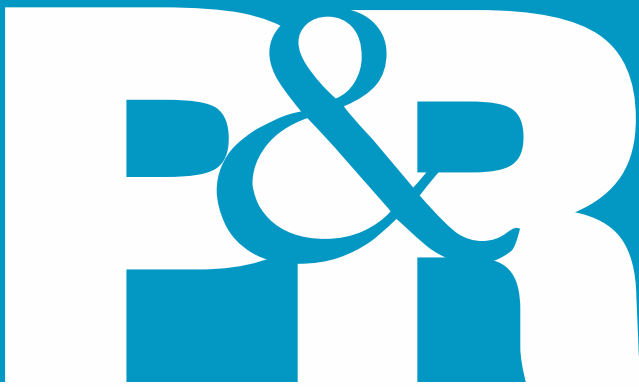


illinois

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# PARKS AND RECREATION

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



# reaching your fitness goals

PLUS: 2017 Soaring to New Heights Conference Program

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

# FROM THE EDITOR



While visiting my family recently, I talked to my sister-in-law about this issue of *Illinois Parks & Recreation*, *Reaching Your Fitness Goals*. We both laughed at the thought of me writing about fitness – knowing it's not my thing.

When my brother and sister-in-law became engaged nearly 25 years ago, my sister-in-law Linda began a fitness routine to lose weight so she could fit into her perfect wedding dress. And she has never stopped. Her primary form of exercise is walking. Last year she added Zumba as well. She acknowledged that it's hard, and sometimes she doesn't want to do it. When I asked why she goes, she responded, "Because I have a buddy who encourages and motivates me."

Ah. A buddy. I should have known. For many years, my family supported my brother Steve, who had Down's Syndrome, in the annual Buddy Walk. I know some of you donated to our team, and my family appreciated your generosity. Steve knew how important fitness was to his health. The local paper in Breese wrote an article about him entitled, "Fitness at 50." He lost nearly 90 pounds just from walking—along with air punching like Rocky Balboa with each step! I can hear Eye of the Tiger as I type this while fighting back the tears knowing that my family and I will no longer walk with him.

Some people, like some of my colleagues and my son, have no problem attaining their fitness goals without a buddy. They are dedicated to working out. Whether it's going to the gym after a long day at the office or at 10:00 at night or running marathons in the pouring rain, they're doing it. Every day. And, I'm envious. I wish I had that kind of self-motivation.

Others I know are motivated by the numbers on their step counters. They must attain that specific goal they set for themselves or they're not satisfied. That number is their motivation to attain their fitness goals. Hey, whatever works.

Sometimes people find it hard just to get started. If that's you, make sure you read Liz Gnippe's article on page 20. She provides seven tips on reaching your fitness goals. If you need a group of buddies and have a Fitbit, join our IAPD Healthy Lifestyles Fitbit Group and get healthy with IAPD, one step at a time. Also, make sure to check out IAPD's Healthy Lifestyles section on our website at [ILparks.org/healthylifestyles](http://ILparks.org/healthylifestyles). It contains information on exercise, nutrition and living a healthy, active lifestyle.

Maybe 2017 will be the year I dedicate myself to reaching my fitness goals. Maybe I'll run my first Tough Mudder. Who knows. Maybe it'll just take a buddy to ask.

Best Regards,  
CINDY TIMMERMANN



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Peter M. Murphy, J.D., CAE  
IAPD President and CEO

## Your Association's Ongoing Commitment to Excellence

The Illinois Association of Park Districts is committed to providing our members with the highest level of service and support through education, research, and advocacy. Looking back at 2016, 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](http://ILparks.org), contains the full Year In Review. Here are some of the highlights.

- Worked with members of the governor's administration, the IDNR director and other key legislative leaders and staff to convey the importance of appropriating funds for OSLAD and PARC in the June stop-gap budget. This successful communication strategy resulted in a \$50 million appropriation for OSLAD and a \$50 million appropriation for PARC in a budget that contained relatively little capital appropriation aside from transportation expenses.
- Successfully advocated for the passage of House Bill 4536, which provides park districts, forest preserves and conservation districts the ability to save time, expense and administrative burden by raising the bid limit threshold from \$20,000 to \$25,000.
- Responded to more than 350 legal inquiries and distributed more than 30 weekly legislative alerts, updates, legal news briefs and legislative advocacy videos to keep members informed of recent court decisions, new federal rules, important election information, deadlines and training opportunities.
- Published the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of IAPD's *Guide to Public Sector Employment Laws*, which was carefully reviewed to ensure the inclusion of all recently enacted laws. This latest version is enhanced with new legal checklists, sample policies and other tools.
- Tracked 729 different bills and monitored more than 1,827 bills for their impact on the IAPD membership and the citizens they serve.
  - More than 250 guests joined IAPD for the 10<sup>th</sup> annual *Best of the Best Awards Gala*. This prestigious event garnered positive news stories and paid tribute to park commissioners, businesses, media and citizen volunteers who contribute countless amounts of their time, talents and resources to the park, recreation and conservation mission.
- The *2016 IAPD Golf Guide* was published, distributed and posted on the IAPD website as an outstanding resource for golfers around the state. The guide featured a comprehensive list of public golf courses in Illinois complete with photos, contact information and highlights of each course.
- IAPD's *Park District Youth License Plate Marketing Kit*, containing print and website ads, flyers, posters and audio/visual public service announcements, was sent as a complimentary member benefit to numerous agencies to enhance their promotional endeavors. Sales of the youth license plate generate over \$30,000 a year for the PowerPlay! grant program.
- IAPD provided more than 50 educational programs in 2016 including Cybersecurity – Protecting your Agency and your Patrons; Partnerships and Intergovernmental Cooperations; Highly Effective Boards and How to Create One; Transgender Rights; and Essential Elements of a Successful Investment Program.
- Published the *2016-2017 Benefits of Membership* as both a hard copy and an interactive .pdf. The electronic version featured more than 700 hyperlinks to the IAPD website and external resources providing convenient

access to grant information, practice tools, educational materials, governance tips and much more.

- Produced six issues of *Illinois Parks & Recreation* magazine, featuring informative articles on foundations and fundraising, golf trends, partnerships that drive fitness initiatives, aquatics, parks designed to match community interests and marketing.
- Continued to negotiate money-saving relationships with several organizations to offer our member agencies discounted prices on products and services.
- Worked with aQity Research & Insights to conduct a statewide survey of W-2 and revenue data.
- Conducted research with the University of Illinois that documented numerous national studies which found that structural consolidation through merging local governments **does not** save taxpayer dollars.
- Sent monthly updates to the IAPD membership regarding programs, services and association advancements.
- Collected and integrated nearly 40 different categories of financial, tax levy and demographic information for every IAPD member agency into our extensive database to create a great new member resource.

**In 2016 we dedicated ourselves to helping our members thrive and you can expect more of this commitment to excellence in 2017.**

The New Year ushers in many resolutions for self-improvement, among which is often the commitment to continue to be a more knowledgeable and effective board member.

The wonderful thing about January in Illinois is that the IAPD/IPRA Conference takes place over a three-day period with nearly 200 educational sessions that are geared to increase the knowledge and the effectiveness of both board members and professional staff. It is simply the greatest opportunity of the year to network with like-minded, publicly-elected officials from across the state of Illinois, see an exhibit hall brimming with the latest park and recreation equipment and take some ideas on best practices to be shared with your communities.

The following is a brief sample of these outstanding opportunities:

### [Friday, January 20, 2017](#)

**Leadership Development – Maximizing Your Potential** 8:15 am – 9:30 am  
John Wooden said, "Success is peace of mind obtained only through self-satisfaction in knowing you made the effort to do the best of which you are capable." This session will focus on leadership development, specifically the process of self-leadership and the value it adds in your ability to serve others.

**Legal/Legislative Part I** 8:15 am – 9:30 am  
Legal experts will discuss new laws and recent court decisions that impact park districts, conservation districts, forest preserves, recreation and special recreation agencies.

**Information Security to Keep You Safe Online, Now** 8:15 am – 9:30 am  
Participants will learn how to protect themselves when online.

### Updates on the Open Meetings and Freedom of Information Acts

8:15 am – 9:30 am

2016 saw important court decisions, legislative action, and binding opinions from the Illinois Attorney General that can impact your day-to-day operations in following these laws (including those park districts with a foundation).

### Sexual Predators: Is Your Agency Safe?

9:45 am – 11:00 am

This presentation will cover a wide variety of sex offender issues including effective deterrents and updated legislation.

### Legal/Legislative Part II

9:45 am – 11:00 am  
Topics will include: recent attorney general opinions related to the Open Meetings Act and the Freedom of Information Act, Department of Labor guidance related to the Prevailing Wage Act and other new federal regulations and state administrative rules.

### Communicate For the Win

9:45 am – 11:00 am  
Business experts have stated that 85% of your overall career success is in direct proportion to your ability to communicate well. In today's highly competitive world, applying exceptional communication skills is not optional, it's critical to your success.

### Moving from Management to Transformational Leadership

3:30 pm – 4:45 pm

What is a transformational leader and what does it take to become one? In this session, the presenters will explore a variety of concepts pertaining to leadership, including the specific traits of a transformational leader.

### Public Meeting Best Practices: From Crowd Control to Errant Commissioners

3:30 pm – 4:45 pm

Participants will learn best practices on a variety of difficult issues.

### Employee and Commissioner Benefits

3:30 pm – 4:45 pm  
Participants will learn what is and what is not, a "fringe" benefit, determining which benefits are treated as income, which are not, and learn the procedures to secure "statutory fringes" and less well-known administrative exclusions.

### Preparing Your Board to Avoid Negative Public Interaction

3:30 pm – 4:45 pm

This session will focus on a variety of issues that can help to strengthen communication and relationships between the Board and its public.

### Saturday, January 21, 2017

#### Game of Thorns

10:15 am – 11:30 am  
Have you ever had experience with prickly people, uncomfortable situations, warring factions? We'll explore these and other thorny scenarios in this dynamic and highly engaging session.

#### Director & Commissioner Relationships: Can Farmers & Cowboys Be Friends?

10:15 am – 11:30 am  
This is a must session for directors and board members to understand their roles and duties. Harmony is sought but at times conflicts distract from the goals to be accomplished.

#### Boardmanship Essentials, Part I

10:15 am – 11:30 am  
Learn the essentials of conducting and participating in public meetings, including rules of order, public comment, minutes, quorum issues, remote participation, voting issues, open meetings act and FOIA issues in the public meeting context, closed meetings and how to get more out of each meeting.

#### Whose Afraid of Robert's Rules?

12:30 pm – 1:45 pm  
Speaker: Nancy Sylvester, Professional Parliamentarian  
This session will cover: Quorum, Agenda, Processing a Motion, Precedence of Motions, Meaning of Votes, Script of a Motion, Rules for a Small Committee/Board, and Basic Characteristics of a Motion.

#### Director Contracts: Pluses, Minuses, Necessities, Language, & For Whom

12:30 pm – 1:45 pm  
This session will deal with pros, cons, reasons, and logic in issuing a director hiring and exiting contract.

#### Park Wars - The Never Ending Saga

12:30 pm – 1:45 pm  
Park wars can be personal, up close, distractive, and sometimes nasty. Come listen to attorneys who have a large background in dealing with park law, issues, and board challenges.

#### Managing Presentation Nerves

12:30 pm – 1:45 pm  
Develop strategies and techniques to manage your nerves so you can concentrate on delivering an effective and engaging presentation or speech.

### Referendums: Dealing with Public Questions

2:00 pm – 3:15 pm  
Come listen to an attorney who deals with helping park districts prepare for these encounters. Do you support, stand, fight or suppress these referendums that knock on your district door?

### Boardmanship Essentials, Part II

2:00 pm – 3:15 pm  
What is your role as a commissioner? Where does your role end and the role of the park professionals begin? How do you handle the difficult commissioner or public participant? What can you do to make your meetings more credible, transparent, focused, shorter and efficient?

### Making Your Citizen Opinions Matter

3:30 pm – 4:45 pm  
Learn how to make your current public involvement processes better, as well as developing new emerging citizen input tools, i.e. web surveys, e-mail blasts, etc. It will teach you how to stay connected to your residents 24/7.

I wish you a happy and prosperous New Year filled with exciting opportunities for leadership development and teamwork.

## 2017 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 19-21, 2017

**IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference**  
Hilton Chicago

April-May, 2017

**Flying for Kids Months**  
Statewide Kite Fly

Tuesday, May 2, 2017

**Parks Day at the Capitol**  
Illinois State Capitol

Tuesday, May 2, 2017

**Legislative Reception**  
Illini Country Club

Wednesday, May 3, 2017

**Legislative Conference**  
Crowne Plaza, Springfield

Tuesday, May 16, 2017

**IAPD Summer Golf Tour #1**  
Wheaton Park District's Arrowhead Golf Club

Saturday, May 20, 2017

**IAPD Boot Camp #1**  
Huntley Park District

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

**IAPD Boot Camp #2**  
Metro East Park and Recreation District, Collinsville

Thursday, May 25, 2017

**IAPD Boot Camp #3**  
Normal Parks and Recreation Department

Wednesday, May 31, 2017

**IAPD Boot Camp #4**  
Bolingbrook Park District

Thursday, June 1, 2017

**IAPD Boot Camp #5**  
Schaumburg Park District

Monday, June 12, 2017

**IAPD Summer Golf Tour #2**  
Rockford Park District's Aldeen Golf Club

Thursday, July 13, 2017

**IAPD Leadership Classic**  
Bensenville Park District's White Pines Golf Club

Saturday, August 19, 2017

**Park District Conservation Day**  
IL State Fairgrounds, Springfield

Monday, August 28, 2017

**IAPD Summer Golf Tour #3**  
GolfVisions Mgt. Inc. Tanna Farms Golf Club, Geneva, IL

Monday, September 11, 2017

**IAPD Summer Golf Tour #4**  
Lockport Twp Park District's Prairie Bluff Public Golf Club

September 26-28, 2017

**NRPA Congress**  
New Orleans, LA

Friday, October 13, 2017

**Best of the Best Awards Gala**  
Wheeling Park District's Chevy Chase Country Club

Thursday, November 9, 2017

**IAPD Legal Symposium**  
McDonald's University

January 18-20, 2018

**IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference**  
Hilton Chicago

**IAPD**  
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 Tom Hartwig and IAPD Co-Chair Lili Kilbridge, and the committee: IAPD Program Chair: Tom Barz, IPRA Exhibits Co-Chair: John Curran, IPRA Operations Co-Chair: Andrew Dallner, IAPD Events Chair: Kevin Dolan, IAPD Operations Co-Chair: Eric Entler, IPRA Program Chair: Mike Kies, IAPD Operations Chair: Jerri-Lynn Kleina, IAPD Exhibits Chair: Greg Kolinek, IAPD Exhibits Co-Chair: Lori Palmer, IPRA Events Chair: John Robinson, IPRA Operations Chair: Kevin Romejko, and IPRA Exhibits Chair: John Wilson, along with Conference Directors Leesa 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: Mike Kies and IAPD Program Chair, Tom Barz, and the committee: Erin Chapa, John Chase, Liz Cox, Mat Emken, Stephanie Fester, Nikki Ginger, Andrea Griffin, Lonette Hall, Taylor Hamm, Kim Hansen, Tammy Hoggatt, Dayell Houzenga, Pat Klawitter, Jennifer Knitter, Ken McEwen, Darleen Negrillo, Matt Ntrefa, Megan Pettit, Laura Reinke, Karyn Roth, John Short, Rob Sperl, Erika Strojinc, Stacey VanEnkevort, 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 19-21 at the Hilton Chicago on Michigan Avenue. There are 18 preconference workshops on Thursday and more than 170 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 19, enjoy the Welcome Social featuring the band, Brass from the Past, "A Tribute to the Legends of Rock & Soul". No tickets needed, all conference attendees are welcome!

On Saturday night, January 21, enjoy the annual Closing Social at the Museum of Science and Industry. You'll need a ticket to this exciting event. Ticket includes: admission to the museum, admittance into the

U-505 Submarine exhibit, admittance into the Omnimax Theater which will be featuring the "National Parks Adventure" movie, dinner buffet, and unlimited beer, wine, and soft drinks. I was recently at the Museum of Science and Industry with my family and was reminded of the great history lessons- the tour guide on the submarine will tell you the story of what happened on the German U-505 during the war, telling the story in a way that will help people of all ages better understand what really happened. The science lessons too are amazing- like the 40 foot tornado or the exhibits on weather. And if you haven't seen the National Parks movie at the Omnimax, it is a breathtaking experience, imagine seeing the view from the tops of some of America's mountains on a dome shaped Omnimax screen! You won't want to miss this memorable celebration.

"My thanks and congratulations to the volunteers and the staff of both IPRA and IAPD on 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 21 at 9:00-10:00 AM. Our keynote speaker this year is Steve Gilliland who will share his session, "Enjoy the Ride." His session is a blueprint for getting the most out of life, examining where you are both personally and professionally. It motivates people to "evolve and appreciate, rather than simply maintain and exist." Steve is a member of the Speaker Hall of Fame. He can be heard daily on Sirius XM Radio's Laugh USA. He has written four books: "Enjoy the Ride," "Making a Difference," "Hide Your Goat," and "Detour." He has built a multimillion dollar company using the same philosophy he shares with his audiences.

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: W-T Engineering and Greenfields Outdoor Fitness, our Platinum sponsors: Call One, DLA Architects, Links Technology Solutions, Inc., Upland Design Ltd, and our Silver sponsors: Burke and Play Illinois and Gov HR USA.

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](mailto:heather@ilipra.org).



For students, our premier option for students is the Sponsor a Student program at the Awards Luncheon on Friday, January 20 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, giving students a chance to network with professionals in the field. We also offer “Professional Connection” on Thursday, January 19 at 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm. You won't want to miss this unique opportunity to network with professionals in the field. The Professional Connection provides a relaxed, social atmosphere and an informal setting for talking with and getting to know professionals currently working in your area of interest. Everyone who attends will enjoy complimentary pizza and soda. We will offer “Mock Interviews/Resume Review” on Friday, January 20 at 9:45 am – 11:00 am. This session will offer students the opportunity to practice and improve their interviewing skills through participation in a mock interview. Professionals will ask interview questions, as well as review students' resumes. Finally, we also offer “Tips in Resume Writing and Interviewing” on Friday, January 20 at 3:30-4:45 pm. This session will cover the basic areas in writing cover letters, resumes and reference lists. The interviewing tips will also help people getting interviewed feel more comfortable in the interview process and help them be able to answer questions better.

New this year, IPRA's 2017 Chair Rita Fletcher from the Bartlett Park District and I will be hosting a session, the “Member Engagement Town Hall” to share ways for new and long-time members of IPRA to get more involved with IPRA. This session will be Saturday, January 21, 2:00-3:15.

On Friday night, January 20 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 2016, and all new board and section board members will be inaugurated. IPRA's new Chairman of the Board will be Rita Fletcher, our new Chair-Elect will be Matt Corso from SEASPAR. Rita is already planning a busy year for IPRA. Additionally, we will have two, possibly three new board members (elections fall after I write this). I look forward to working with our new Chair and our new leaders.

My thanks also to Mary Jeanne Hutchison, our outgoing Chair for 2016. During “MJ's” year as Chair, we focused on streamlining IPRA's structure and implementing our rolling five year strategic plan. We also focused on ensuring that IPRA was serving our non-Chicago metro members and all our municipal members. We traveled together all over the state with the IPRA Board of Directors, meeting in every region of the state, sharing meals with local park and recreation VIPs and regional affiliate groups. MJ spoke at the ProConnect and ProConnect South combined culmination luncheon in March. This was ProConnect South's inaugural year in partnership with the Southern Illinois Park and Recreation Association (SIPRA). MJ was a strong leader for us and IPRA is better today than when she started. Thank you, MJ, I enjoyed every minute of working with you!

I also want to thank the 2016 IPPRA Board of Directors for all their time and commitment to IPRA this year: Chair Mary Jeanne Hutchison, Past Chair Rick Hanetho, Chair-Elect Rita Fletcher, Secretary/North West Region Rep Molly Hamer, Chicago Metro Region Rep Greg Petry, Central Region Rep Jarrod Scheunemann, Southern Region Rep Kimberly Caughran, Membership Council Representative Matthew Corso, and At Large Representative Jeff Fougerousse.

Additionally, I want to thank the members of the Illinois Park and Recreation Foundation (IPRF) Board of Directors: Chair: Michael Clark, Mark Badasch, Carlo Capalbo, Tracey Crawford, John Curran, Erin Folk, Michael Kies, Ray Ochomowicz, LoriKay Paden (January –May), Charles Szoke, John Wilson, IPRA Board Liaison, Mary Jeanne Hutchison, 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

**February 20, 2017**

### Teen Ski Trip

#### Wilmot Mountain

Teens have fun learning to carve perfect turns, race down a slalom course, or master tricks in the terrain park with park district friends from all over Illinois. Wilmot Mountain in Wisconsin has 25 unique runs that will be engaging for novice and expert ski/snowboarders alike.

**April 7, 2017**

### Supervisor Symposium

#### Bartlett Community Center

Supervisor Symposium provides professionals in the recreation field a curriculum that builds a strong foundation of basic skills needed to obtain a supervisory position. Sessions provide opportunities to increase

knowledge, which can be implemented immediately and expose participants to emerging trends that can help advance their career in the recreation field.

**May 4, 2017**

### 11th Annual Park

#### Pursuit

#### Park Ridge

Modeled after the Amazing Race, Park Pursuit allows members of IPRA to engage in a day long race where team building, healthy competition and recreation take center stage. Participants are challenged physically and mentally as they race through the streets of Park Ridge. Clue cards direct teams to various parks and landmarks where tasks are performed.

For details and registration, please visit the IPRA event calendar at [ILipra.org](http://ILipra.org)

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Jason Anselment  
Legal/Legislative Counsel

## Annual Conference Presents Opportunity to Stay Updated On Legal Obligations Like Open Meetings Act and FOIA

The Open Meetings Act (OMA) and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) are two laws that impact every unit of local government, and the beginning of each calendar year is an excellent time for park commissioners and professionals to review these legal requirements.

Few statutes impact local governments more frequently than the OMA because it affects every park board meeting. Likewise, FOIA's short timeframe for responding to citizen records requests demands that officials be integrally familiar with that law's requirements. A periodic review of these laws is further necessitated by the fact that each is frequently amended by the legislature, and both are often the subject of court decisions and Attorney General opinions that expound upon their day-to-day application.

Staying up-to-date on so many legal developments may seem overwhelming. However, IAPD offers many educational opportunities throughout the year as well as numerous publications and other resources to assist member agencies. One of the most effective methods is to participate in the upcoming Soaring to New Heights Conference, which offers participants more than 200 hours of educational training to choose from in just two days. As you peruse the conference brochure in the pages that follow, you will find many sessions which cover a variety of important topics, including the OMA and FOIA.

Below is a summary of OMA and FOIA developments that occurred in the past year that will be discussed in greater detail in numerous conference sessions later this month.

### Statutory Changes

In 2016, the Illinois General Assembly made two changes to the OMA that were signed into law by the Governor.

The first is contained in **HB 4630 / Public Act 99-0515 (Ives, J. / Connelly, M.)**, which codifies the rule that a public body's closed meeting minutes and verbatim recordings may be accessed by its current board members regardless of whether the closed meeting occurred before they were members of the board. Recall that unlike open meetings, boards are required to make verbatim audio or video recordings of their closed sessions and to maintain those recordings for at least 18 months. Subsequently, if the closed meeting minutes have been approved, the board can vote to destroy these tapes.

While the new amendment now guarantees board member access to closed meeting recordings that are maintained under OMA's rules, it also limits the location of that access to the public body's main office or official storage location where the recording is kept. The public body's records secretary, administrative official such as the executive director, or another board member must be present during the review. The new

amendment prohibits the board member from making a duplicate recording or otherwise removing it from the storage location unless otherwise allowed by a vote of the public body or court order.

The second OMA change is contained in **HB 5683 / Public Act 99-0714 (Breen, P. / Nybo, C.)**, which now allows a citizen to file a lawsuit in circuit court within 60 days after a non-binding OMA decision by the Attorney General's Public Access Counselor (PAC). Previously, the requester could only file a lawsuit within 60 days of the date of the alleged violation.

This new amendment is intended to encourage citizens to use the PAC's request for review procedures rather than proceeding directly to a lawsuit by granting them appeal rights. In the past, if a citizen first filed a request for review with the PAC and did not receive a decision within 60 days of the alleged violation, the citizen risked losing his or her right to seek judicial review of the matter if the PAC issued a non-binding rather than binding opinion.<sup>1</sup> With the amendment, a citizen may now seek judicial review in these instances as long as the action is commenced within 60 days after the PAC issues the non-binding decision.

The General Assembly also made important changes to FOIA last year by providing a court with the ability to impose additional penalties if it determines that a public body willfully and intentionally fails to comply with a court order or binding PAC opinion.

**HB 4715 / Public Act 99-0586 (Bryant, T. / Radogno, C.)** now allows courts to impose an additional penalty of up to \$1,000 for each day that a public body fails to comply with a court order beginning 30 days after the order is issued unless the court grants the public body additional time or the order is appealed or stayed. The new amendment also expands a court's existing authority to impose a penalty of up to \$5,000 for willful and intentional FOIA violations by treating a public body's failure to comply with a binding PAC opinion as willful and intentional if the public body has not filed for administrative review of the PAC decision within 35 days. A public body may rebut the new law's presumption that its refusal to comply is willful or intentional by showing that it is making a good faith effort to comply with the binding opinion, but it was not possible to do so within the 35-day time frame.

### Recent Court Decisions

In addition to legislative changes, the OMA is often the subject of court decisions that help provide guideposts on its application. In two decisions from the past year, the 4<sup>th</sup> District Appellate Court addressed the OMA's mandate that boards publicly recite the nature of matters being considered including information that sufficiently informs the public of the business being conducted.

*Board of Education of Springfield School District No. 186 v. Attorney General*, 2015 IL App (4<sup>th</sup>) 140941, involved a decision by a local school board to approve a separation agreement with its superintendent. The meeting agenda described the action item as “Approval of a Resolution regarding the [Agreement] between the [Superintendent] and the Board,” and the electronic version of the agenda on the board’s website contained a hyperlink to the actual agreement.<sup>ii</sup>

The lower court held that the board’s actions were sufficiently descriptive to satisfy OMA’s requirements and held that while the OMA “requires that the public entity advise the public about the general nature of the final action to be taken [it] does not ... require that the public body provide a detailed explanation about the significance or impact of the proposed final action.”

*Springfield*, which is now on appeal before the Illinois Supreme Court, also raises the question of whether the signing of the agreement by a majority of board members during a closed meeting constitutes a “final action” if the board subsequently votes to approve the agreement in open session. The lower court held that the closed session action did not amount to “final action” and the board did not violate the OMA. Again, this case is on appeal to the Illinois Supreme Court with a decision expected this year.

Very recently, the 4<sup>th</sup> District Appellate Court revisited the same OMA requirement in *Allen v. Clark County Park District*, 2016 IL App (4<sup>th</sup>) 150963. In *Allen*, the appellate court found that the park board’s public recital of agenda items approving a lease agreement and covenants did not sufficiently inform the public of the business being conducted because the board failed to describe any of the key terms such as (1) what was being leased, (2) the name of the lessee, (3) the lease term, or (4) the dollar amount before voting to approve each of these agenda items.<sup>iii</sup>

In *Allen*, the appellate court refrained from articulating a standard that would guide public bodies regarding the minimum level of specificity a board is required to provide the public before approving an agenda item, but noted that *Springfield* is currently pending on appeal before the Illinois Supreme Court. Rather than articulating a specific standard in *Allen* and risk having it overturned in *Springfield*, the appellate court held that “we are confident that no matter what standard the supreme court eventually adopts, the public recital given by the board in this case was insufficient.” *Allen* was remanded back to the trial court for further consideration.

Obviously, the Illinois Supreme Court’s decision in *Springfield* will be watched closely because of its potential impact on a board’s ability to transact business.

### Binding PAC Opinions

Since 2010, the OMA and FOIA have permitted the PAC to issue binding opinions to resolve disputes under these two laws. While those opinions are binding only upon the citizen and public body that are involved in the specific case, these opinions offer important guidance on how the PAC would likely rule in similar cases.

Half of the PAC’s binding opinions in 2016 ordered public bodies to respond to FOIA requests where they failed to either grant the request or issue a denial. Each opinion also reminded the public body that its failure to provide any response to the requester within the five-day period meant that the public body waived its right to assert that the request was unduly burdensome and to assess any fees. These opinions serve as an important reminder of the need for public bodies to work with their local counsel to respond within the statutory timeframes.

In Public Access Opinion 16-006, the PAC found that all emails pertaining to the transaction of public business are “public records” even if they are located on personal email accounts of public employees and that a public body fails to demonstrate that it has conducted a reasonably adequate search for all responsive records if it does not seek to obtain such records from personal email accounts.

In Public Access Opinion 16-007, the PAC found that a public body did not have reasonable grounds to find that litigation related to a village board’s decision to issue bonds was probable or imminent and, therefore, the board violated the Open Meetings Act when it went into closed session.

Finally, Public Access Opinion 16-009 is a 30-page opinion that deals with a variety of issues related to a criminal complaint filed by a public official and provides guidance with respect to several specific types of information. For example, while there is no specific exemption in FOIA, the PAC confirmed that an individual’s birth date is exempt information under Section 7(1)(c) because disclosure would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. The PAC also found that while home addresses, personal telephone numbers, wire transfer tracking numbers and Uniform Resources Locators (URL’s) for Facebook pages are all “private” information exempt under Section 7(1)(b) of FOIA, a public official’s Facebook and Skype account names are not “private information” and cannot be redacted in a FOIA response.

A hyperlink to access these and other PAC opinions is available at ILparks.org under the “Practice Tools” section.

### Other Valuable IAPD Educational Opportunities and Resources

In addition to the upcoming Annual Conference, IAPD presents several other educational opportunities and resources to help members stay current on changes to the OMA, FOIA and other laws. For instance, IAPD will once again be offering IAPD Boot Camps after the April election. While seasoned commissioners will find this refresher course to be particularly helpful, it is essential training for new commissioners. Completion of the live, in-person course offered by IAPD at the Boot Camps will once again satisfy the one-time OMA training requirements.

IAPD also offers several publications that contain sample policies and procedures, rules, outlines and other useful information pertaining to the OMA and FOIA, including the *Park District Code*, the *Park District Law Handbook*, and the *IAPD Legal Calendar*. A newly revised and expanded version of IAPD’s must-have *Guide to Open Meetings Act and FOIA* (the Sunshine Laws) will be released in the coming weeks. Every board member, executive director, FOIA officer and OMA designee will want a copy of the practical guide on these two important laws.

Finally, IAPD members have 24-hour access to nearly a dozen different online tools through the Member Resources and Practice Tools webpages under the Legal Assistance section at ILparks.org.

<sup>i</sup> The OMA already allows binding PAC decisions to be appealed under administrative review law rules regardless of when they are issued.

<sup>ii</sup> The actual title of the agreement and full name of the superintendent appeared on the agenda.

<sup>iii</sup> According to record, the agenda identified the final action items as “X. Board Approval of Lease Rate” and XI. Board Approval of Revised Covenants.” During the meeting, the Vice President introduced the items as “approval \*\*\* of the lease rates \*\*\* entertain a motion” and “approval for the revised covenants,” respectively. (Omissions in the original record) The subject motions to approve the two items were “approve the ‘rates that came from the appraisal” and to “accept the revised covenants,” respectfully.



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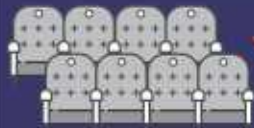


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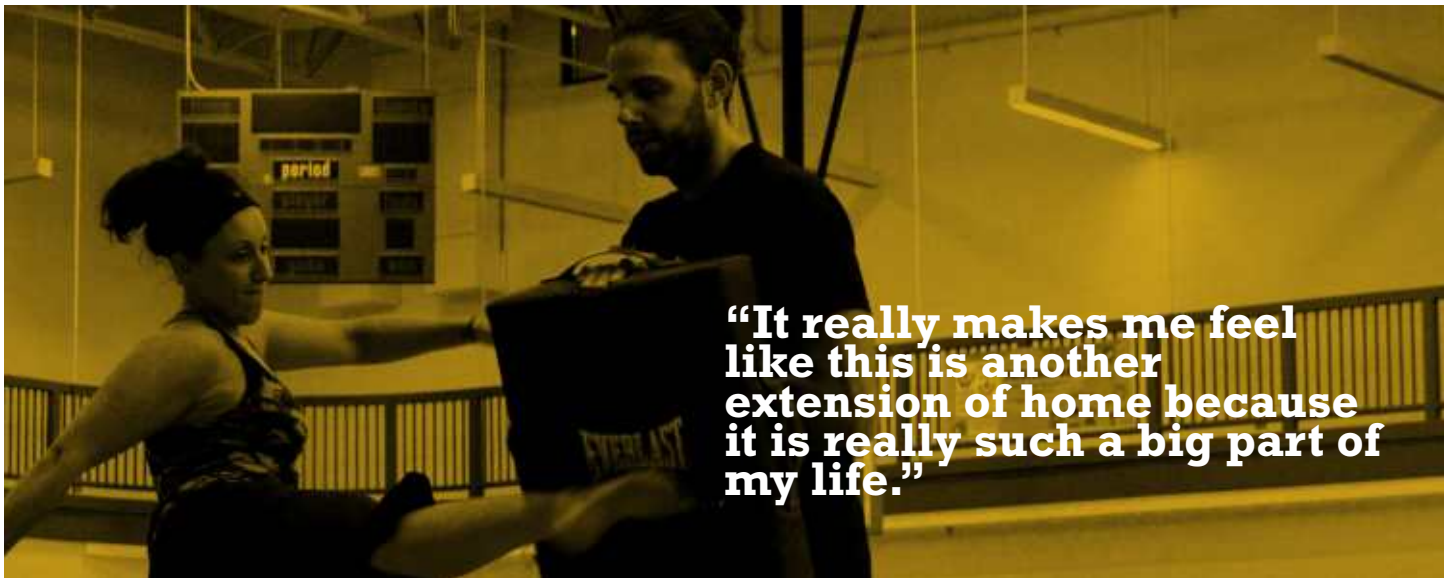
# FOSTERING A LIFETIME OF **FITNESS:**

Our Focus on Facility, Friendliness and Fun

By Christa Lawrence, Marketing Specialist, Mundelein Park & Recreation District

Fitness is a life-long journey. It improves our quality of life and can even extend it, but staying committed to healthy habits can be difficult. That is why it is important for a fitness club to understand not only what gets people through the door, but what motivates them to come back. The question park district fitness facilities must ask is "What keeps someone on track and how can we help?" With the growing competition of fitness clubs nearby we must also determine why our members choose us.

With this in mind, we interviewed several of our members at Park View Health & Fitness in Mundelein. We asked them why they chose to work out at our facility. We learned that, while the primary reason might vary from person to person, there were determining factors that were common to all. Our members choose Park View because of our facility, friendliness of staff, friendships made and the fun atmosphere.



**“It really makes me feel like this is another extension of home because it is really such a big part of my life.”**

**One size does not fit all: Park View provides choice and variety for our patron's individual needs.**

Park View understands that each person is unique with different interests, motivations and needs. We are a full-service fitness center with a large fitness floor, indoor track, indoor pool, gymnasium, exercise studios and cycling studio. This gives our members a choice in how they would like to exercise.

Rose Nudo-Semak, who manages Park View Health & Fitness, explains, “It is important to provide a variety of fitness equipment and class offerings that meet multi-generational needs. We have different brands of fitness equipment, including Life Fitness®, Cybex®, and Precor® and additions like the Marpo® Kinetic Rope machine, Techno Gym Kinesis One® and heavy bag and speed bag sets us apart from other fitness facilities.”

We offer a wide selection of group exercise classes to ensure there is something for everyone. We offer standard classes like Zumba, Yoga and indoor cycling as well as unusual classes like cardio drumming and kickboxing. Most classes are adaptable for any age or fitness level. Some classes like Zumba Gold target a specific group. The variety of classes we offer helps to keep our patrons interested in working out and prevent their routine from getting stale.

Park View's personal trainers know the importance of tailoring workouts to members' goals. Park View member, Greg Teipel told us, “I like having the workouts built for me. My trainer, Cody, is always changing them up to keep it interesting and challenging. He gives me a different perspective about what I need to be doing to get the best workout. Training helps me to stay motivated. I don't get bored, and it is helpful to have someone to push me.”

Personal trainers at Park View tailor routines to member's personal exercise preference. Jess Stoffel is a business owner and mother of two young children. Because of her busy schedule it is important to plan time to exercise. Jess works with personal trainer Brian Rejman. To keep her motivated, Brian combines a strength workout with Kickboxing. Jess has lost more than 30 pounds since she began the program two years ago. She convinced her husband to start training at Park View as well, and he has lost more than 50 pounds.

Offering customization and variety through our equipment, group exercise and personal training not only helps to keep our members motivated, but provides them with a more effective workout.

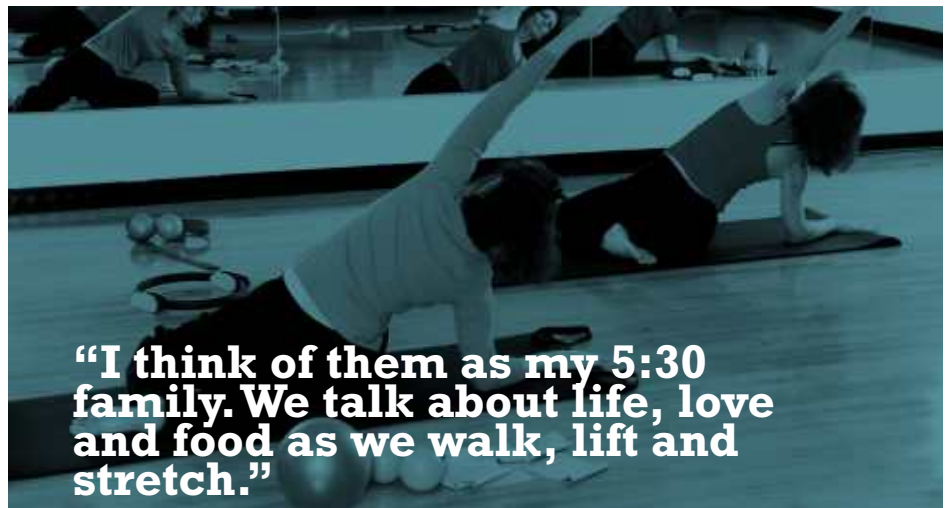
**Make it sparkle and keep it working: Our clean and well-maintained facility makes all the difference to our Park View Patrons.**

It is imperative to maintain the equipment, and continuously clean the facility. Everyone we interviewed mentioned the cleanliness of Park View. When we asked Jess what she liked about working out here, she answered, “The equipment is great. The hours and location are convenient and you get a lot of the same stuff you would get at other clubs without the expensive membership cost. I used to be a personal trainer at a club and would get frustrated at how long a machine might be down before it was repaired. This can really interrupt a workout routine. At Park View, you know the staff cares and they keep the facility up. They maintain the machines.”

Park View understands that keeping our facility clean and our equipment well-maintained keeps our members safe and healthy.

**The “Cheers” Effect: Park View's friendly atmosphere makes patrons feel comfortable, cared about and welcome.**

Remember the TV Sitcom “Cheers”—the place where “everybody knows your name?” At Park View, our staff strives not only to be helpful, but to know the names of our members. Members feel comfortable and welcome at Park View. Everyone we surveyed described Park View as having a “neighborhood feel.” Kathy Taylor, a member who often attends Park View with her husband said, “I love all the instructors that I work with. Everyone really makes me feel comfortable here. I've never felt embarrassed. Everyone has always made me feel welcome. I feel like I've gotten to know everybody...at the desk when you come in, everybody recognizes us. It really makes me feel like this is another extension of home because it is really such a big part of my life.” Kathy added that her life has changed completely since beginning water aerobics classes at the Park District. Not only has she lost a considerable amount of weight, but now Kathy is off all her medications and feels terrific.



**“I think of them as my 5:30 family. We talk about life, love and food as we walk, lift and stretch.”**

Our instructors are knowledgeable and committed to the well-being of each patron. Kathy's husband, Scott, who also lost a lot of weight and feels great since coming to Park View said, “I feel like there is a lot of personal attention from instructors about things I do during the course of the workout where I am corrected or made to modify something or to improve it. That's important. It feels like a personal class.”

Some of our patrons enjoy Park View so much that they have become employees. For example, Mark Tommes, a Marine Corp. veteran, participated in our Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds program for disabled Veterans is now a lifeguard at our indoor pool. When we asked Mark why he came to work here, he explained, “I love the staff here. It was the staff that made me want to work here. If I ever needed anything, they were right there. Whether I had questions, needed a towel, or just someone to talk to.” He has even recruited another co-worker from his other job to work at Park View.

Keeping our members feeling welcome and at ease means that they not only will keep coming to workout, but that they will feel comfortable asking questions or making suggestions to make their time here effective.

### **Let the good times roll: Friendships & Fun keep members coming back.**

At Park View we foster a casual friendly atmosphere where friendships flourish. This atmosphere has motivated some members to add a little fun to their work out. For example, our Tuesday and Thursday night cycling class has developed trivia nights. Members come with trivia questions to test the classes' knowledge while they pedal. Another example is the Monday/Wednesday/Friday morning aqua aerobics class where participants have become friends. They meet for brunch one Friday each month. By becoming friends, our members can encourage and keep each other accountable. When we asked member Marilyn Chaiken what she liked best about Park View, she replied, “I have met so many nice people at the club that it's become difficult to remember all their names. Kim and Gary are the two people I walk with and we share our stories with each other.”

Member Renee Baude talked about what she liked about Park View. She said, “My past two years at Park View have been amazing for me on a physical level and emotional level. My 5:30 workout has high school kids, an 86-year old man and every age in-between. I think of them as my 5:30 family. We talk about life, love and food as we walk, lift and stretch.”

Park View encourages fun by hosting events like “Sweat with Santa.” On this day group exercise classes are free with a canned food donation to the local food pantry. Classes take on a festive flair. Rose Nudo-Semsak explains, “The tradition of Sweat with Santa started in 1997. I started dressing up like an elf after my first year at Park View. Dressing up like Santa or an elf is a lot of fun. I really enjoy making people smile. The Sweat with Santa is truly a 'feel good' event. We laugh and have fun and know that we are helping the community!”

Park View Health and Fitness knows that by focusing on our facility, equipment and workout offerings as well as cultivating an atmosphere of friendliness and camaraderie, we can help our members to improve both their physical and emotional health. This is what keeps them coming through the door year after year.



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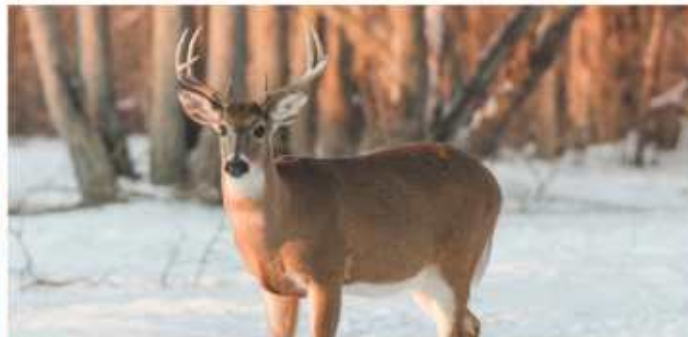


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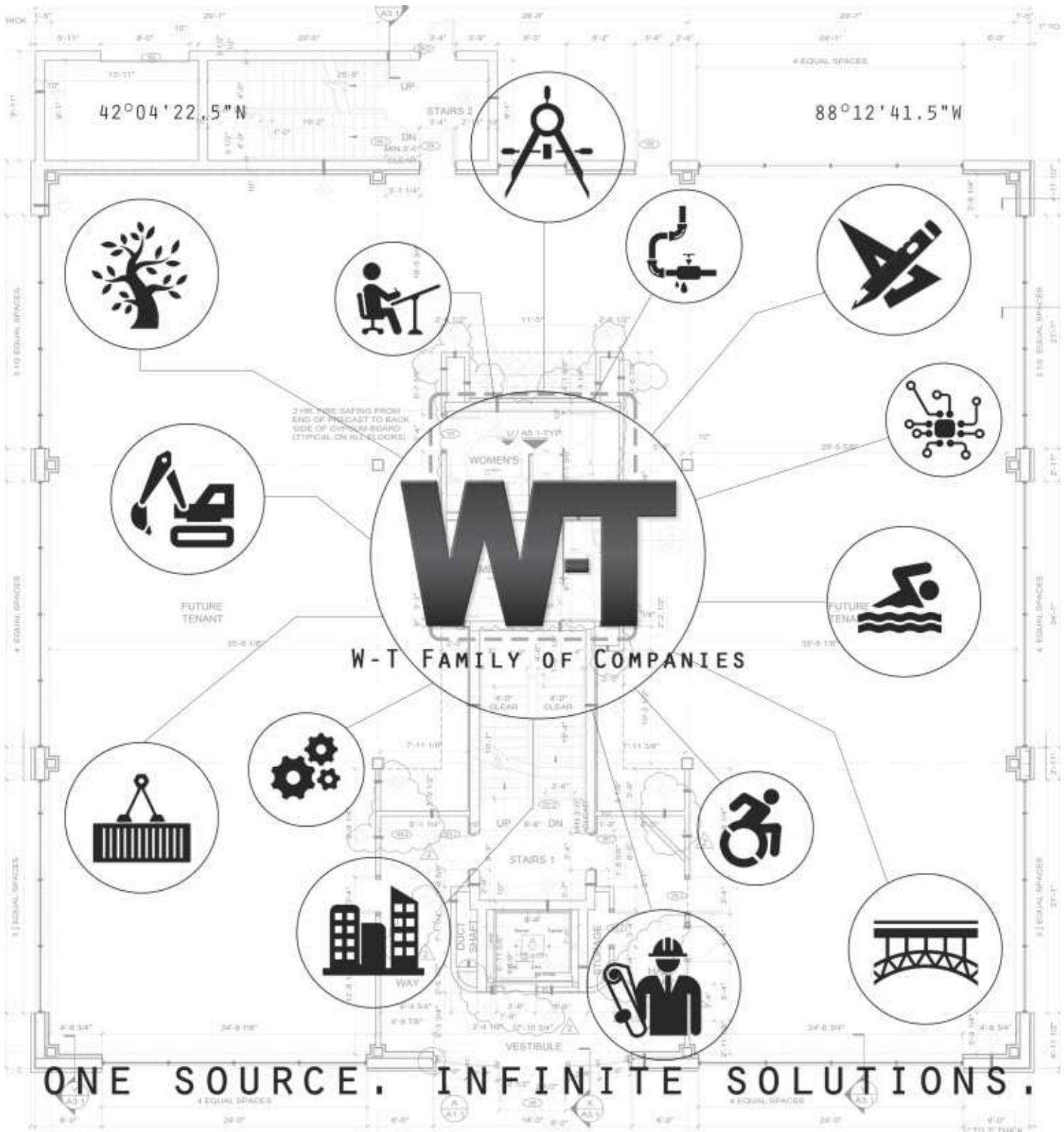
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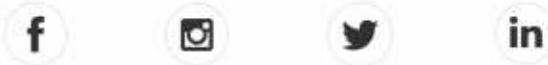
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*“we want to encourage our team to live healthy lifestyles – just as much as our residents.”*

# ***TOP 7 ways*** ***to reach any fitness goal –*** ***individual, community and agency related***

By **Liz Gnippe**, *Marketing Specialist with Gurnee Park District*

Successfully reaching any fitness goal, whether it be personal or community related, takes time, effort and dedication. Gurnee Park District (GPD) knows that well. For the past few years, the park district has been taking steps to be the health and wellness leader for the Gurnee community. Those steps quickly turned into a multi-year journey and goal for the entire agency.



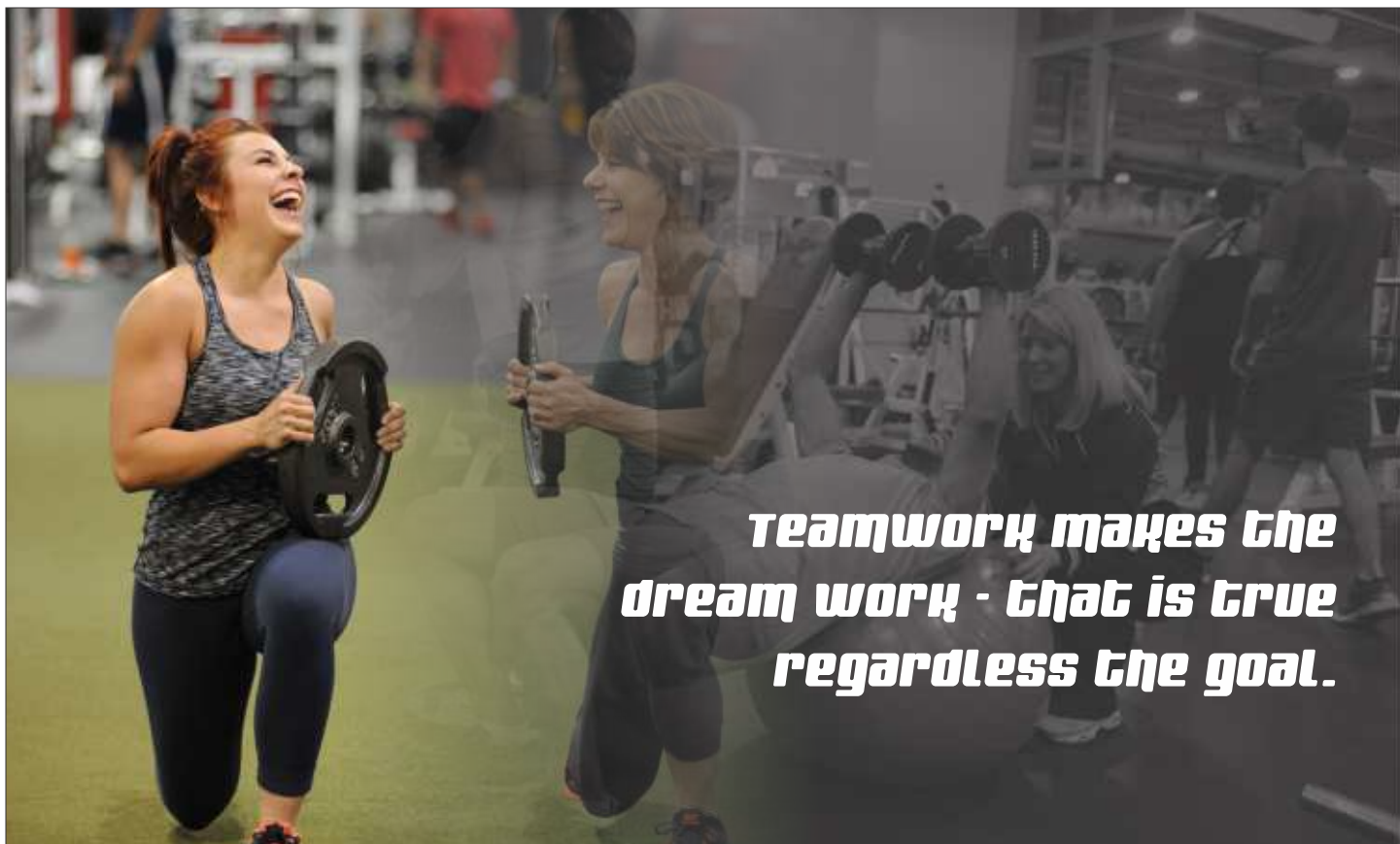
It all began in 2012 when GPD sent out a community-wide survey to all residents to evaluate their needs from a parks and recreation agency. The overall consensus showed patrons wanted and needed more fitness options close to home.

Gurnee Park District took this request seriously, and in 2013, they purchased Gold's Gym located in the heart of Gurnee. They revamped and rebranded the facility to create FitNation, a 75,000 square foot fitness center. The purpose behind purchasing this building was to create a dedicated space where residents could workout, have safe and affordable childcare as well as reach their personal health and wellness goals.

The park district set the bar high and went out to impact the lives of at least 6,000 people. They outlined a timeline to achieve this goal by 2015. Reaching this enrollment number did not come without a lot of hard work. The GPD team put all their energy and efforts into this project. They prepared the building for the grand opening, consulted with experts and utilized the below steps to reach their objectives.

After opening the facility and surpassing their membership goal by more than 400 members in only 18 months, GPD knew it was time to "Step It Up" once again. They made it a priority to provide not only revenue generating fitness opportunities to the Gurnee community but affordable experiences as well. In the spring of 2016, GPD created **GO GURNEE**, a free and accessible walking movement encouraging Gurnee residents to move for at least 30 minutes each day. This program was inspired by the U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek H. Murthy. He encouraged everyone in the nation to take the necessary steps to support and improve the health of our entire country. GPD was confident they could play an impactful role within their community by following the Surgeon General's example and expanding upon it.

Before they could get started, they needed a plan. Embarking on a new fitness journey is not always easy, as they learned with FitNation. It takes the right mind-set and strategy to conquer the many obstacles or challenges that may arise along the way. GPD followed these tips and tricks to be sure they could adequately support their community:



**Teamwork makes the dream work - that is true regardless the goal.**

**TIP 1. SET A GOAL**

Goals are the key to success. It is important to establish “why” it is necessary to accomplish this objective. The easiest place to start is with a SMART goal plan. SMART stands for specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely.

**SPECIFIC**

Clearly state the goal. Make it simple and sensible. Decide what needs to be accomplished and how the plan is going to be put into action.

Gurnee Park District wanted to be the community-wide leader in health and wellness to positively impact as many residents as possible. Thus, they created **GO GURNEE**, an accessible and affordable opportunity for all residents.

**MEASUREABLE**

Assign a number to your goal. Make it meaningful and motivating.

GPD asked residents to walk for at least 30 minutes every day in support of the **GO GURNEE** movement.

**ATTAINABLE**

Set short term goals, build a positive environment to ensure goals are met and celebrate success along the way.

**GO GURNEE** planned free and fun walking, running and strolling events throughout the year as well as free bootcamp and yoga in the park for those looking to mix up their workouts. These activities helped build an environment that created excitement around health and wellness as well as were an enjoyable way to celebrate and measure success.

**REALISTIC**

The objective must identify how willing and ready the individual/community/agency is to reach the goals outlined. If a realistic timeframe is not set, chances are much progress will not be made.

Gurnee Park District was more than willing and ready to take steps to build the **GO GURNEE** movement. A committee of key staff members were put together to start leading the way for the entire district.

**TIMELY**

Every goal should have a timeframe surrounding it to ensure you are on target. This creates a sense of urgency and motivation to all parties involved.

The GPD team was provided with three months to build **GO GURNEE**. It was important that there was enough time to build a solid plan, but not too much in order to create a sense of urgency and motivation for the team.

**TIP 2. MAKE A PLAN AND FOLLOW THROUGH WITH IT**

**GO GURNEE** and FitNation would not be here today to support the residents of Gurnee if GPD did not set a plan and follow through with it. The inspiration from the U.S. Surgeon General spearheaded the **GO GURNEE** movement. However, Susie Kuruvilla, Executive Director with GPD, led the way for staff to create an impactful and important movement. “Inspiration is important, but teamwork, motivation and dedication are the building blocks to success,” stated Kuruvilla. “As a district, we needed to create a plan and follow through with it for the community. Our residents were and still are relying on us to pave the way for them,” she added.

### TIP 3. FORM HEALTHY HABITS

It all started with the Gurnee Park District team. Under the direction of the district's Wellness Committee employees, the district was encouraged to step it up and set the example for the entire village. In 2016, Gurnee Park District Board of Commissioners approved all GPD team members receive a free fitness membership to FitNation. "By providing our staff with affordable and accessible fitness options, they can be the leaders and set the example for all. It is important to the board as well as myself that we all support our community through every outlet available," Kuruvilla explained. "We want to encourage our team to live healthy lifestyles – just as much as our residents."

### TIP 4. FIND YOUR MOTIVATION

Dig deep and find motivation. Gurnee Park District found that the community drove them to reach their fitness goals. The residents were relying on them to set the example and lead the community to better health. "It will be a long but meaningful journey. We are confident our team will be able to impact a myriad of people in Gurnee and hopefully one day the entire Lake County," stated Kuruvilla.

### TIP 5. BE ACCOUNTABLE

It is important to establish accountability. At Gurnee Park District, both the staff and community held them accountable to their goals. GO GURNEE showcased their employee champions on their Facebook page to show that the staff are leaders in the community's health and wellness. "It was great to see all the faces of GO GURNEE. It was another way our community members could connect with our team and see that we are truly laying the first stones for them. As a team, we are holding each other just as accountable as we are our residents," stated Kuruvilla.

### TIP 6. GET SUPPORT

Teamwork makes the dream work - that is true regardless the goal. "We are only as strong as our team. This was so evident when we brought FitNation to the Gurnee area and built GO GURNEE from the ground up. Our dedicated team always came together to support one another," Kuruvilla explained. It is important to note that GPD also relied on other community agencies for support in creating excitement around the GO GURNEE movement. One supporter was Warren-Newport Public Library. They partnered with Gurnee Park District to present the community with Stories and Strollers, a free GO GURNEE event geared towards families with small children to encourage exercising both the mind and body.

### TIP 7. HAVE FUN!

"In parks and recreation, we are all about having fun. If we are not the leaders in fun, who can be?" Kuruvilla asked. If an activity, goal or opportunity is selected that is enjoyable for all parties involved then they are more likely to accomplish the goal.

Please note, it won't always be easy, but it will be worth it. Follow these seven tips, dream big and achieve it! "Gurnee Park District prides itself on setting the bar high, taking the necessary steps to support our entire community and accomplishing great goals. We could not support the residents of Gurnee like we do without our amazing team. I am so grateful for the support, motivation and accountability our team provides me professionally and personally every day. Together we can be a FitNation," explained Kuruvilla.

It is never too late to make a positive change. Why not start today?

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HEALING COMMUNITIES THROUGH

# PLAY

OUR PILOT PROJECT IN FERGUSON, MISSOURI

BY VICTORIA SCHMITT BABB

Turn on the television, read the news, follow Tweets, scroll through feeds on Facebook and it is evident that our world is becoming more and more polarized than ever before. People are hunkering down in philosophical and dogmatic silos where perspectives are “us” versus “them” and if you are not *with* us then you must be *against* us. There is a loss of “we” happening in America. Now is the critical time to band together on something that can bring back the “we”. Now, not tomorrow.





*Go to [play4allcampaign.com/healingcommunities](http://play4allcampaign.com/healingcommunities) to watch a video of the Healing Communities Through Play Pilot Project in Ferguson, Missouri.*

What can revive the “we” in America? Many things, but for starters...play. Play is a neutral, but effective way to bring various sectors together. Regardless of differences, people from all walks of life can identify with play. We all know about the intrinsic force to play. Children need play, children want to play. Not only does the play space bring people literally together to interact with one another, work together, take turns, and foster friendships, but the effort to bring play to a designated site is something that is just as cohesive.

Two years ago, my childhood stomping grounds of Ferguson, Missouri lit up every news network across America and even attracted attention from international networks. The images of the upheaval, the anger, the violence still linger in some of our minds. A line of police officers stood wearing riot gear, shields in their hands, faces protected to thwart off a very angry crowd. The majority of “protestors” who reeked the most havoc came from areas outside of the quiet, suburban area in North St. Louis County. Nevertheless, the world watched as police and people struggled against one another. This just did not happen one night but a series of weeks, both in August of 2014 and again in November 2014.

After reading an article about local police officers handing out ice cream to children to help foster positive relationships, the Play 4 ALL team, an extension of Cunningham Recreation, wanted to expand on that effort and offered the idea to give something more sustainable... a playground. In less than 4 weeks, we reached out to the Fraternal Order of Police through the St. Louis Police Association and the City leadership in Ferguson. Both groups loved the idea to raise the philanthropic dollars to bring a playground to the Ferguson Community Center. The site was slated to one day have a playground when the city budget would allow for it. There was no need to wait. Both resources of funds and labor were mobilized in 48 hours. Equipment was ordered through GameTime and a community build date was set.

On September 29, 2016, a group of committed volunteers arrived on the playground site, some with tools in their hands while others had never picked up a tool in their life. Police officers, firefighters, local Ferguson residents including youth, homeless youth living at a Youth in Need transitional living program, Ferguson Police Chief, Ferguson Mayor, Ferguson small business owners, along with people from across the St. Louis news-viewing area put everything aside to focus on bringing play to those who matter most...the children.

It took approximately five hours to build the structure and anyone who has ever built a playground realizes that it is no easy feat. Side-by-side, volunteers lifted steel decks and fastened slides and climbers, passing tools back and forth while getting to know one another. The process of seeing each other as “equals” helps strengthen the ties of humanity; fostering a connection, building trust, dispelling myths and racial stereotypes – that was the REAL impact that day. Play 4 ALL realizes the healing process will involve much more than what we were able to do on that day, but it's a small step. A step in the right direction. People from all over St. Louis continue to bring their children to this playground to take photos. News media crews followed the project and aired it on multiple news channels.

The Ferguson Community Center playground is the instrument that will continue to bring people to a common place, a place where everyone matters. It was a collaborative gift by sectors that at one time were pitted against one another. As we left that day, a young man turned around, looked at the playground and said – “now that is a beacon of hope and awesomeness.” That statement was enough for us to say, let's do this again...and again.

***If you know of a community interesting in a Healing Communities Through Play project, please contact Play 4 ALL. Together we can engage the partners, mobilize the dollars and take a small step towards healing and togetherness. [www.play4allcampaign.com](http://www.play4allcampaign.com) [Victoria@play4allcampaign.com](mailto:Victoria@play4allcampaign.com)***

## PEOPLE & PLACES



### Greg Kuhs Retiring as Executive Director of Mount Prospect Park District

After devoting nearly 40 years to the Illinois park and recreation industry, **Greg Kuhs** will retire from the Mount Prospect Park District in June.

His career began as a supervisor for a special recreation association serving individuals with special needs. He

has held the title of superintendent and director at several Illinois park districts.

Greg stated, "Working in the park and recreation field has been a very rewarding experience as we provide vital programs, parks and facilities for all residents. During my career, I have had the good fortune to spend time at several great park districts and have worked with outstanding people in each community I have served."



### Rachel Lenz Appointed Executive Director of Macomb Park District

After working with the executive search team at the Illinois Association of Park Districts, the Macomb Park District has appointed **Rachel Lenz** as its next executive director following the retirement of Raymond Peterson. Ray was employed by the Macomb Park District for 40 years, 28 of those years as executive director.

Rachel earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from Western Illinois University and has served the Macomb Park District in several capacities since 2010. She has been able to increase the park district's visibility and she is well-respected in the community. Regarding her new position, Rachel stated "I am looking forward to bringing new, innovative facets to the Macomb community as we push forward in furthering our leisure and recreation opportunities."



### Deerfield Park District Selects Jeff Nehila as Executive Director

After working extensively with the Illinois Association of Park Districts, the board of commissioners of the Deerfield Park District has hired **Jeff Nehila** as its next executive director to lead their agency. "It was difficult making a decision from among such excellent candidates but we were able to find the best fit for our park district

with Jeff," stated Greg Lapin, board president.

Jeff has nearly 30 years of parks and recreation experience with a highly successful track record of establishing intergovernmental cooperation and improving relationships. For the past six years, he served as the executive director for the Grayslake Community Park District. Prior to that, Jeff led the Round Lake Area Park District as its executive director for eight years.

He has his master's degree in recreation management from the University of Wisconsin LaCrosse and his bachelor's degree in business management from the University of Maryland. Jeff is a Certified Park and Recreation Executive which is a mastery-level certification program for park and recreation management and administration professionals offered by the National Park and Recreation Association.

Jeff looks forward to providing a seamless transition of leadership for the district and to continuing to pursue excellence in the provision of services to the community.



### Rick Julison Retires from Deerfield Park District

**Rick Julison** retired as the executive director of the Deerfield Park District after 40 years of dedicated service in the field of parks and recreation. Rick started his career with the Arlington Heights Park District, later moving to the Hanover Park Park District as superintendent of parks and planning.

In 1989, he began his 27 years with Deerfield, holding the position of superintendent of parks and later executive director. During his tenure, he was involved in virtually all district projects including two OSLAD grant projects.

His most recent accomplishment was the redesign and construction of the 50-year-old Mitchell Pool in 2016. Rick served on the NSSRA board, is an active member of the Lions Club, DBR Chamber and several village commissions including the NW Quadrant Taskforce.

Rick touched the lives of many and played such an important role in the creation of many amenities in the community. He will be sorely missed.



## In Memoriam

**Glen Marcum**, 56, passed away on November 1, 2016, from complications of cancer.

Glen was first elected to the Joliet Park District Board of Commissioners in 2011 and had been president since 2013. He loved Joliet and spent his life trying to make it a better place.

He served on Joliet Public Schools District 86 Board of Inspectors from 1991 to 2003. Glen was the founding president of the Joliet Grade Schools Foundation for Educational Excellence, which provides scholarships and classroom grants for District 86 teachers and students.

Glen also served as chairman for the American Cancer Society Joliet Relay for Life for seven years, and was involved in the Will Buy Local Alliance, Joliet Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Will County Take Back the Night and Will County Old Timers Baseball Association.

He is survived by his wife and four children. Glen's warm heart and caring personality will be sorely missed.




### Membership in IAPD Pays Big Dividends!

The PowerPlay! grant program enables IAPD member agencies to apply for a grant to implement a model beyond-school program that emphasizes health, fitness and nutrition for children ages 5-13.

Member agencies **may receive up to \$1,000** to enhance an existing program or to create a new beyond-school program.

Go to IAPD's website at [ILparks.org/PowerPlay](http://ILparks.org/PowerPlay) to learn more about the grant and to download the application guide.


**Applications must be postmarked February 24, 2017.** Grant recipients will be notified **March 17, 2017.**

Apply for a PowerPlay! grant today!

## \$596,450

Total amount of PowerPlay! grants IAPD has awarded to member agencies since the program began.



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