

MEDIA RELEASE

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CITY OF KITIMAT WINS BCRPA PROGRAM EXCELLENCE AWARD ***Kitimat honoured with 2018 Program Excellence Award***

Vancouver, BC (May 2, 2018) - The BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) today presented its Program Excellence Award for members with a population under 15,000 to the City of Kitimat for its i-Can program. The award recognizes creative, successful and innovative program which may serve as a model for other recreation and parks agencies to enhance their services.

The i-Can program provides children with special needs the opportunity to participate in a successful and comfortable environment that is adapted to their individual needs. The programs are designed to be inclusive with peers, while offering a unique, physically challenging level of participation that the child can achieve success while still have fun (based on FLOW theory – finding the appropriate balance of challenge and skill in an activity to make the participant successful). The program tried to run with a 1:1 child to staff ratio. The benefits of having lower child/staff ratios are to allow the proper adaptations and accommodations to support and guide the child while encouraging independent activities as well.

The program tried to run with a 1:1 child to staff ratio. The benefits of having lower child/staff ratios are to allow the proper adaptations and accommodations to support and guide the child while encouraging independent activities as well. In general, lower child/staff ratios are one indicator of a higher-quality program as staff can be more sensitive and responsive to the individual child's needs.

Kitimat Leisure Services developed the i-Can program to run parallel to the youth programming and resulted in two hybrid programs that were developed; one for swim lessons and the other for youth summer programs. The program met with so much success that more swim lessons and summer programming are underway to accommodate children with disabilities into the leisure services programming at their own pace and comfort level.

“It is our pleasure to present the City of Kitimat with this award for Program Excellence for the tremendous work they have done to offer creative and inclusive recreation programming. The *i-Can* program is a glowing example of the kind of impactful, collaborative initiative that can be developed to meet the needs of a community’s citizens,” said Rebecca Tunnacliffe, CEO of the BC Recreation and Parks Association.

The Program Excellence Award is one of five provincial awards presented at the BCRPA’s annual Symposium today in Vancouver. The conference brings together members of the recreation and parks sector from across BC, including elected officials, volunteers, members of the business community and others interested in building and sustaining active, healthy lifestyles and communities in BC.

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BACKGROUND

The British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) is a not for profit organization dedicated to enhancing quality of life in our province. The Association and its extensive network of members, in the parks, recreation, physical activity and culture sector support the development of healthy individuals and communities and sustainable environments and economies.

Since 1958, the BCRPA has provided leadership, training and support, fostering the principles of accessibility and inclusiveness, to help its members meet provincial and local health and physical activity priorities. www.bcrpa.bc.ca