

MEDIA RELEASE



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AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE HANDED OUT TO COMMUNITIES ACROSS BC ***BCRPA presents Provincial Awards of Excellence for innovation in the recreation, parks, and culture sector***

Vancouver, BC (May 2, 2018) – One individual and six communities have won Provincial Awards of Excellence from the BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) in recognition of their outstanding efforts and innovation in the recreation, parks and culture sector. This year's awards were presented in six categories:

Parks Excellence Award:

City of Trail for the *Columbia River Skywalk* [www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards] – The Columbia River Skywalk project specifically addressed issues related to Trail's walkability and connectivity as the West and East communities are separated by the mighty Columbia River. Prior to this project, the only other means to cross the river was via the main traffic bridge's walkway, which was noted as feeling unsafe by pedestrians. The connection to other urban trail systems, the installation of onramps, and the grade and width of the bridge have ensured 100% accessibility to users of all abilities.

Facility Excellence Award for projects over \$1 million

City of Richmond *City Centre Community Centre* [www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards] – The City Centre Community Centre is a vibrant two-storey facility located within a mixed-use development. The LEED Gold community centre offers modern, multi-purpose spaces for a range of community recreation programs and services that are tailored to residents of all ages and abilities. The community centre also features an art studio, music rooms, social room, community living room and fitness centre. The facility includes state-of-the-art audiovisual equipment such as integrated touch panels, flat screen televisions, built-in projectors and screens, music recording equipment, and a listen assist and induction loop system.

Facility Excellence Award for projects under \$1 million

City of Taylor for the *Community Services Hub* [www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards] – The Community Services Hub was built with inclusivity in mind, with full wheelchair access, including wheelchair accessible doors, counter, conference table, and washroom implements. It also hosts the monthly meetings of the Taylor Access and Inclusion Committee, whose aim is to improve accessibility and inclusivity for the community.

Program Excellence Award – Population over 15,000

City of Richmond for its *Pollinator Pasture* program. [www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards] – The Pollinator Pasture and supportive free programming raises awareness of the plight of wild pollinators, particularly bees, and empowers communities to actively engage in solutions for habitat loss. The initiative also transforms underutilized urban sites into aesthetically pleasing and scientifically viable pollinator pastures. The Pollinator Pasture exemplifies how harnessing the power of artistic practices can inspire community action, engagement and stewardship of pollinators in British Columbia.

Program Excellence Award – Population under 15,000

City of Kitimat for its *I-Can* program. [www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards]

The I-Can program provides children with special needs the opportunity to participate in a successful and comfortable environment that is adapted to their individual needs. The programs are designed to be inclusive with peers, while offering a unique, physically challenging level of participation that the child can achieve success while still have fun (based on FLOW theory – finding the appropriate balance of challenge and skill in an activity to make the participant successful).

Award of Merit

Cathryn Vokering Carlile.

Cathryn was the General Manager of the Community Services Division for the City of Richmond for 16 years. [www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards] She retired in October 2017 after serving 43 years in local government. She was involved in shaping major events in Richmond. **The Richmond Tall Ships event** in 2002 attracted more than 400,000 attendees and then the **Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games** hosted the world in Vancouver and Richmond. Cathy brought the concept of the **speed skating Oval to Richmond** and championed its development as part of the senior leadership team for the City. She led her work life with her values of respecting people, working hard, seizing opportunities, being interested and engaged, letting others shine, being a leader and having fun front and center.

Award of Merit

Community Recreational Initiatives Society (CRIS), Kelowna

CRIS is a unique, non-profit and charitable organization that uses adaptive equipment to enable people of all abilities and disabilities to experience the great outdoors, interact with nature, and live healthier lives. Most importantly CRIS creates memories and experiences, while enhancing quality of life.

[www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards]

The BCRPA Provincial Awards showcase the innovative work being done throughout the province.

“These award recipients each reflect a distinct level of leadership and dedication to enhancing the quality of life of their communities, often through collaborative, innovative design and access to the natural world,” said Rebecca Tunnacliffe, BCRPA Chief Executive Officer. “Each project has once again raised the bar to a new standard of excellence for how to approach greater inclusion, sustainability and support active, healthy lifestyles for all British Columbians.”

The Awards of Excellence are presented annually at BCRPA’s Symposium. The conference brings together members of the recreation, parks, physical activity and culture sector from around BC, including elected officials, volunteers, members of the business community and others. This year’s event was held in Vancouver.

The BCRPA Provincial Awards celebrate recreation as an essential social service which builds 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. The annual awards recognize excellence in the field of recreation as well as exceptional efforts to enhance recreation facilities, programs and services.

Images available

Background included

For more information:

Connie Mah

Administrative Assistant, BCRPA

p) 604.629.0965 ext 258

cmah@bcrpa.bc.ca

BACKGROUND:

The British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) is a not for profit organization dedicated to building and sustaining active healthy lifestyles and communities in BC. Established in 1958, the Association is a central resource agency for members and stakeholders of the recreation, parks, physical activity and culture sector, providing leadership, training and support to help meet national, provincial and local priorities. Through a diverse network of partners and extensive programs and services, BCRPA actively advocates accessibility and inclusiveness to recreation and physical activity. <http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/>