esq., CAE, IOM
IAPD President and CEO

A Legacy of Innovation and Excellence

The Illinois Association of Park Districts is committed to providing our members with the highest level of service and support through advocacy, public awareness, education, programs and service. Looking back at 2017, I am proud of our accomplishments and grateful for your continued loyalty.

I wanted to share some of our many successes throughout the last year. Our annual report, which can be seen online at ILparks.org, contains the full Year In Review. Here are some of the highlights.

Advocacy

- Successfully advocated for the passage of House Bill 3120/Public Act 100-0154, which helps all member agencies and their taxpayers save hundreds of dollars every year by providing the option to publish the prevailing wage notice on their website rather than in the newspaper.
- Advocated for an important amendment to Senate Bill 81 which proposed to increase the minimum wage to \$15 per hour. IAPD's amendment increased the teen worker exemption from \$.50 to \$3.00 per hour. Although the Governor vetoed the underlying bill, this amendment will be valuable to our advocacy efforts.
- Persisted as a strong and consistent voice of local government to articulate the short-sightedness of property tax freeze legislation. In addition to testifying during committee hearings and maintaining constant vigilance during special session days, including weekends and holidays, IAPD continued to develop grassroots advocacy resources and kept members apprised of the latest developments through Legislative Updates and Alerts.

Public Awareness

- More than 250 guests joined IAPD for the 11th annual *Best of the Best Awards Gala*. This prestigious event garnered positive news stories and honored on a statewide basis park commissioners, businesses, media and citizen volunteers who contribute their time, talents and resources to the park, recreation and conservation agencies.

- The 24th annual *Park District Conservation Day* featured media interviews by IAPD staff and brought nearly 400 representatives of Illinois park, recreation, and conservation agencies to the Illinois State Fair to showcase their programs to more than 51,000 fairgoers at various high traffic areas throughout the fairgrounds.
- *Parks Day at the Capitol* reached full capacity with more than 50 IAPD member agencies showcasing their programs, services and natural areas with the theme: *Discover the Power of Park Districts and Forest Preserves*.

"Perfect alignment
can yield
extraordinary things."



Education

- IAPD presented over 40 educational programs in 2017. One of our most popular seminars are the *Boot Camps* for the newly-elected or appointed board members and seasoned commissioners to learn about board member roles, legislative advocacy, park district finances and the Open Meetings and Freedom of Information Acts.
- More than 100 people participated in IAPD's complimentary webinars *Maximize Your Investment Income with IPDLAF+* and *Energy Efficiency Programs for Illinois Park Districts/Saving Money and talking Energy Efficiency with Rebates*.
- The *39th Annual Legislative Conference and Reception* featured more than 300 attendees who networked with legislators and learned how to use research and data to make their agency's case and gained information on commissioner/professional roles in legislative advocacy.

- IAPD's 2017 *Legal Symposium* featured a power-packed agenda for more than 300 in attendance that provided the sold-out audience access to top legal experts who guided them through the hottest topics in park district law including employment and labor law updates, best practices for minimizing cyber liability, legal regulation of First Amendment-protected expression in public parks, responding to requests to administer medication to minors and change of use or private use of bond-financed park facilities.

Programs

- IAPD member agencies received \$34,000 in *PowerPlay!* grants this year. **\$630,450 is the total amount of *PowerPlay!* grants IAPD has awarded to its member agencies since the *Park District Youth License Plate Program*, which funds the grant, began.**
- IAPD continued to negotiate money-saving relationships with several organizations with our Affinity Programs to offer our member agencies discounted prices on products and services.

Research

Conducted research on the W-2 data of members and published individual agency and statewide results.

Service

IAPD uses a team approach with commissioners, professionals and staff to provide programs designed to align with our members' mission, goals and objectives.

- New Commissioner Tool Kits titled, *Make the Most of Your Illinois Association of Park Districts Membership* were mailed to new commissioners with a new board member checklist, an IAPD fact sheet, a member benefit summary and a directory of the IAPD Board of Trustees and staff.
- IAPD's *Board Development and Self-Evaluation Program* continued to increase in popularity with more than 70 board self-evaluations completed to date. This valuable service provides boards with assistance in defining roles and responsibilities, describing duties for oversight and governance and determining leadership within their agencies.
- The *Board Member Development Program* continued to enable board members to track their accomplishments through the accumulation of Board Development Units and the advancement through three levels of achievement: Notable, Distinctive and Master Board Member.

In 2017, we dedicated ourselves to helping our members thrive and we will continue this commitment to excellence in 2018 as we celebrate IAPD's 90th year of service to its membership.

2018 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 18-20, 2018
IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference
Hilton Chicago

Tuesday, April 24, 2018
Parks Day at the Capitol
10am – 3pm

Tuesday, April 24, 2018
Legislative Conference Reception
Illini Country Club,
Springfield
6pm – 7:30pm

Wednesday, April 25, 2018
Legislative Conference
Crowne Plaza, Springfield
8am – 2pm

May 2018
IAPD Summer Golf Outing #1
TBD

Thursday, May 10, 2018
Leadership Institute The Foundations of Leadership – “They” Know It when “They” See It! Workshop
Hoffman Estates Park
District's Bridges of Poplar Creek Country Club
6pm – 9pm

June 2018
IAPD Summer Golf Outing #2
TBD

Thursday, July 12, 2018
Leadership Classic Bensenville Park District's
White Pines Golf Club
11:30am Shotgun Start

Thursday, July 19, 2018
Leadership Institute YOUR “Someday” is NOW – The Power of Positivity! Webinar
11am – 12Noon

Thursday, August 2, 2018
Leadership Institute Core Leadership Skills that Lead to Respect and Harmony Webinar
11am – 12Noon

Saturday, August 18, 2018
Park District Conservation Day
IL State Fairgrounds,
Springfield

Monday, August 27, 2018
IAPD Summer Golf Tour Outing #3
GolfVisions Management, Inc.
Oak Grove Golf Course

Thursday, October 4, 2018
Launching Successful Leaders: “Can I hear YOU?” Recharging YOUR Communication Skills Workshop
Hoffman Estates Park
District's Bridges of Poplar Creek Country Club
6pm – 9pm

September 2018
IAPD Summer Golf Outing #4
TBD

September 25-27, 2018
NRPA Congress
Indianapolis, IN

Friday, October 12, 2018
IAPD Best of the Best Awards Gala
Wheeling Park District's
Chevy Chase Country Club

Thursday, November 8, 2018
Legal Symposium
McDonald's University /
Hyatt Lodge

January 24-26, 2019
IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference
Hyatt Regency Chicago

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Illinois Association of Park Districts

EYE ON THE PROFESSION

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



By Debbie Trueblood, CAE
IPRA Executive Director

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

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 Mike Kies and IAPD Co-Chair Tom Barz, and the committee: IPRA Operations Co-Chair Carlo Capalbo, IPRA Exhibits Co-Chair John Curran, IPRA Operations Chair Andrew Dallner, IAPD Program Chair Kevin Dolan, IAPD Events Chair Eric Entler, IAPD Exhibits Co-Chair Adriane Johnson, IAPD Operations Chair Jerri-Lynn Kleina, IAPD Operations Co-Chair Lori Palmer, IPRA Program Chair John Robinson, IPRA Events Chair Kevin Romejko, IAPD Exhibits Chair Bob Schmidt, and IPRA Exhibits Chair John Wilson, along with Conference Directors Leesa Kuo Johnson from IPRA and Sue Triphahn from IAPD.

My thanks to the dedicated IPRA Program Committee. This committee works to ensure that you have the best educational experience at conference. My thanks to IPRA Program Chair John Robinson and IAPD Program Chair Kevin Dolan, and the committee: Erin Chapa, John Chase, Liz Cox, Caitlin Deptula, Mat Emken, Nikki Ginger, Andrea Griffin, Lonette Hall, Kim Hansen, Carol Heafey, Tammy Hoggatt, Pat Klawitter, Jennifer Knitter, Ken McEwen, Darleen Negrillo, Matt Netrefa, Megan Pettit, Laura Reinke-Cavazos, Marlon Rodas, John Short, Rob Sperl, and Erika Strojinc along with Conference Directors Leesa Kuo 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. [If you wish to volunteer and have an hour or two to spare during conference, please send an email to the following people and include the day\(s\)/time\(s\) you are available: Conference Concierge: Jerri-Lynn Kleina \(\[jerrilynnkleina@gmail.com\]\(mailto:jerrilynnkleina@gmail.com\)\). Conference Headquarters: Duane Smith \(\[duane@ilipra.org\]\(mailto:duane@ilipra.org\)\), Conference Registration: Alan Howard \(\[ahoward@ilparks.org\]\(mailto:ahoward@ilparks.org\)\), and the IPRA Booth: Jessica Kollman \(\[jessica@ilipra.org\]\(mailto:jessica@ilipra.org\)\).](#)

This year's conference will be January 18-20, 2018 at the Hilton Chicago on Michigan Avenue. As usual, we also have exciting entertainment planned to enhance your networking opportunities. On Thursday night, January 18, enjoy the Welcome Social featuring the band, The Breakfast Club. They are a high-energy rock/dance 80's tribute band. Expect some fun singalong moments and fun 80's dance steps. No tickets needed, all conference attendees are welcome!

On Saturday night, January 20, enjoy the annual Closing Social at the Museum of Science and Industry. You'll need a ticket to this exciting event. Ticket includes: roundtrip shuttle service from the Hilton Chicago, access to the main floor and balcony, admittance into the lower level U-505 Submarine exhibit and main floor Robot Revolution special exhibit, dinner buffet, and unlimited beer, wine, and soft drinks. You won't want to miss this memorable celebration. Additional tickets may be purchased through the pre-registration process or on-site from. Adult tickets are \$95; Child tickets (12 and under) are \$35. Tickets will not be sold on-site at the museum.

My thanks and congratulations to the volunteers and the staff of both IPRA and IAPD a successful conference. All your work is going to create an amazing experience we will all remember."



Be sure not to miss the Keynote General Session on Saturday, January 20, 8:30 am – 9:45 am. New this year, the keynote session awards 0.1 CEUs. The speaker this year will be Eddie Slowikowski, presenting "The Best Version of YOU". Eddie is a Gold Medal winner for the USA Track & Field Team and a 3-time NCAA All-American. Through years of training as an athlete and running his own speaking business, he knows what it takes to be elite. Through hilarious and poignant storytelling, Eddie gets to the core of what it really means to dig deep and find "the real you." Eddie shows audiences how to transcend failure. How can you be more comfortable in your own skin? By questioning your actions and influences, you can discover the truth at the heart of your character. Eddie shows participants how to match who you are with who you want to be.

We want to thank our conference sponsors who help make the conference possible for us. Thanks to our Diamond Sponsor: Cunningham Recreation, our Titanium sponsors: Greenfield Outdoor Fitness and W-T Engineering, and our Platinum sponsors: Call One, DLA Architects, Upland Design Ltd.

We also have some other exciting events planned. We will have our annual Silent Auction and Sports Raffle. Proceeds go to the Illinois Park and Recreation Foundation (IPRF) to provide scholarships to professionals and college students all over the state. Find it at a new location near registration this year. If you would like to make a donation or need more information, please contact Nanette Sowa at nsowa@nwsra.org. The winner of the sports raffle will be announced at the Closing Social Saturday night of conference.

For students, our premier option for students is the Sponsor a Student program at the Awards Luncheon on Friday, January 19 at 12:15 pm – 2:15 pm. In this program, students can opt in when they register to attend the lunch for free and be matched with an organization who will share their table with you, giving you a chance to networking with professionals in the field. We also offer “Professional Connection” on Thursday, January 18 at 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm. You won't want to miss this unique opportunity to network with professionals in the field. Everyone who attends will enjoy complimentary pizza and soda. We will offer “Mock Interviews/ Resume Review” on Friday, January 19 at 9:45 am – 11:00 am. Professionals will ask interview questions, as well as review students' resumes. At the conclusion of the interview, students will receive constructive feedback and advice that will help them be more prepared and to do well in a real life interview.

Again this year, we will host the IPRA Member Engagement Town Hall presented by IPRA 2018 Chair Matt Corso and I on Saturday, January 20: 2:00-3:15. In this session we will share ways for new and long-time members of IPRA to get more involved.

Two tips for you for conference this year. Take advantage of the Hilton Honors App to make check in easier for you. Skip the line, bypass the front desk, check-in and unlock your door with Digital Check-in and Digital Key. Get all of these exciting features and more when you text “HILTONAPP” to 55000 to download the app! While you must be a Hilton Honors member to participate, the Hilton Honors program is free to join. Attendees must provide their Hilton Honors number with their reservation prior to arrival. Pre-arrival room selections are not guaranteed and subject to the hotel's availability at the time of arrival. Standard guest check-in time is 3:00 pm. For more information visit hiltonhonors3.hilton.com.

Second, get the IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference app for up to the minute news during conference. Further, new for 2018, in an effort to reduce paper there will be no paper evaluations for conference sessions and workshops this year. Instead, use the app to provide comments and feedback. Go to Google Play or the Apple App Store and search the keyword IAPD/IPRA.

On Friday night, January 19 at 5:00 pm will be IPRA's Annual Business Meeting. All are welcome to attend this event where we will present a variety of awards for both agencies and individuals, share IPRA's annual report for 2017, and all new board and section board members will be inaugurated. IPRA's new Chairman of the Board will be Matt Corso from SEASPAR and our new Chair Elect will be Jeff Fougrousse from the Vernon Hills Park District.

I also want to thank the 2017 IPPRA Board of Directors for all their time and commitment to IPRA this year: Chair Rita Fletcher, Past Chair Mary Jeanne Hutchison, Chair-Elect Matthew Corso, Secretary/At Large Rep Jeff Fougrousse, North West Region Rep Erin Folk, Chicago Metro Region Rep Greg Petry and later Jim Warnstedt, Central Region Rep Jarrod Scheunemann, Southern Region Rep Kimberly Caughran, and Membership Council Representative Conor Cahill.

Additionally, I want to thank the members of the Illinois Park and Recreation Foundation (IPRF) Board of Directors: Chair: Michael Clark, Mark Badasch, Cam Bettin, Carlo Capalbo, Tracey Crawford, John Curran, Mike Kies, Jeff Nehila, Ray Ochromowitz, Chuck Szoke, John Wilson, IPRA Board Liaison Jeff Fougrousse, members of the Events Committee: Laura Barron, Lindsey Nicholson, and Nanette Sowa, and Staff liaison, Jessica Kollman.

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.

Upcoming Events

December 13 & 21, 2017 Give the Gift of Great Customer Service (Webinar)

This month's webinar, Give the Gift of Great Customer Service, is presented by Kurt Podeszwa of Journey Consulting, and he will discuss how to model and motivate your staff to develop and deliver excellent customer service across your agency.

December 21, 2017 CPRP October-December Exam Preparation - Class 4

This is the last of four in a series of classes designed to prepare individuals for the National Recreation and Park Association's Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP) exam.

December 14, 2017 Youth Programming Committee Meeting

December 14, 2017 Day Camp and School Age Committee Meeting

December 14, 2017 Human Resource Committee Meeting

January 18-20, 2018 IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference 2018

As the premier state conference for parks and recreation, forest preserves, and conservation agencies in Illinois, the IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference brings together more than 4,200 professionals and elected officials for three days of exciting and quality educational programming, networking, and professional development.

For details and registration, please visit the IPRA event calendar at Ilipra.org

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Jason Anselment
Legal/Legislative Counsel

Annual Conference Provides Great Return on Investment, Especially Considering the Potential Cost of Not Attending

Writing this column is a bi-monthly ritual, but finding time to focus sometimes puts me up against the press deadline. That is again the case this month. While I started this article more than a week ago, it is now Saturday morning and the countdown to the Monday deadline is fast approaching!

As I reflect on the phone calls, meetings and projects that kept me away from the keyboard this week, I cannot help but think about the value of the upcoming Soaring to New Heights Conference.

Top Experts, Latest Trends, Cost Saving Ideas and Much More All in One Place

Like many Monday mornings, my week began with several phone calls related to questions that percolated in the minds of members during the weekend. One agency was interested in a list of consulting firms that perform community surveys while a similar inquiry was about feasibility studies. Another agency was beginning its search for a new local counsel due to a retirement.

Although in each case we discussed the IAPD/IPRA *Buyers' Guide* as an excellent resource for contact information, I also reminded these members that the Conference Exhibit Hall provides an opportunity to speak one-on-one with these and dozens of other consultants, manufacturers, distributors and designers. The Exhibit Hall offers a unique experience because of the ability to engage with top experts and to see firsthand the latest trends in equipment, software and other features, which is often the first step in finding innovative solutions and cost saving ideas.

Innovative, cost saving solutions are one of the many qualities that set Illinois park, recreation and conservation agencies apart, and a primary example is the number of partnerships and intergovernmental agreements that exist between park districts and other local governments. Coincidentally, I spent part of this past week gathering examples and meeting with representatives of the Lt. Governor's Office regarding its future best practices journal. The number of intergovernmental agreements related to special recreation, shared facility use, joint programming, cooperative purchasing and hundreds of others is astounding. There is no better place than the Soaring to New Heights

Conference to learn about these opportunities from peers throughout Illinois. As you review the conference schedule, you will find several excellent sessions related to this topic. Of course, while much learning goes on in the conference classroom, an equal amount is obtained through collaboration among commissioners and professionals during the many networking opportunities that are available at the conference as well. I can think of no other time or place where there is greater access to park and recreation expertise under one roof.

Legal Updates and Best Practices Aplenty

As is the case every week, we also received numerous legal inquiries from park district local counsel and member agencies. These calls and emails present some of the most interesting parts of any day, and we are grateful for the opportunity to help hundreds of members and their counsel each year. Yet, it reminds me that there is no better place than the annual conference to keep up with the ever-changing legal world, a fact that is evident from the number of sessions on legal topics like the Open Meetings Act, Freedom of Information Act, tax levies and other financial procedures, employment laws and many others that are listed in the conference brochure in the pages that follow.

For local counsel, the continuing legal education track offers an excellent opportunity to keep current on new laws, regulations and other developments that impact their local government clients while also satisfying continuing education requirements at an affordable cost. Board members who are attorneys can also take advantage of this opportunity.

Changes in statutes and federal regulations are not the only legal matters that require attention, and another development that delayed my article was an Illinois Supreme Court opinion issued this week that addressed tort immunity in trail liability cases. As I reviewed the opinion, I could not help but think of the need to add the discussion to my conference session, Legal / Legislative Part I (#110). The opinion also reminded me of the importance of regular facility inspections and other risk management practices, which are also covered at numerous conference sessions.

The commitment of best practices and continuing education among professionals and elected board members that govern their agencies to best practices and continuing education are among the many reasons Illinois leads the nation in delivering local park and recreation services – a fact that was also called to mind this week as I discussed the advantages of the park district model with a professional from another state who called with questions about forming park districts.

Consider the Potential Cost of Not Attending the Conference

While critics sometimes attack the financial cost associated with attending conferences, they typically ignore the advantages of the information that is obtained, including ideas that save money. They also neglect to consider the costs and potential consequences of not obtaining continuing education. Failure to stay current with hundreds of legal changes exposes districts to liability. Not keeping up with best practices often ends up costing taxpayers exponentially more than the investment in conference registrations, while missed opportunities to network with other elected officials, professionals and vendors may mean lost non-tax revenue ideas and cost saving tips.

Critics also do not consider that attending the conference requires volunteer park commissioners to offer more of their own personal time to attend. So many are willing to do this every year because they realize that the investment is beneficial and can save time down the road. Meetings run more smoothly because of a greater understanding of the Open Meetings Act and parliamentary procedures. Less study time may be needed to prepare for a meeting because there is a greater understanding of financial procedures or because officials are more in tune with the latest trends.

Simply put, although attending the conference requires a commitment, those who make the investment return to the conference almost every year because they know the knowledge they receive more than pays for itself. This is especially true when considering the cost of not attending. A single non-tax revenue producing or money saving idea may last in perpetuity. A legal pitfall or other liability avoided may save money and avoid other damaging consequences, and the education and networking with other park commissioners and professionals throughout the state are priceless.

While I may have missed my goal of completing this article ahead of the deadline, the matters that kept me busy reminded me of the great opportunities that await at the upcoming Soaring to New Heights Conference. Continuing education and training are essential to the successful operation of park and recreation agencies, and this premier event is well worth the investment. I look forward to seeing you there!

2018 SPRING SESSION IAPD LEGISLATIVE AWARENESS SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

The General Assembly's Spring Session officially begins later this month. Key deadlines and other important dates are available on the IAPD website at ILparks.org as well as the General Assembly's website at ilga.gov.

There will be numerous opportunities throughout the Spring Session to meet with legislators to discuss important legislative issues and deliver positive messages about the benefits of parks, recreation and conservation.

January 19	Soaring to New Heights Awards Luncheon
February 2	Legislative Breakfast Fox Valley Special Recreation Association
February 9	Legislative Breakfast Park District of Oak Park
February 16	Legislative Breakfast Glenview Park District
February 23	Legislative Breakfast Mundelein Park & Recreation District
February 24	Legislative Breakfast Schaumburg Park District
February 26	Legislative Breakfast Joliet Park District
February 27	Legislative Breakfast Springfield Park District
March 2	Legislative Breakfast Peoria Park District
March 5	Legislative Breakfast Tinley Park-Park District
March 9	Legislative Breakfast Carol Stream Park District
March 12	Legislative Breakfast Champaign Park District
March 16	Legislative Breakfast Rockford Park District
April 24	Parks Day at the Capitol State Capitol, Springfield
April 24	Legislative Reception Illini Country Club, Springfield
April 25	Legislative Conference Crowne Plaza, Springfield



FITNESS FOR MOM FUN FOR BABY WITH FIT4MOM

By Alison Finn, Owner, FIT4MOM Lake Zurich,
Mundelein & Wauconda, Illinois

"FIT4MOM: Combining fitness and fun for the whole community."

As a business owner, I am often asked why I got into what I am doing now. The answer has been the same for the nearly 18 months since my doors opened: I want to do what I love (fitness) with the ones that I love (my children- Sadie, 2 and Brooks, 1). In these 18 months, not only have I been able to maintain that personal mission, but I have built and become a part of a brand new mom village in my community. With 2 Stroller fitness locations up and running and a third on the way, 2 body back locations, and a prenatal FIT4BABY location, I have found what it means to be a community leader.

Created by a mom who was formerly a professional ballerina, this class incorporates prenatal and postnatal training and yields amazing results in an exciting, fun format.

FIT4MOM is the country's largest fitness program for moms and FIT4MOM Lake Zurich/Mundelein/Wauconda has been offering a community to moms since 2016. We offer fitness classes for every stage of motherhood. Classes are offered in Lake Zurich, Long Grove, Mundelein and coming soon in Wauconda. Programs include Stroller Strides and Stroller Barre, Fit4Baby prenatal fitness classes, Run Club, and Body Back mom only HIIT training classes. We also offer free weekly playgroups through Our Village. FIT4MOM was founded in 2001 by Lisa Druxman who has since gone on to build a national mom-based fitness empire as well as write her recently published book, *The Empowered Mama* (<http://fit4mombiz.mykajabi.com/p/empoweredmama>). Lisa continues to be an integral part of the FIT4MOM brand, and has since onboarded a team of highly reputable women to run every aspect of the business. Our Mission is simple: FIT4MOM helps moms make strides in fitness, motherhood and life.®

When I looked into FIT4MOM as a career change, I found a warm group of women who wanted to support and help get my business off the ground. I felt comfort in the national brand, local support, and ongoing training and education. FIT4MOM has a group of highly skilled master trainers who make sure that every instructor is well trained and ready to instruct in a safe and effective manner. Every 18 months, there is a national convention as well as smaller summits, all of which aim to inspire, train, and sharpen the saw for instructors, owners, managers, and everyone in between.

I have the most fantastic staff who have truly become family to me since I opened and hired them. I currently have 7 staff members with 2 more coming on board this month. My kids get to watch me build something I am so passionate about while learning what it means to be a part of a group. Their very first friendships started at our Stroller classes. A major part of the success of my particular locations has been the location partnerships that we have. Our newest location at the Mundelein Park District has been 'officially' open for just a couple of weeks and has flourished for both the park district as well as FIT4MOM.

Our Stroller classes are a unique balance of a total body workout and fun for the kiddos. We offer a Strides class as well as a Barre class. Stroller Strides® is a stroller-based fitness program designed for moms with little ones. Each 60-minute, total body workout incorporates power walking,

strength, toning, songs and activities. Certified fitness instructors offer a variety of fun class formats both indoors and outdoors. Stroller Barre® is a unique blend of ballet, Pilates, barre, yoga and stroller-based exercises designed to help moms build strength and muscle tone and improve posture. Created by a mom who was formerly a professional ballerina, this class incorporates prenatal and postnatal training and yields amazing results in an exciting, fun format. We sing songs, read stories, and tickle those babies all while getting a full body 60-minute workout in. The kiddos stay in the stroller for the duration of class and they truly look forward to the songs, games, and getting to see mom enjoying her workout! All Stroller classes are pregnancy safe and instructed by highly trained moms who are certified in prenatal fitness.

Prenatal classes are offered at many locations as well. These classes are a time for the expectant mom to get a pregnancy safe workout and bond with her baby. FIT4BABY instructors are trained in prenatal fitness following guidelines presented by ACOG (American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists). I personally took and instructed FIT4BABY while pregnant with my son, and it made a world of difference in my recovery and labor.

Body Back® classes are offered in many locations around the country. Body Back is a university studied results based 8 week program which focuses on the postnatal mom (whether 12 weeks or 20 years postpartum!). Body Back instructors provide HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training) workouts twice per week along with intensive nutritional coaching. The combination of over 120 'real life' recipes and at-home workouts create results and accountability unlike any other program. Instructors are trained and certified in postnatal care and take into account each individual when running the program. Class size is limited to 12 moms per class for a very individual experience.

Also offered at some locations is Run Club. Moms train for races together with a certified run coach. This past fall, we ran a 10K in one of our hometowns on my son's first birthday! I was thrilled to cross the finish line 1 year to the minute of when I went into labor with Brooks, my one year old. We train from Feb/March through November.

The first location that opened in 2016 is in Lake Zurich. Here, we partner with Main Street Sports Center and Trilogy Dance

The beauty of FIT4MOM is that there are programs in many locations around Illinois as well as the entire country.

to offer stroller classes as well as Body Back classes. We also run class once per month at the Arboria of Long Grove, a memory care/assisted living facility. We aim to bridge the gap between the generations while teaching our littles the importance of loving our elders. Something unique to my locations is our FIT4FAMILY classes on Saturdays. We have a morning class that moms can bring an adult family member along. This class has been instrumental in getting our families, significant others, and older kiddos to feel the community that FIT4MOM brings to the table.

Our prenatal classes are held in historic downtown Long Grove. We offer class in a very quaint building off of the main road called the Long Grove Performing Arts Academy. Our prenatal moms love the cobblestone path and vintage feel that the town offers. When the weather is nice, we walk down and look at all the sights of the wonderful old town.

Our partnership with Mundelein Park District has been key in growth. It's a beautiful marriage of good quality programming and well trained instructors with a robust community location and following. The program is truly a perfect fit! We are happy to serve the community while we grow our village of moms and children. Mundelein offers a welcoming family environment along with some top notch facilities

for us to use. Mundelein is a family orientated community with deep roots and an ever growing population of new families. We are lucky to be able to serve such a unique and flourishing community.

We will be expanding our programming to Wauconda Park District in 2018 and are very excited to replicate this beautiful partnership in our new hometown. We are thrilled to bring programs to this growing and flourishing community and utilize the wonderful, scenic facilities that Wauconda Park District boasts. We are looking at a Winter 2018 opening and can't wait to reach all of the moms in Wauconda and its surrounding area!

Classes are offered at convenient times for both working and stay at home moms. Our Stroller classes are held at 9:30am and 11am. Our Body Back classes are offered in the evenings and weekend mornings. Our run club meets on Sunday mornings. There is a class for every stage of life and motherhood!

The beauty of FIT4MOM is that there are programs in many locations around Illinois as well as the entire country. To find a franchise near you, visit <https://fit4mom.com/programs/find-a-location> . If there is not a franchise in your area and you are interested in bringing the programs to your park district, please feel free to reach out to me!



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BREAKING THE STATUS QUO

AND HELPING PEOPLE CREATE LASTING CHANGES

BY LIZ ROMAN

OPERATIONS MANAGER & NUTRITION COACH, OPPOSING FORCE GYM, BOLINGBROOK

There are more fitness choices than ever before as the fitness industry has taken a major turn towards mindfulness and time-efficient training. The fitness industry has changed on a global scale. The industry continues to evolve from traditional big box gyms with 1-1 personal training to group training and smaller, boutique style gyms. There are various types of studios from Cycling Bars, Yoga, Pilates, Barre, Boxing, MMA, CrossFit, OrangeTheory Fitness and various other “bootcamp” style gyms. Not to mention all the online fitness programs and at home programs that are available. This allows individuals to find the right program that works for them and one that they enjoy.



Fitness professionals understand that it is important for people to enjoy their workouts - if they are going to make a lasting change they have to have a little fun!

All of these facilities provide a different approach to exercise, yet more than 603 million adults and 107 million children (out of a global population of around 7.5 billion) are obese, according to a report published earlier this year from the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation, based at the University of Washington in Seattle. This number is alarming!

So how is the industry evolving to help improve these statistics? Our answer - by changing the game and breaking the status quo to help people create lasting changes.

The fitness industry has recognized there are other components necessary to helping one make a sustainable long term lifestyle change. Anyone can go to a gym or workout at home and break a sweat, but the most important part of a weight loss journey isn't just exercise. A true transformation requires good, healthy habits - practiced consistently. That requires fitness professionals to educate people on what living a healthy lifestyle **truly** means, outside the gym, and doing so in a way that is fun, inviting and encouraging.

Fitness professionals understand that it is important for people to enjoy their workouts - if they are going to make a lasting change they have to have a little fun! This is imperative as the New Year approaches and people make New Year's resolutions, it needs to be something they look forward to so they stay engaged, accountable and motivated to achieve their goals. Additionally, making personal connections is crucial whether that be with a trainer one-on-one, or in a group environment as they meet others working towards a similar goal. Team training has become more popular and I believe the movement of group training will continue to spread. I also believe we will see more team training programs become gamified to make exercise and weight loss more fun and playful.

The industry has responded to this demand with a variety of group training studios opening across the U.S. and many with programs that have a competitive or results-based component.

The latest trend is running transformation challenges. At Opposing Force we have been running transformation challenges for 4 years and it has been a game changer for our clients as it encompasses more than just training. The focus of the transformation challenge is to help people make a holistic lifestyle change by teaching them how to instill healthy habits that are sustainable. A transformation challenge is great for beginners, those getting back into fitness, or those struggling to get the last few pounds off. It also provides a less intimidating, more engaging environment as hitting the gym floor in a big box gym can be daunting. Not to mention, people need a strategic plan, not just a gym membership, to successfully reach their goals and sustain them.

The transformation challenge may not seem new to some in the industry as Beachbody set the stage a few years ago with their Beachbody Challenge (which included at home workouts and a protein shake). Other companies quickly followed suit - you can even make bets on your weight loss and make money losing weight through challenges like Biggest Loser and DietBet. These challenges are typically short-term, and offer a reward to encourage people to participate. Yet, most people lose weight and gain it right back, or purchase programs/supplements and don't follow through.

Why?

Because they are missing two major components of, what I call the FITrifacta. The FITrifacta is an all-encompassing system which pairs training, nutrition and accountability.

At Opposing Force, we run transformation challenges as a six-week, small group training program. This includes personalized attention, a custom nutrition plan, and an accountability coach with the added support of being a part of a like-minded community of women.

Personally, I know these are the keys to a lifelong transformation because I've been through it myself. I had a gym membership that I used on and off, then hired a trainer, which gets expensive as 1-1

training ranges from \$50-100 per session. Personally, I wasted a lot of time and money because I didn't have a strategic plan to get to my goals. This resulted in yo-yo dieting, flighty exercise and repeat New Year's resolutions. This is very common for those going a lifestyle change alone. In fact, 67% of people have a gym membership that never use them, according to a recent study done by Statistic Brain. 67%! Further, the number of people that fail at following through on their their New Year's resolutions is even higher. According to Forbes.com, only a tiny fraction of us keep our resolutions; University of Scranton research suggests that just 8% of people achieve their New Year's goals.

This is one of the many reasons fitness professionals have started to focus on more than just training. Many gyms are incorporating nutrition coaching, lifestyle coaching, as well as creating a community for people to be a part of whether they are participating in a transformation challenge or just maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

The transformation challenge is a great way to help people who are serious about making a lifestyle change without breaking the bank trying to hire a personal trainer, life coach, and nutritionist separately. Depending upon the gym, a challenge typically offers at least two (training and nutrition), if not all three of the FITrifacta components and typically provides a monetary incentive to those that hit their goal and beat the challenge.

Transformation challenges have been very successful for thousands of women, specifically those that need more than just a workout class. They have continued to gain popularity and we have seen a tremendous influx of transformation challenge offers at both small

and large gyms across the U.S. We believe this trend will continue because it helps people with more than just exercise - it helps them change their life.

Not only does the combination of training, nutrition, and accountability help people see results quicker, it also gives the participants a bit more incentive to stay the course when they are tempted to skip a workout or eat unhealthy foods. It is important to note that having a certified nutritionist on staff is imperative as not everyone loses weight at the same pace, and every human body is different. Focusing on weight loss alone shouldn't be the sole focus of the challenge - the focus is to educate people on living a healthy lifestyle and helping them feel better, move better and live better. That includes educating them on how to instill healthy habits, what types of foods they should be eating to nourish their body, what foods they should avoid and helping them overcome emotional, stress or binge eating.

Most challenges provide an accountability coach that is there to guide, support and educate you as you build a solid foundation of fitness into your life. They check-in with their clients 3-4 times per week, and many gyms also have a private support group to keep clients motivated and educate them on living a healthy lifestyle. People need this type of support because life is stressful! It is easy to make excuses, fall of the bandwagon and ultimately find oneself setting the same New Year's Resolution over and over.

I believe the FITrifacta is the key to making a lifelong transformation and hope other fitness professionals will continue to incorporate nutrition and lifestyle coaching into their programs so clients can get results and sustain them.



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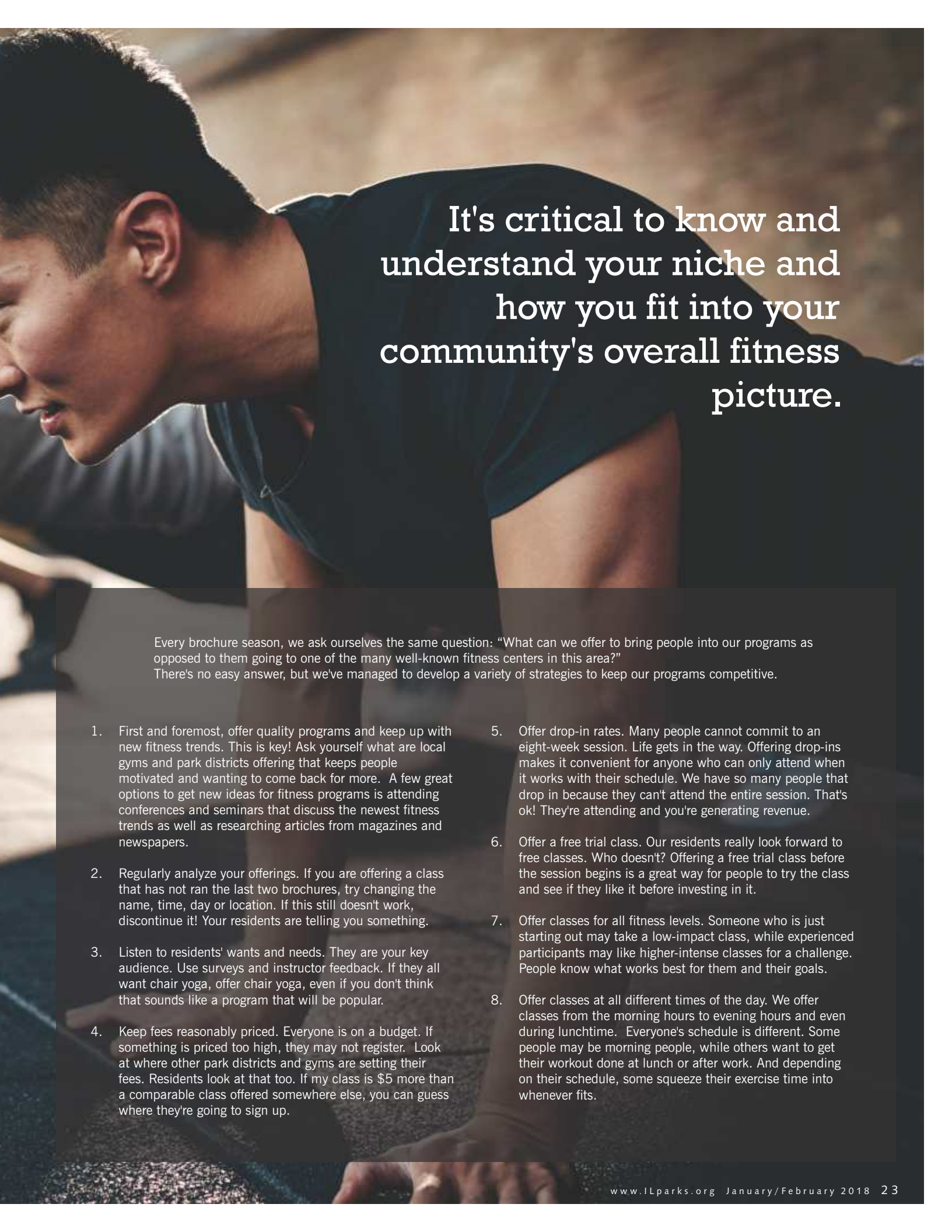


How to
“BULK UP”

YOUR FITNESS PROGRAMS ABOVE THE COMPETITION

By Rebecca Defrancesco, Recreation Supervisor, Bloomingdale Park District

Most agencies have private sector competition when it comes to fitness services. Some communities have more than others. In Bloomingdale we have eight fitness centers at a variety of price points within a five-mile radius, which is definitely a challenge for our team in making our services stand out.



It's critical to know and understand your niche and how you fit into your community's overall fitness picture.

Every brochure season, we ask ourselves the same question: "What can we offer to bring people into our programs as opposed to them going to one of the many well-known fitness centers in this area?" There's no easy answer, but we've managed to develop a variety of strategies to keep our programs competitive.

1. First and foremost, offer quality programs and keep up with new fitness trends. This is key! Ask yourself what are local gyms and park districts offering that keeps people motivated and wanting to come back for more. A few great options to get new ideas for fitness programs is attending conferences and seminars that discuss the newest fitness trends as well as researching articles from magazines and newspapers.
2. Regularly analyze your offerings. If you are offering a class that has not ran the last two brochures, try changing the name, time, day or location. If this still doesn't work, discontinue it! Your residents are telling you something.
3. Listen to residents' wants and needs. They are your key audience. Use surveys and instructor feedback. If they all want chair yoga, offer chair yoga, even if you don't think that sounds like a program that will be popular.
4. Keep fees reasonably priced. Everyone is on a budget. If something is priced too high, they may not register. Look at where other park districts and gyms are setting their fees. Residents look at that too. If my class is \$5 more than a comparable class offered somewhere else, you can guess where they're going to sign up.
5. Offer drop-in rates. Many people cannot commit to an eight-week session. Life gets in the way. Offering drop-ins makes it convenient for anyone who can only attend when it works with their schedule. We have so many people that drop in because they can't attend the entire session. That's ok! They're attending and you're generating revenue.
6. Offer a free trial class. Our residents really look forward to free classes. Who doesn't? Offering a free trial class before the session begins is a great way for people to try the class and see if they like it before investing in it.
7. Offer classes for all fitness levels. Someone who is just starting out may take a low-impact class, while experienced participants may like higher-intense classes for a challenge. People know what works best for them and their goals.
8. Offer classes at all different times of the day. We offer classes from the morning hours to evening hours and even during lunchtime. Everyone's schedule is different. Some people may be morning people, while others want to get their workout done at lunch or after work. And depending on their schedule, some squeeze their exercise time into whenever fits.

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9. Hire quality and qualified instructors. They often have their own following and in addition to being qualified to teach the class, they also need to be personable. People come back because of the instructor. Our instructors are friendly, fun and motivating! I take many group fitness classes throughout my week and what keeps me coming back is the great instructors.
10. Create a warm, clean and friendly atmosphere. Your participants should be comfortable when they walk into the building. Front desk and customer service staff should greet them. Have a place for them to lounge before, or after class. If you can, put out some water and snacks once in a while, to show your appreciation.
11. Know your audience. Demographics are extremely important when programming for your community. Make sure you are hitting your target audience. You shouldn't gear all your fitness programs for participants ranging from ages 18 to 35 if your main demographic is 55+.
12. Location, location, location! Participants like convenience. Driving more than a five-mile radius may not work for most people. They may be more inclined to take a class at your facility rather than a different location if it offers them more convenience. Try offering the same popular class in multiple sites in your community.
13. Many fitness facilities offer child care services to help allow parents to take classes. Our Recreation Department has created a program called "Partner Programs." These partner programs offer a youth class and an adult class that run simultaneously during the same time frame, so a parent can drop off their child to one program and then attend another program at the same time.
14. Focus on Marketing. In addition to traditional marketing strategies and social media outlets consider delivering your brochure to local businesses where potential participants are stuck waiting such as hair salons, nail salons, grocery stores, doctor's offices, etc. to attract more participants. People that go to these places may not currently come to the park district and may be looking for something new to try.
15. Consider your marketing message. In addition to describing your programs as an opportunity to "lose weight and look younger," start talking about the real outcomes in your promotions. For example, for an active 55+ adult fitness program, talk about the benefits such as still being able to get on the floor to play with your grandchildren, or adding yards to your golf swing as the benefits of what you offer.

Fitness is a fluid, constantly changing program area. It's critical to know and understand your niche and how you fit into your community's overall fitness picture. It's important to listen, learn and implement new ideas on a regular basis. Encourage people to move and be physically challenged. Your agency has an important role in your community's overall health and wellness!

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