

EACH YEAR MRPA RECOGNIZES AGENCIES OR ORGANIZATION IN MINNESOTA FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS. THE FOLLOWING ARE THE RECIPIENTS OF THE MRPA AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE FOR PROJECTS COMPLETED IN 2017.



CITY of CRYSTAL



ADMINISTRATIVE OR MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

CITY OF CRYSTAL - PARK SYSTEM MASTER PLAN

The City of Crystal developed its first park and recreation system master plan in 2017. As a rapidly growing community in the 1960s and 1970s, many recreational facilities were built during that time. However, very little development has been done since. The need for active living opportunities has increased over the years, and the ways citizens recreate have changed. The master plan was completed to help them understand the needs of their residents, and to make sure their parks and recreation system reflects that now and into the future. The planning process began with an inventory of current park amenities. They took this inventory and compared it to national standards. Through this process they learned a number of ways to help their parks meet community need. For instance, it noted they had more softball fields than the city needed, but not enough rectangle fields for more recent sports like soccer, lacrosse, rugby and ultimate. It also allowed them to take note of many unused facilities they had in their parks, like their eight warming houses that were built 40-50 years ago.



MINNEAPOLIS PARK AND RECREATION BOARD - CUSTOMER SERVICE BOOT CAMP: BACK TO THE BASICS STAFF TRAINING PROGRAM

The Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board's 20-year comprehensive plan articulates a vision of creating "dynamic parks that shape city character and meet diverse community needs." A strategy to meet this vision is to "develop and implement a customer service program, including training, to ensure customer service techniques are applied effectively and consistently across the organization." This is exactly what has happened through the training development efforts of two Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB) employees, Annie Olson and Iris Pahlberg Peterson. This interactive training series offers fundamental customer service philosophy through skills and techniques to recreation staff both in the field and behind the scenes.

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MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

EDEN PRAIRIE PARKS AND RECREATION - SUMMER CAMP PREVIEW



In response to the expressed desire of parents wishing to plan their family's summer calendar, Eden Prairie Parks and Recreation developed a marketing effort to make summer camp offerings available for viewing and pre-registration several weeks earlier than in previous years.

Instead of receiving summer camp information in March, parents were able to access program titles, dates and ages through a new document entitled "destination summer" sent through the school e-flyer system and posted on the City website on January 20. The destination summer document also provided a timeline showing when families could access full camp descriptions and pricing online (February 17) and the date when registration would open (March 15). Additionally, the department added a free "summer camp preview day" on President's Day (February 20, 2017) where families could come to one location and meet camp staff, try out a new sport or activity, ask questions and take advantage of early-bird registration.



HUTCHINSON PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION - HUTCHINSON SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING MASTER PLAN

The Hutchinson signage & wayfinding master plan was an idea that stemmed from the Imagine Hutchinson Downtown Plan. Within this plan it called for better signage around the community to point people towards key destinations. The signage was put up at key areas around the community, along with directional arrows with noted locations along the Luce Line Trail. This signage will serve visitors and residents of Hutchinson for years to come with a standardized look and feel to the downtown area and trail system.

THREE RIVERS PARK DISTRICT - THREE RIVERS PARK DISTRICT WEBSITE

Three Rivers Park District completely rebuilt its website, and the new site launched in April 2017. The new site added several features to ensure that the site is meeting current best practices in order to better serve the public. Fundamental in the project was a site built on mobile first design (responsive website design), meeting Americans with Disabilities Act standards – WCAG AA level compliance, improved navigation and interactive mapping, search and search engine optimization capabilities, a feature allowing visitors to select translation of content into other languages, enhanced social media, image and video integration, integration of the Park District's new online reservation/registration system, and employment portal, as well as the use of an open source content management system.




PARKS & FACILITIES

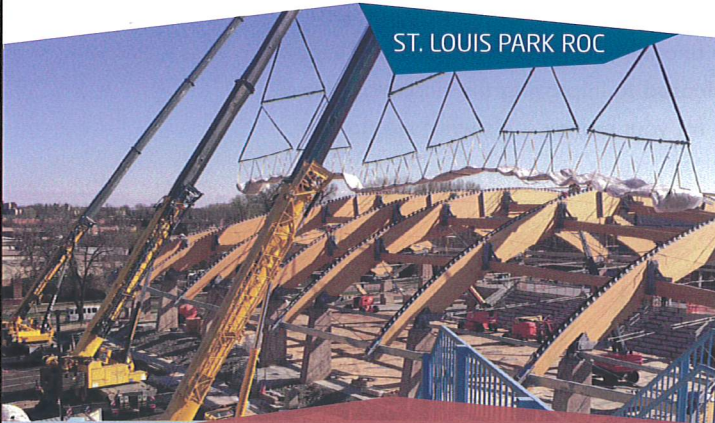
CITY OF ST. LOUIS PARK - RECREATION OUTDOOR CENTER (ROC)

The City of St. Louis Park has taken outdoor skating and the term “multi-use facility” to another level! The City’s new Recreation Outdoor Center (ROC for short), provides an unparalleled skating experience during the late fall/winter months, artificial turf space during the spring and a unique venue for concerts, performances, public gathering and so much more during the summer and early fall. This facility is truly a community asset. The St. Louis Park Hockey Association was instrumental in bringing this unique and exciting concept to the residents of St. Louis Park. In early 2014, members of the St. Louis Park Hockey Association approached the City about the possibility of building a covered refrigerated outdoor ice rink on the campus of the current Rec Center. City Staff and Hockey Association members presented the idea of a covered refrigerated outdoor rink to the City Council in the spring of 2014 requesting approval to begin the design process.





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FARMINGTON PARKS AND RECREATION - VERMILLION RIVER AND TRAIL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

The City of Farmington faced a serious trail issue in Rambling River Park because the Vermillion River was eroding away its banks until it was at a point where an existing paved trail in the park was sitting on the edge of the river and if no action was taken the trail would have eventually been washed away. Because of erosion, there was also a significant safety risk by continuing to allow people to use the trail. As a result of this issue, the City turned to other possible project partners to correct it. However because the Vermillion River is the only Minnesota Department of Natural Resources designated protected trout stream in the seven county metropolitan area, this project had to be carefully considered and planned so as not to negatively impact the brown and rainbow trout living in the river.



These photos show one of the project areas before and after differences in the trail and river locations

GOLDEN VALLEY PARKS AND RECREATION - BROOKVIEW

The project began with the need for the replacement of the outdated Brookview Community Center. The original building was constructed in 1919 and served as a private golf course and country club until 1966. In 1967, the City of Golden Valley passed a referendum to purchase the golf course, the clubhouse, pool and surrounding parkland in order to develop the Brookview Recreation Area. After some remodeling and new park amenities, Brookview Recreation Area opened in 1969. In 2013, the Golden Valley City Council appropriated funds to replace the community center. Ultimately, the city council determined the old community center would be replaced with a new facility. Brookview opened December 1, 2017. It has gathering space throughout the entire building: Three One Six Bar+Grill, many meeting rooms with a view of the golf course, and an indoor playground.



Make your park the envy of communities everywhere. Unique aquatic play environments create everlasting memories and bring families back again and again. **All through the wonder of water.**



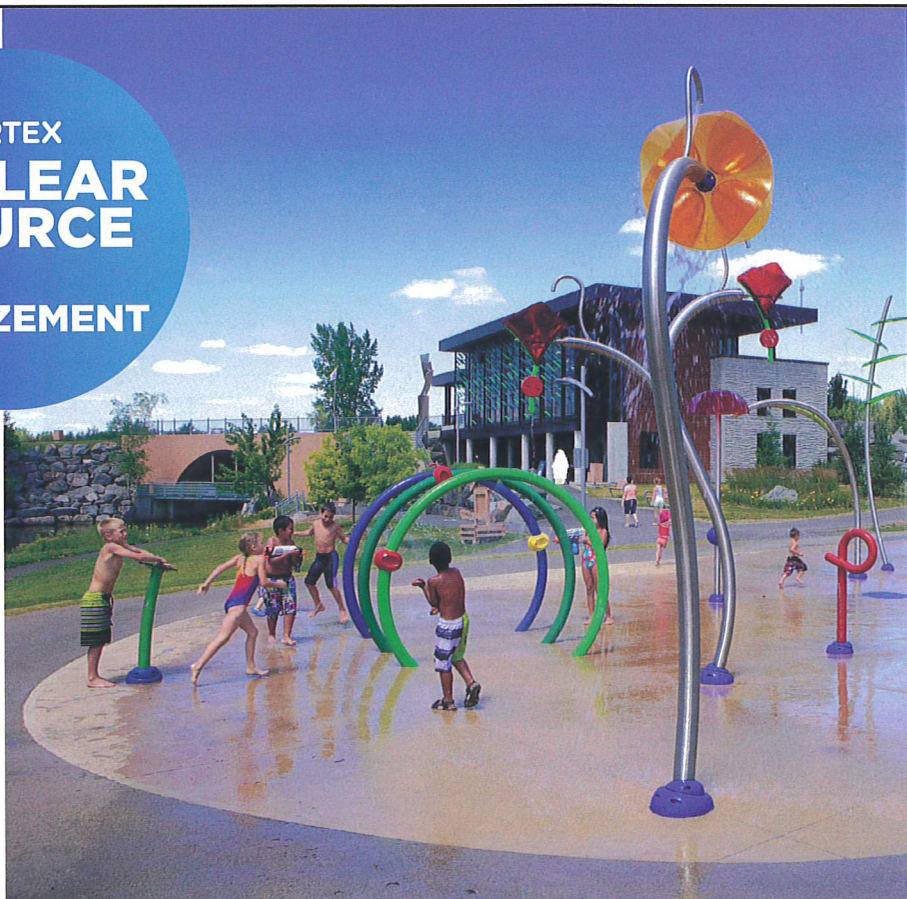
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HUTCHINSON PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION - HUTCHINSON OUTDOOR FAMILY AQUATIC CENTER

The Hutchinson Family Aquatic Center opened its doors to the public on June 3, 2017. The facility spans over 12,000 square feet, the two bodies of water hold over 400,000 gallons of water with water depth varying from zero to twelve feet. It accommodates 730 swimmers and is home to one of three water zip-lines in the state of Minnesota, a climbing wall, one and three meter diving boards, an enclosed speed slide, an enclosed tube slide, an open body slide, a lazy river and a zero-depth area with several play features. The leisure area includes a six lane, 25-yard by five-lane 25-meter lap pool. The facility has outdoor lockers, updated locker rooms and three family changing rooms. Finishing off the updates is the Shark Food concession stand serving a variety of hot and cold food/snacks and beverages with three party tents available for rent.



GOLDEN VALLEY PARKS AND RECREATION AND THREE RIVERS PARK DISTRICT - SCHAPER PARK CHALLENGE COURSE AND INCLUSIVE PLAY AREA

The first outdoor fitness challenge course in Minnesota opened at Schaper Park in Golden Valley in fall of 2017, as well as an all-inclusive play area designed to meet the recreation needs of kids and families of all ability levels. The fitness challenge course includes obstacles that participants navigate over, under, around and through as they race against the clock. The challenge course is designed for ages 13 and up and promotes wellness, fitness and health through active recreation for teens and adults. The new park features are the result of a partnership that included the City of Golden Valley, Three Rivers Park District, Minnesota/Wisconsin Playground, Paul's Pals, Golden Valley Rotary Club, and the Golden Valley Community Foundation. Schaper Park is owned by the City of Golden Valley. Three Rivers Park District operates the Luce Line Regional Trail, which travels through Schaper Park. The park includes parking and restrooms available for regional trail users, and the new challenge course and play equipment enhance the experience for trail users.

PLYMOUTH PARKS AND RECREATION – THE NORTHWEST GREENWAY

The Northwest Greenway (NWG) is a 350-acre wooded nature preserve with winding bike and pedestrian trails that stretches approximately two linear miles from Lake Camelot on the east side of Plymouth to Wayzata High School on the west. In 2015, after nearly 15 years of planning and acquiring property for the greenway, the City had finally acquired enough property to begin building trail segments. By the end of 2017, three trail segments (2.46 miles) and a pedestrian bridge were built, officially opening the NWG's east/west corridor. The trails provide connections to 19 community neighborhoods and five parks (including a dog park).



RAMSEY COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION – KELLER REGIONAL PARK TUJ LUB COURTS

Due to the increasing popularity of this culturally significant game, Ramsey County in collaboration with the City of Maplewood, and members of the Hmong community developed a formal Tuj Lub court. Ramsey County Parks and Recreation initiated a two-year planning process that was mainly driven by collaboration and engagement with the Hmong community, City of Maplewood, and City of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation. A critical outcome goal that was established in the planning process was to make this a cultural significant project that reduced barriers for addressing recreational disparities within the Hmong community. This critical goal helped to define the planning and development for the Tuj Lub court project.



ROSEVILLE PARKS AND RECREATION – CEDARHOLM COMMUNITY BUILDING AND GOLF COURSE

It has been a long road of community engagement, planning and development, industry expertise, and local leadership that led to the authorization and realization of the Cedarholm Community Building and Golf Course project. The project took an aging golf course clubhouse and rebuilt the facility into a welcoming community building. Roseville demonstrated its support for the Cedarholm Community Building throughout the four-year process. Community members became engaged, stayed engaged and grew into involved advocates. The vision to go beyond replacing the clubhouse and instead, build a community building guided community support. This vision aligned with the core values and key directions outlined in the department master plan.



PROGRAMMING AND EVENTS

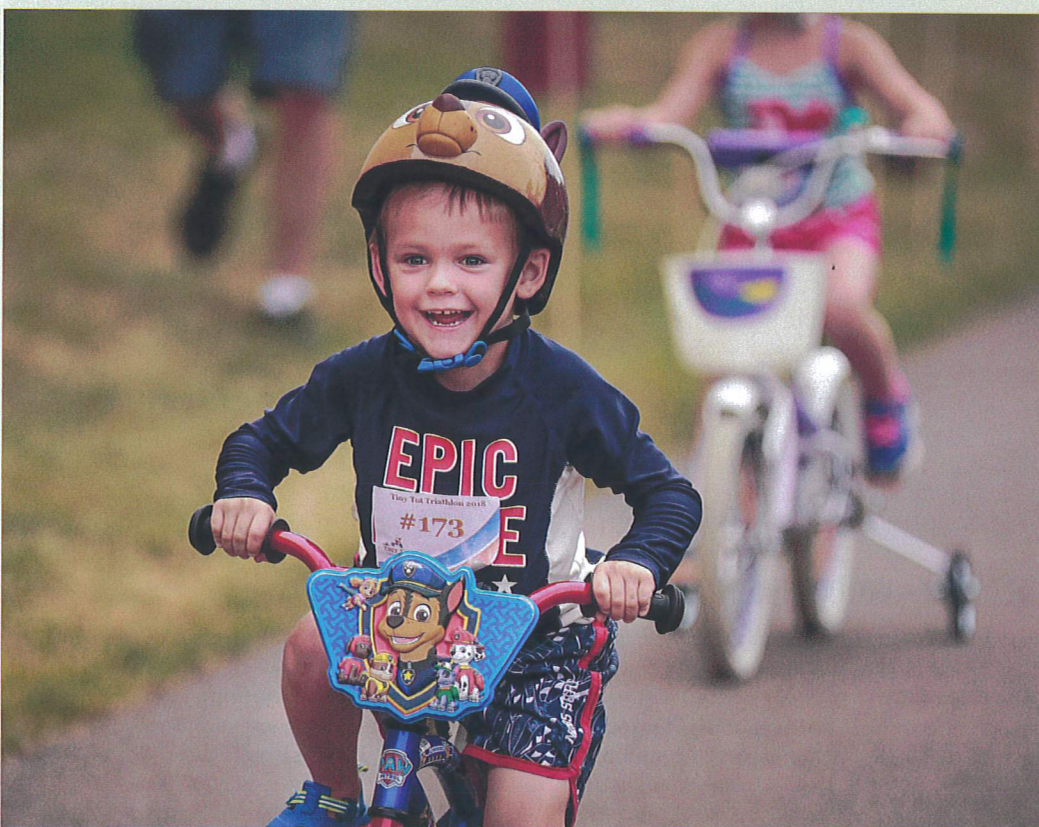
THREE RIVERS PARK DISTRICT – EXPLORER CAMPS

Three Rivers Park District partners with other agencies and cities in suburban Hennepin County to provide explorer camps, which offer a day camp experience during the summer. The majority of camps are for youth; however, camps also are offered for seniors and adults. The camps began as a pilot program in 2016 with the objective of providing camp experiences in the first-tier communities of suburban Hennepin County. Three Rivers Park District has a robust summer camp program offered at its parks; however, the majority of the Park District's regional parks and park reserves are located miles from the first-tier communities of Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park, Robbinsdale, Crystal, New Hope, Golden Valley, St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Edina and Richfield. The goals of the program are to connect participants to nature in their community; introduce communities that have been identified as underrepresented in the Three Rivers Park District system to the parks; and to provide high-quality, safe, educational, and fun experiences.



WOODBURY PARKS AND RECREATION – TINY TOT TRIATHLON

Inspired by the addition of a city operated splash pad at HealthEast Sports Center, the tiny tot triathlon was a fun race for the youngest athletes in Woodbury! Participants between the ages of two and five years old rode, scooted or pushed themselves along the Sports Center's walking paths; then ran, walked or skipped a length of path; splashed through the splash pad and finally dashed to the finish line where a police officer and firefighter awarded them with sticker medals.



SPONSORSHIP AND PARTNERSHIPS

CITY OF ST. LOUIS PARK – WESTWOOD HILLS NATURE CENTER WOODLAND AND SHORELAND HABITAT

This project is a multi-year project with numerous sponsoring agencies, partnerships and volunteers with one goal – to restore and maintain the natural grounds (habitat) of Westwood Hills Nature Center. This project includes partnering with several organizations, soliciting and gaining several grants, donations, implementing numerous volunteers, contributing multiple forms of in-kind operations, and implementing restoration practices. This culminated in a phased-in management protocol and practice; and leading to the creation of a natural resource management plan for the entire grounds that will be used, into the foreseeable future, to enhance, maintain and manage the renewed landscape.



COTTAGE GROVE PARKS AND RECREATION – WOODRIDGE PARK INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND

The educational campaign began with the Parks Commission and City Council. By defining the need and community impact of an inclusive playground, the project was awarded with concept approval and a financial commitment of \$350,000 from the City. The table was set for this historic challenge. In September of 2017, the City of Cottage Grove hosted a grand opening celebration for the Woodridge Park Inclusive Playground. This 24,000 square foot playground has broken barriers of play for roughly 95,000 people within the recreational regional service area. As the Cottage Grove Mayor stated in his speech that day, "Although it may not show up in science books, we in Cottage Grove believe PLAY is a fundamental need of all people, and a fundamental need of a strong community."

ELK RIVER PARKS AND RECREATION – WILLIAM H. HOULTON CONSERVATION AREA

The William H. Houlton Conservation Area is a 335-acre parcel of land within the Elk River city limits that sits at the confluence of the Elk and Mississippi Rivers. The property was privately owned by a prominent local family since the mid-1800s until the time it was purchased and donated to the City of Elk River in 2014. The Trust for Public Land (TPL) bought the property for \$3.1 million dollars with funds from the outdoor heritage fund, then donated the property to the city for a natural habitat conservation and hunting area. The Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) obtained a grant for \$160,000 to develop a natural resource management plan for ecological restoration and committed an additional \$597,600 toward restoration and enhancement of the property. The City agreed to a final three-year lease for agricultural use to a man that had farmed the land for decades, which ended in the fall of 2017. The City developed and implemented a hunting plan, a volunteer group began removing invasive species from the property and following crop harvesting, prairie and oak savanna restoration began.



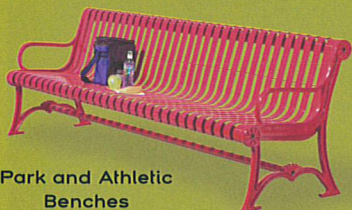
HUTCHINSON PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION – ROTARY PARK PLAYGROUND REBUILD

Rotary Park Playground Rebuild was a collaborative project between the City of Hutchinson and the local Rotary Club. Over the years, a strong partnership developed to improve the usability of their adopted park. The installation of the original playground for Rotary Park was in 1993. Discussions to replace the original playground began in 2011. At that time, the Rotary Club paid to repaint the structure to extend the usability of the structure in order to allocate funds towards replacing the complete playground unit. In December 2016, demolition of the old structure began for installation beginning May 2017. The Hutchinson Parks Department and the Rotary Club agreed upon \$60,000 as the cost for the structure. In October 2016, the Rotary Club presented the City Council with a \$40,000 donation as an initial down payment on the purchase of the new playground equipment. The Rotary Club will pay the remaining \$20,000 over four years.

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LAKEVILLE PARKS AND RECREATION – WEST LAKE MARION MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL

The West Lake Marion Mountain Bike Trail was first proposed to staff and Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Committee (PRNRC) by a group of local cycling enthusiasts who eventually formed a group called the Lakeville Cycling Association. This group detailed the growth and popularity the sport has gained in recent years and requested the City establish a designated area for off-road biking in Lakeville. In cooperation with City staff, Lakeville Cycling Association, volunteers and a contractor, constructed approximately five miles of trail. The trail includes sections for beginner to advanced rider levels and is open year-round for riders to enjoy. The primary funding for the project was provided through the City's park dedication fund, the total cost of the trail construction was \$122,214. Lakeville Cycling Association was originally asked to raise \$10,000 towards the project, but as interest grew for the project, it was determined additional trails could be added to the site. Lakeville Cycling Association raised and donated \$37,829 towards the project, over 30% of the total cost. The project went out for bid in February 2017, was constructed throughout the summer and officially opened for use in September 2017, with a ribbon cutting ceremony.





NEW BRIGHTON PARKS AND RECREATION – LIONS PARK

The City of New Brighton and Ramsey County partnered together to work on Lions Park in New Brighton. A 9.1 acre park that includes a lacrosse field, lighted softball field, a first of its kind in New Brighton - poured in place surface accessible playground and tot lot, and large environmentally friendly pervious pavement parking lot. The total cost of this project was over \$1.86 million.

The City of New Brighton was responsible for soliciting and securing funding for the project. Funding came from the following partners: Rice Creek Watershed District, New Brighton Lions Club, Ramsey County Parks and Recreation, Change for the Better Funds, and direct donations from various local businesses in New Brighton. Over 35% of which came from sources other City tax levy. This funding, along with volunteer labor, made this project possible. The New Brighton Parks and Recreation Department worked with 37 volunteers who provided over 198 hours of volunteer time to install the playground.



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March 13-15, 2019

**Minnesota Festivals & Events Association
2019 Conference, St. Cloud, MN**

We're heading to Saint Cloud for next year's exciting MNFEA Conference! Join us March 13-15, 2019 for this great opportunity to network with MNFEA members, the Board of Directors, and leading event organizers from throughout Minnesota. You'll gather valuable insights for enhancing your event operations and discover products and services to help support your events. You won't want to miss it!

More details coming soon at www.MNFEA.com





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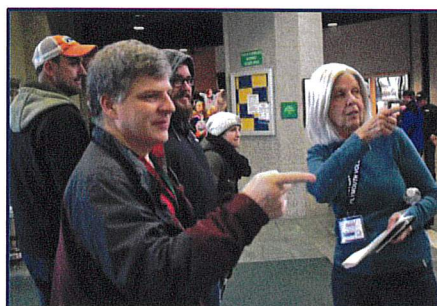
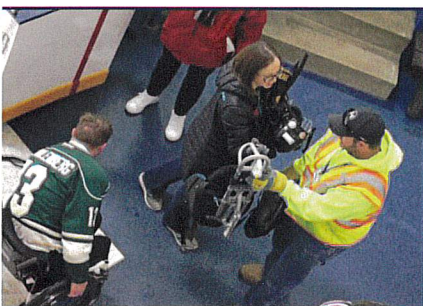
VOLUNTEER INITIATIVES

CITY OF ST. LOUIS PARK – RECYCLING CHAMPIONS

In 2017, the City of St. Louis Park launched a new program called Recycling Champions. This program engages residents who are enthusiastic about recycling and willing to share their time to educate others. The volunteers receive training that delves into issues around recycling, and then are given opportunities to share their knowledge throughout the community. One of the ways they can get involved is to volunteer at community parks and recreation events to help attendees properly sort their recyclable and compostable items from the trash. In 2017, Recycling Champions played an important role in keeping the recycling clean at two major events in the city's parks. Parktacular is the official kick off to summer held at Wolfe Park each June and put on by the nonprofit Parktacular Inc. Strut Your Mutt is fundraiser walk put on by the nonprofit Best Friends to support homeless animals. Both of these events had collection for both regular recycling and organics recycling (for food waste and compostable foodservice items), and volunteers were integral to ensuring a successful outcome. These are examples of large special events where we have used Recycling Champions.



PLYMOUTH PARKS AND RECREATION – USA HOCKEY SLED CLASSIC



The Minnesota Wild and Minnesota Hockey held the eighth annual USA Hockey Sled Classic, presented by the NHL in November of 2017. The City of Plymouth was proud to host the four-day event, which took place at the Plymouth Ice Center (PIC) from November 16-19, 2017.

The national tournament had a record high of approximately 28 teams from the United States and Canada participating with 330 players registered throughout the four day tournament. The majority of tournament logistics (registration, rules, schedules, etc.) was organized by USA Hockey, while Plymouth Parks & Recreation took the lead when it came to organizing and scheduling volunteers. Nearly 500 volunteer hours were recorded for this four day event. City volunteers assisted athletes by carrying equipment, helping with transfers from wheel chairs to hockey sleds, greeting Ice Center guests, operating scoreboards, and many more assignments.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL 2017 AWARD WINNERS!