

MEDIA RELEASE



AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE ANNOUNCED FOR COMMUNITIES ACROSS BC *BCRPA presents Provincial Awards of Excellence for innovation in the recreation and parks sector*

Vancouver, BC (June 22, 2020) – Six communities have won Provincial Awards of Excellence from BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) in recognition of their outstanding efforts and innovation in the recreation and parks sector. As a result of COVID-19 physical distancing restrictions, this year’s Awards of Excellence were presented virtually by BCRPA on behalf of over 3,300 recreation and parks sector members from across BC, each working to enhance the physical and mental health, wellness, connectedness and quality of life of their communities. Awards included:

Parks Excellence Award:

District of Peachland for *Ray Kandola Heritage Pier* [www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards] – Ray Kandola Heritage Pier is a 120 metre, wheelchair accessible, multi-use pier that runs parallel to Peachland’s downtown public waterfront. The innovative design and development of this open space, bordering the community’s central hub, Heritage Park, has removed long standing challenges to accessing the 13 kilometers of Peachland’s steep public waterfront along Okanagan Lake. The Pier now serves to enhance community culture by providing locals and visitors alike an accessible destination to enjoy a variety of activities and community events.

Facility Excellence Award for projects over \$1 million:

Township of Langley for the *Aldergrove Credit Union Community Centre (ACUCC)* [www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards] – The ACUCC facility was created with the goal of supporting the inclusion of all genders, ages, and cultures within Langley’s 125,000+ residents, bringing four key recreation components together in one central location: an arena, community spaces, aquatics waterpark, and a playground. The establishment of the modern, energy efficient ACUCC in its central downtown location not only allows it to be accessible by multiple forms of transportation (walking, cycling, transit and driving), but it supports the overall revitalization of business activity in the Township’s core.

Facility Excellence Award for projects under \$1 million:

City of Richmond for the *Edwardian Cottage* [www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards] – The Edwardian Cottage is an iconic 1920s heritage building, located in Terra Nova, one of Richmond’s oldest settlement areas on the northwest corner of Lulu Island. In 2014, after a comprehensive planning, design and stakeholder engagement process, the Edwardian Cottage was rehabilitated, restored, and retrofit with a wheelchair ramp, becoming the new home of the Terra Nova Nature School for children from preschool to 13 years old. The facility’s design emphasizes conservation, optimizing building performance, continued improvement in energy use, water efficiency, and a high indoor environmental quality. The establishment of the Terra Nova Nature School supports the community-identified need for more early childhood learning opportunities, and to connect young people to nature in order to develop lifelong ecological literacy and stewardship.

Program Excellence Award – Population over 15,000:

City of Surrey for the *Sensory Friendly Spaces program* [www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards] – The City of Surrey has one of the highest rates of Autism in British Columbia. To address this, and guided by the City’s principle of inclusion, Surrey partnered with the Canucks Autism Network (CAN) to create and promote several sensory-friendly options for people living with autism spectrum disorder or who have sensory processing needs. The Sensory Friendly Spaces program aims to ensure people living with Autism feel welcome at City events and facilities. Recreation centre staff across Surrey have also trained to support patrons to use sensory friendly kits, and the City’s firefighters have received training and kits to aid them in emergency situations assisting people with autism and other sensory processing needs.

Program Excellence Award – Population under 15,000:

City of Nelson for the *Nelson and District Youth Centre Program* [www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards] – The Nelson and District Youth Centre program is a social enterprise developed to empower children, youth, and families through connection, education, and recreation in a safe, fun, and creative environment. The program offers barrier-free programming, allowing anyone to participate in programs at little or no cost. The Centre’s facilities include an indoor all-wheels park, a bouldering cove, multi-sporting court, dance studio, art and band rooms, kitchen, and a new Makerspace - all designed to increase physical literacy and social well-being.

Community Leadership Award:

City of Burnaby for the *Warming Centre Team* [www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards] – The Warming Centre Team supports each of Burnaby’s three warming centre locations, operated by the City of Burnaby’s Parks Department. Each day, Warming Centre Team members address a wide range of complex social and health issues, including mental health, addiction, housing and homelessness, medical health concerns, hunger, and overall life preservation. Along with basic shelter for the night, Burnaby’s warming centres provide washroom facilities, mats, tables and chairs, hot beverages and snacks, and space for people’s belongings. Last year the Warming Centre Team provided shelter for more than 2,500 visitors, connecting them with agencies that can help them access the services they need.

The BCRPA Provincial Awards recognize excellence in the field of recreation as well as exceptional efforts to enhance recreation facilities, programs and services.

“These award recipients each illustrate tremendous creativity, ingenuity and a standard of excellence to aspired to. Each project reflects a notable dedication to accessibility and inclusion, sustainability, and a focus on enhancing the quality of life of their communities by supporting recreation opportunities that promote active living and overall health,” said Rebecca Tunnacliffe, BCRPA Chief Executive Officer. “Not being able to hold our annual awards ceremony in person this year, we have chosen instead to present them today as another way to celebrate June being recreation and parks month. Recreation and parks have never been more important to our lives than they are right now, and our awards help further highlight the impactful work being done in communities across BC.”

BCRPA Provincial Awards celebrate recreation as an essential social service which builds healthy individuals, communities and environments. The Association supports communities in their efforts to enhance quality of life through leadership and advocacy in physical activity and healthy living initiatives, grants and professional development.

Images available
Background included

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BACKGROUND:

The British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) is the voice of public recreation and parks, and champions the sector's development of healthy people and connected communities. Representing over 95% of the provinces' local governments, we play a central role in supporting the enrichment and improvement of the quality of life of British Columbians. Our work as a not-for-profit organization focuses on creating community connectedness and well-being based on the knowledge and recognition that recreation and active living, as well as access to parks and the natural environment, have significant impacts on our physical and mental health.

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 mental health and physical activity priorities.

www.bcrpa.bc.ca/about-us/