

# MEDIA RELEASE



Thursday, May 2, 2024

## **AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE ANNOUNCED FOR COMMUNITIES ACROSS BC**

*BCRPA presents Provincial Awards of Excellence for innovation  
in the recreation and parks sector*

Penticton (May 2, 2024) -- Six communities were awarded Provincial Awards of Excellence from BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) today in recognition of their outstanding efforts and innovation in the recreation and parks sector. This year's Awards of Excellence were presented by BCRPA at their annual Symposium conference in Penticton on behalf of more than 5,000 recreation and parks sector members from across the province.

### **Awards Included:**

#### **Parks Excellence Award:**

**The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation** for the *sθəqəlxenəm ts'exwts'áxwi7 Rainbow Park* ([www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards](http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards)).

The *sθəqəlxenəm ts'exwts'áxwi7 Rainbow Park* in Vancouver is an urban oasis situated in the heart of the City of Vancouver's downtown core. The park is a dynamic space and serves as a model of accessible and universal design. It has created a barrier-free and accommodating environment that services 30,000 people who work and live in the area. The park includes pocket wetlands, pollinator plants and native plant species significant to the host Nation's culture, food and medicine. The park acts as a community porch for residents, office workers and tourists, enriching the urban experience in a memorable way.

**Honourable Mention:** City of Coquitlam for Sheffield Park.

#### **Facility Excellence Award for projects under \$3 million:**

**Prince George** for the *Jumpstart Multi Sport Court* ([www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards](http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards)).

The *Jumpstart Multi Sport Court* is the city's only fully accessible multi-sport court and the largest of its kind built to date. The 28,000 square foot design accommodates physical, cognitive and sensory disabilities, supporting casual play and a variety of organized sports and para sports. The facility gives users of all ages the opportunity to participate and is a shining example of how to bring multi-generations together and stay active.

**Honourable Mention:** West Shore Parks & Recreation for the Thrifty Foods Skatepark.

#### **Facility Excellence Award for projects over \$3 million:**

**The Township of Esquimalt** for the *Gorge Pavilion Park*. ([www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards](http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards)).

*Gorge Pavilion Park* is an inspiring 6,000 square foot Pavilion, built in Esquimalt's Gorge Park. The facility marks the site of the area's first Japanese tea house destroyed nearly 80 years ago and includes captivating artwork and interpretive displays honoring the legacies of early Japanese immigrants. The

Pavillion is constructed primarily of local Vancouver Island timber and stone, incorporating innovative energy-saving features and green initiatives and is a leading example of how to bring a thriving and sustainable community hub to life, one that supports healing, placemaking and community connection.

**Honourable Mention:** City of Prince George for Canfor Leisure Pool.

**Program Excellence Award:**

**District of West Vancouver** for the *Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Program* ([www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards](http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards)).

The **Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Program** is an example of programming that empowers new community members to build important social connections. It offers programs and services to help newcomers to Canada and to their communities feel welcome and connected with support to overcome language barriers, cultural differences, social isolation, access to information and resources, and employment challenges. With a focus on promoting and developing physical fitness, social skills, and overall physical and mental well-being, the program epitomizes equity, diversity, inclusivity and accessibility.

**Festivals and Events Excellence Award:**

**Village of Burns Lake** for *A Century Together: Celebrating 100 Years Together*. ([www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards](http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards)).

**A Century Together: Celebrating 100 Years Together** was the largest event ever hosted in Burns Lake. The inclusive and accessible event brought together over 1,200 people with connections to the area, including six First Nations. The event included community visual and musical arts, Indigenous performances, a triathlon, as well as raft races, and a parade. The focus was on reconciling the past and setting a direction for the future of the community within the spirit of celebration and understanding.

**Community Leadership Award:**

**Nicky Brown** of Westshore Parks and Recreation Society ([www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards](http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards)).

**Nicky Brown is the Community Leadership Coordinator** with Westshore Parks and Recreation Society. She has worked in recreation for over 18 years in the Greater Victoria Region and is widely recognized for her dedication, commitment and passion for supporting gender inclusive sports programs, education and training for parents and staff on physical literacy and providing marginalized youth access to programs. Nicky's contributions and dedication to building a healthier, more vibrant community is truly inspirational. Her passion for making a difference to the lives of youth in West Shore will have a positive impact on the community for years to come.

"This year's Provincial Awards of Excellence recipients have each cultivated the intrinsic power of recreation in parks in innovative and inspiring ways unique to their communities," says Katie Fenn, CEO of BCRPA. "In doing so, they have set a remarkable standard to aspire towards, one that can benefit British Columbians from across the province in the promotion of greater inclusivity, accessibility, equity and sustainability."

The BCRPA Provincial Awards recognize outstanding special events, programs, facilities, and parks which reflect ideas, innovation, and services that have impacted the recreation and parks sector.

BCRPA Provincial Awards celebrate recreation and parks as essential social services that build 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.

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**For more information:**

**Connie Mah**

**Manager, Operations and Sustainability, BCRPA**

**p) 604.629.0965 ext. 258**

[cmah@bcrpa.bc.ca](mailto:cmah@bcrpa.bc.ca)

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/](http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/about-us/)