

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, May 2, 2024



DISTRICT OF WEST VANCOUVER WINS BCRPA PROGRAM EXCELLENCE AWARD **Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Program Honoured with Award for Program Excellence**

Penticton, BC (May 2, 2024) -- BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) presented its **Program Excellence Award** today to the District of West Vancouver (www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards).

The award recognizes innovative programs that have been successful in improving individual and community-level social and physical well-being. These programs also serve as a model for other local governments and organizations to enhance their services.

The Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Program (WIC) offers programs and services to help newcomers to Canada and/or new communities to feel welcome and connected. WIC is designed to support overcoming language barriers, cultural differences, social isolation, access to information and resources, employment challenges and community connection.

With a focus on promoting and developing a newcomer's physical fitness, social skills, and overall physical and mental well-being, the program epitomizes equity, diversity, inclusivity and accessibility. Programs include English classes, learning buddies to support newcomers to navigate barriers and resources, a social activity lounge to build social connections, museum tours to learn about local arts and culture, as well as opportunities to access low-cost theatre and skating programs.

"The District of West Vancouver's Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Program is a great example of programming that empowers new community members and helps build social connections," said Katie Fenn, BCRPA CEO. "We are thrilled to present BCRPA's Program Excellence Award to this outstanding program."

The Program Excellence Award, sponsored by RC Strategies, is one of six Provincial Awards of Excellence presented during BCRPA's annual Symposium conference held this year in Penticton. Each award is presented on behalf of more than 5,000 recreation and parks sector members from across BC working to enhance the physical and mental health, wellness, connectedness, and quality of life of their communities.

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BACKGROUND

BCRPA: Inspiring and connecting professionals to build healthy and resilient communities through the power of recreation and parks.

The British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA), a not-for-profit organization, plays a central role in leading the enrichment and improvement of the quality of life of British Columbians and their communities. We do this by championing the power of recreation and parks.

Ours is a story of creating community connectedness and individual 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 that improve the quality of life of every British Columbian.

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