

BRITISH COLUMBIA RECREATION AND PARKS ASSOCIATION 2009 ISSUE RESOLUTION



Access to Recreation

Recreation is a primary provider of physical activity opportunities and is recognized as a preventative measure on the health promotion spectrum. Regular physical activity is proven to reduce risk factors for chronic disease and improve overall health. Recreation also provides opportunities for people to develop social networks. However, people who live in poverty often do not have the financial and social resources to experience the benefits recreation has to offer.

There is growing recognition that health is influenced by more than individual choice. Research shows that health is related to factors such as income and social status, social support networks, social and physical environments, and access to services. In order to improve community health, these factors must be considered when structuring programs, services and policies.

Leaders in recreation can seize the opportunity to take action and ensure that people who live in poverty can experience the health and social benefits of recreation and physical activity. Recreation can mitigate the worst effects of poverty by providing opportunities for improving physical health and creating social connections.

Whereas:

In the parks, recreation and culture sectoral strategic plan adopted in 2008 by the membership, one of the strategic result areas is accessibility and inclusion;

Whereas:

BCRPA delivers *Everybody gets to play™*, a community mobilization initiative to remove barriers to recreation for low-income children and families;

Whereas:

BCRPA is implementing the *Everybody Active Initiative* to provide resources, workshops and grants for communities to address the barriers to physical activity for people living in poverty;

Whereas:

Recreation and physical activity opportunities are a means to engage community members and promote inclusion and social well-being;

Whereas:

People who live in poverty often do not have the financial and social resources to experience the health and social benefits of recreation;

Whereas:

Leaders in the field of recreation are in a position to connect and work with community stakeholders in order to improve the quality of life of people who live in poverty;

Whereas:

Leaders in the field of recreation are in a position to advocate for organizational support and policy change to increase opportunities for and remove barriers to physical activity for people who live in poverty

Therefore be it resolved:

That members of the Association provide leadership in their communities and support the implementation of initiatives which remove barriers to participation and increase access to physical activity opportunities for people who live in poverty.