

# 100 NEWS RELEASE

**From:** Rockford Park District - Therapeutic Recreation  
**For Immediate Release:** Friday, May 22, 2009  
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## Rockford Park District Receives Sport Wheelchairs

**ROCKFORD, IL** – Rockford Park District received a donation of 13 sport wheelchairs as part of The Hartford's "Paralympic Chairs for Champions –The Road to Chicago 2016." The program is a partnership between The Hartford Insurance Company, U.S. Paralympics, and World Sport Chicago, with the goal to advance programming at the community level in the Chicago area for people with physical disabilities. The Rockford Park District's Therapeutic Recreation department submitted a letter of application earlier this year to be considered for a donation of eight adult chairs and eight youth chairs. In total, 100 sport wheelchairs were donated to Chicago-area organizations.

The public presentation of the sport wheelchairs took place on Thursday, May 7th during a special event on Daley Plaza in downtown Chicago. The presentation also showcased several Paralympic sport demonstrations featuring both U.S. Paralympic and local-area athletes.

Due to the growing interest in wheelchair sports in the community, the Rockford Park District's Therapeutic Recreation Department has received an increased number of requests for the use of sport wheelchairs for events such as the three local wheel-a-thons, as well as for use in physical education classrooms and by therapists. The new sport chairs will also help in recruiting athletes to the Park District's adapted sports programs.

"With our recent Paralympic Sport Club Designation, we anticipate that our need for sport wheelchairs will quickly increase. This donation will allow us to accommodate the equipment needs of our growing sport wheelchair programs. This is truly awesome," said Recreation Coordinator Abby Oakley.

The Therapeutic Recreation Department coordinates wheelchair athletic programs for youth and adults in the northern Illinois area, and offers athletes with physical disability-related needs the opportunity to participate in sporting activities based upon interest and demand; among the offerings are wheelchair softball, track and field, sled hockey, golf, tennis, football, and basketball. The Park District is the only provider of such opportunities within a 60-mile radius, and serves approximately 30 youth and 20 adult athletes per year in various sports.

For more information, contact Abby Oakley at 815-987-1610 or [abbyoakley@rockfordparkdistrict.org](mailto:abbyoakley@rockfordparkdistrict.org).

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**ROCKFORD PARK DISTRICT**

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