

# 100 NEWS RELEASE

**From:** Rockford Park District - Community & Therapeutic Recreation

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## Park District Recognizes 20 Years of Therapeutic Recreation Services

**ROCKFORD, IL** – At the November 24 meeting of the Rockford Park District Board of Commissioners, a presentation was made by Laurie Anderson, Manager of Community and Recreation Services, and Brenda Parrish, Manager of Therapeutic Recreation, highlighting the history of Therapeutic Recreation services offered by the District. The presentation also included local and national trends impacting delivery of those services, as well as a summary of the survey results that continue to drive the department's program delivery.

In 1990, the landmark federal legislation, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), became law offering for the first time civil rights protections for all Americans with disabilities. Although the Rockford Park District already had many years of history in providing recreation programming and accessibility improvements for its citizens with disabilities, it recognized the passing of this legislation as an opportunity to ensure that it was in the forefront of welcoming all people disabilities into its facilities, parks and programs.

During the same time, the Park District took advantage of new Illinois legislation that enabled it to join forces with the Freeport Park District and formed the Northlands Association for Special Recreation (NASR), which allows each District to levy a special recreation tax to fund recreation programming and accessibility improvements for people disabilities. In 2007, the Belvidere Park District also joined NASR.

This year marked the Rockford Park District's 20-year anniversary of providing recreation programs to people of all abilities. As early as 1959, the Park District sponsored a summer camp for children with disabilities at Talcott-Page Park. In 1972, Camp Sunshine became the Park District's first official camp program for youth with disabilities, and continued well into the 1980s.

Today, Rockford Park District's Therapeutic Recreation services offers more than 80 programs, including Adapted Sports, Youth, Teen, and Adult recreation programs that are designed and staffed with specially-trained team members to aid and offer support so that individuals successfully participate in a variety of sport, social, cultural, and entertainment programs throughout the community.

"Needs and requests for disability-related services continue to increase each year, and the services that the Park District provides to the community are invaluable to the hundreds of families we serve," said Board President Doug Brooks.

(more)



## ROCKFORD PARK DISTRICT

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We welcome the opportunity to assist guests with disabilities to enjoy ALL our facilities, programs, and services. For assistance and information on accessibility, contact RPD Customer Service at 815-987-8800 (TTY, 888-871-6171).



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The Park District's Therapeutic Recreation services offers swimming, gymnastics, fitness, outdoor adventure sessions, weekend special events, sport lessons, youth and teen after school programs, skill building and sensory programs, and a variety of wheelchair sports. All ages three through adult who present a variety of disability related needs, including but not limited to individuals with Autism, Diabetes, Down Syndrome, physical/mobility needs, cerebral palsy, mental illness, learning disabilities, traumatic brain injuries, vision impairments, hearing impairments, and behavioral disorders, etc. are welcome to join the Park District.

Through Inclusion Services, individuals with disability-related needs may request an accommodation when registering for any program or lesson offered through the Rockford Park District. Disability-related support managed by a Nationally Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist can include trained, additional therapeutic recreation staff assistance, adapted equipment, sign language interpreter, visual systems, and program modifications.

Anyone interested in more information or would like a free visit to any of the therapeutic recreation programs offered, please contact the Therapeutic Recreation Manager or visit our web site at [www.rockfordparkdistrict.org](http://www.rockfordparkdistrict.org) for a brochure.

For more information, please contact Brenda Parrish, C.T.R.S. at 815-289-1407.

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