

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, May 8, 2025



AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE ANNOUNCED FOR COMMUNITIES ACROSS BC

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

Whistler (May 9, 2025) -- Six communities were awarded **Provincial Awards of Excellence** from **BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA)** today, recognizing outstanding achievements and innovation in the recreation and parks sector. The Awards were presented at BCRPA's annual Symposium in Whistler on behalf of more than 5,200 recreation and parks sector members across the province.

Awards Included:

Parks Excellence Award:

City of Richmond for **Minoru Park – Lakes District** (www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards).

The Minoru Park – Lakes District renewal beautifully balances ecological innovation, accessibility, and cultural preservation. Through extensive public consultation, the City of Richmond revitalized this beloved space with rainwater-fed lakes, enhanced biodiversity, and inclusive design elements, creating an urban oasis that serves as a vital refuge and gathering place for the community.

Facility Excellence Award – Projects under \$6 million:

City of Surrey for **Totest Aleng: Indigenous Learning House** (www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards).

Totest Aleng: Indigenous Learning House is a visionary facility co-created with Semiahmoo, Kwantlen, and Katzie First Nations. More than a building, it is a living cultural space for Indigenous artists and the wider public to gather, learn, and connect through arts and knowledge-sharing in an inclusive and sustainable setting.

Facility Excellence Award – Projects over \$6 million:

City of New Westminster for **təməsewtx[™] Aquatic and Community Centre** (www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards).

The təməsewłtxw Aquatic and Community Centre sets a national benchmark as Canada's first completed Zero Carbon Building – Design certified aquatic facility. With a focus on sustainability, accessibility, and Indigenous placemaking, the Centre provides state-of-the-art recreation, wellness, and community gathering spaces for generations to come.

Program Excellence Award:

City of Burnaby for **Harmony for All** (www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards).

Harmony for All breaks down barriers to music education and participation through free instrument lending, scholarships, and outreach programming. Since 2022, this innovative initiative has empowered more than 4,500 residents — especially newcomers, low-income families, and individuals with diverse abilities — to access the transformative power of music.

Honourable Mention: District of Saanich for Cedar Hill Second Chance Café - Cridge Centre for the Family Brain Injury Partnership Program.

Events and Festivals Award of Excellence:

City of Penticton for **Frost Fest Winter Carnival** (www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards).

The Frost Fest Winter Carnival brought Penticton alive with free and low-cost family events, Indigenous cultural programming, outdoor recreation, and inclusive celebrations. Through dynamic partnerships and a commitment to accessibility, Frost Fest created a vibrant, resilient winter community tradition.

Honourable Mention: District of Saanich for their Indigenous Music Festival.

Community Leadership Award:

City of Surrey for the **Surrey Accessibility Leadership Team** (www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards).

The Surrey Accessibility Leadership Team (SALT) is a model of community-led accessibility leadership. By centering lived experience and co-developing policy, public spaces, and civic engagement practices, SALT has embedded accessibility across City initiatives, championing equity, inclusion, and innovation.

"This year's recipients have each demonstrated the transformative power of recreation and parks to foster well-being, inclusion, sustainability, and community pride," said Katie Fenn, CEO of BCRPA. "Through their leadership, creativity, and commitment, they have set inspiring new standards for what is possible in communities across BC."

The BCRPA Provincial Awards recognize outstanding events, programs, facilities, parks, and community leadership that advance the essential role of recreation and parks as social services critical to healthy, connected 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.

Since 1958, BCRPA has provided leadership, training, and support, fostering accessibility, sustainability, and inclusiveness to help members meet provincial and local priorities that improve the health and quality of life for all British Columbians.

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