

MEDIA RELEASE



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AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE ANNOUNCED FOR COMMUNITIES ACROSS BC ***BCRPA presents Provincial Awards of Excellence for innovation*** ***in the recreation and parks sector***

Whistler, BC (May 5, 2022) – Seven communities were awarded Provincial Awards of Excellence from BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) today in recognition of their outstanding efforts and innovation in the recreation and parks sector. This year’s Awards of Excellence were presented by BCRPA at their annual Symposium conference on behalf of over 4,000 recreation and parks sector members from across BC, each working to enhance the physical and mental health, wellness, connectedness, and quality of life of their communities.

Awards included:

Parks Excellence Award:

City of Abbotsford for *Grant Park* [www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards] – Grant Park is Abbotsford’s first fully accessible all-in-one baseball themed park. The park’s innovative design includes the use of recycled materials and reflects an overarching goal of inclusion in each step; with wheelchair accessible surfaces, dugouts, washrooms, and playground and picnic facilities that welcome people of all abilities. The park encourages engagement of community members near and far. The park includes high-level ecological and climate considerations. The design retained 80% of the park’s existing trees and included new rain gardens to support rehabilitation of the natural park habitat.

Facility Excellence Award for projects over \$1 million:

City of Surrey for the *Clayton Community Centre* [www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards] – The Clayton community has the highest number of children and youth in Surrey. The Clayton Community Centre is designed to provide them a safe, accessible gathering space to connect with each other, their families, and the culturally vibrant Clayton community. An innovator in accessibility and inclusivity, the new Centre provides a hearing loop in its Performing Arts studio, wheelchair accessible fitness equipment, and universal washrooms and changerooms. The location provides easy access by transit and the unique design celebrates the natural elements of the surrounding forest while also emphasizing energy efficiency.

Program Excellence Award:

City of Victoria for *Get Growing Victoria* [www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards] – Get Growing Victoria is a far-reaching program developed in 2020 to strengthen local food systems in Victoria by providing equity-deserving communities with the tools and information they need to grow fresh, affordable food. Vegetable and herb seedlings are grown in the City’s nursery in Beacon Hill Park and distributed in partnership with community organizations. The program has had a massive impact supporting thousands of households through the pandemic and beyond to grow their own food as a safe,

outdoor activity that fosters social and emotional well-being. It is estimated that over 100,000 pounds of fresh produce is grown through Get Growing, Victoria each year.

Program Excellence Award – Honourable Mention:

Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation for the *All Bodies Community (ABC) program*.

[\[www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards\]](http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards) – This exceptional program focuses on removing barriers to physical activity and supporting individual lifelong learning of physical movement and wellness.

Festivals and Events Excellence Award:

City of New Westminster for Shine Bright New West [\[www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards\]](http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards) - Shine Bright New West incorporates the breadth of New Westminster’s vibrant community culture into one umbrella event. City staff conceived of the event series during the pandemic, focusing on bringing community together in the spirit of hope and forging a deeper connection between event planning and positive community impact. Activities included innovative light displays, outdoor concerts and cultural festivities, themed evening shopping events, and an interactive light display map of the entire community. Shine Bright New West has now become the City of New Westminster's annual holiday event series and serves as a model of inclusion and community engagement.

Festivals and Events Excellence Award – Honourable Mention

Oliver Parks and Recreation Society for the 100X100 Festival [\[www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards\]](http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards) - BCRPA’s awards committee also recognized an honourable mention in the Festivals and Events Excellence category. This was presented to the for the 100X100 Festival. This exceptional festival provided an opportunity for locals and visitors to reclaim a sense of connectedness to each other, the land and to shared wisdom across cultures, arts, music, and sports.

Community Leadership Award:

Alan Sakai of Richmond [\[www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards\]](http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards) – Alan Sakai has been an outstanding leader in Richmond for decades, inspiring and enriching the lives of citizens of all ages through his mentorship as a teacher, school administrator, Olympic athlete, sport administrator, and through his roles as Director, Chairperson and President of multiple volunteer-driven committees and organizations. Alan is a lifelong learner and has been recognized for his passion for making a difference and influencing the development of healthy and sustainable programs in his community for many years. He has recently supported the development of the Steveston Salmon Festival, and the design of the new Steveston Community Centre.

The BCRPA Provincial Awards recognize outstanding special events, programs, facilities, and parks which reflect ideas, innovation, and services that have made an impact in the recreation and parks sector.

“These award recipients each illustrate tremendous innovation, creativity, and a standard of excellence to aspire to. Each project has had an enormous positive impact on its community members and serves as a gold-standard for the entire recreation and parks sector. I commend each award recipient for their dedication to accessibility and inclusion, community connectedness, energy efficiency, and a focus on enhancing the quality of life of their communities for generations to come,” said Rebecca Tunnacliffe, BCRPA Chief Executive Officer.

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.

Images available
Background included

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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, the 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/