

MEDIA RELEASE

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CITY OF SURREY WINS BCRPA COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD

Surrey Accessibility Leadership Team awarded Community Leadership Award

Whistler, BC (May 8, 2025) – BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) proudly announced today that the City of Surrey’s Surrey Accessibility Leadership Team (SALT) is the recipient of the 2025 Community Leadership Award of Excellence (www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards).

This prestigious award recognizes an outstanding leader or organization that, through their unique strengths and approaches, acts and inspires others to build a healthier, more vibrant community. Award recipients demonstrate responsiveness to community needs by creating a vision for change rooted in shared values, while championing the power of recreation and parks.

The Surrey Accessibility Leadership Team exemplifies these ideals through their pioneering, community-led model built on the principle of "Nothing about us without us." Comprised of City of Surrey staff and community members with lived experience of disability, SALT has been instrumental in advancing accessibility initiatives across the municipality. Their contributions include shaping Surrey’s Accessibility Action Plan, advising on inclusive park and civic space designs, and integrating accessibility into city-wide programs and infrastructure.

Among their many accomplishments, SALT introduced a groundbreaking co-chair leadership model that shares power between a City of Surrey staff member and a community member with lived experience. They also established an honorarium process to recognize and value the expertise of community advisors, setting a new standard for inclusive civic engagement. Through collaboration with multiple departments and external organizations, SALT ensures accessibility improvements are sustainable, impactful, and driven by the community itself.

“I am thrilled to present our esteemed Community Leadership Award to the Surrey Accessibility Leadership Team,” said Katie Fenn, CEO of BCRPA. “Their leadership, innovation, and unwavering commitment to equity and inclusion are transforming Surrey into a model community for accessibility. Their work will leave a lasting impact, not only in Surrey, but across the broader recreation and parks sector.”

The Community Leadership Award is one of six Provincial Awards of Excellence presented during BCRPA’s annual Symposium conference, held this year in Whistler. 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, 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/