

# From the community: Glenview Park District Receives Illinois Distinguished Accredited Agency Award

By **Community Contributor Pioneer Press Editorial**

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**T**he **Glenview** Park District has been recognized as an Illinois Distinguished Accredited Agency by the Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD) and the Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA).

The two statewide associations administer the Illinois Distinguished Accreditation program with the goal of improving the delivery of park and recreation services to Illinois residents. "Illinois has a reputation for the best park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation and special recreation agencies in the nation," said Peter Murphy, IAPD President and CEO. "The Illinois Distinguished Accreditation program provides an opportunity for these agencies to undergo a voluntary, comprehensive evaluation process to demonstrate that they have met state guidelines to provide exceptional park and recreation services to their community. The end result is to improve the quality of life for Illinois residents."

"This program gives recognition to park and recreation agencies that go above and beyond in dedicating themselves to offering quality programs and services designed to fulfill their community's needs," said Debbie Trueblood, IPRA Executive Director.

A park district or recreation agency interested in applying for Distinguished Accredited Agency recognition undergoes a detailed, lengthy process of application and evaluation. It is a two year process led by a Joint Distinguished Park and Recreation Accreditation Committee (JDPRAC) comprised of members from IAPD and IPRA. "Agencies submit a self-evaluation and a formal letter requesting admission into the process," said Marie Todd, IAPD Co-Chair of the JDPRAC. "If the committee determines the agency is eligible to continue the process, we send them an evaluation date."

According to Todd, on the day of the evaluation, the agency presents documented information and gives a tour of pertinent facilities and parks for the evaluation team's review. The team reviews general management procedures, finance and business operations, facilities and parks, personnel, recreation services, legal documentation and other materials including mission statements, goals and safety manuals.

Upon completion of the evaluation, the agency is notified in writing of the official results within ten days. Agencies that have achieved Distinguished Accredited status are recognized with a plaque at the IAPD/IPRA Annual Conference Awards Luncheon in January.

The JDPRAC approved the Glenview Park District for Distinguished Accredited status in November. According to reviewing team members, Glenview has one of the best preventive maintenance plans they've ever seen. In

addition, the team said Glenview excelled in the following: reporting volunteer hours, having a thorough application process, outstanding budget documentation, excellent long range planning, extensive fundraising efforts, having an intergovernmental agreement with the Village for land-cash donations, well organized safety committee minutes, unique experience for special needs through the PERK program and a unique fee waiver program with "Leisureships."

"The accreditation process was comprehensive and rigorous. Ultimately, a group of expert evaluators agreed that everything at the Glenview Park District from the policy level to the operational level is worthy of this distinction and I couldn't be more proud of the team of dedicated professionals we have," said Mike McCarty, Executive Director.

In compliance with the program, the Glenview Park District will be reevaluated in six years to verify that they have continued to demonstrate sound management practices in providing quality park and recreation services to the community.

IAPD is a non-profit service, research and education organization that serves park districts, forest preserves, conservation and recreation agencies. The association advances these agencies, their citizen board members and professional staff in their ability to provide outstanding park and recreation opportunities, preserve natural resources and improve the quality of life for all people in Illinois.

IPRA is a not-for-profit organization and public interest group who is an advocate in providing quality park, recreation and conservation education, resources and services to professionals and citizens throughout the state of Illinois.

In conclusion, the Review Team has verified that the Agency demonstrated sound management practices in providing quality parks and recreation services to the Glenview Park District communities.

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