The mission of the Vermont Recreation and Parks Association is to provide training and resources to help Vermonters to “Create Community through People, Parks and Programs.”

Autumn is my favorite season of the year, with the sun shining and a crisp feeling in the air, along with the feeling of a fresh start…9 months into the year. For me, this time of year has always seemed to be the refresh button I’ve needed. A busy spring working with staff to prep and beautify the parks and pool, a summer that was exhausting but also rewarding seeing the success of our hard work pay off with the community recreating, enjoying the parks and open space, making memories at camp and building lasting relationships and connections with staff and families. All of this is rewarding and many of us work best when “putting out fires”, but Autumn shows us the versatility we have in our unique profession.

Autumn’s refresh button not only changes our routines and programming, but just like the landscape around us, it is also an amazing time to remind ourselves what sort of changes is needed for us all to continue to grow. Whether we are new, a few years in, or a long-time parks and recreation professional, we know when consistency is best but also know when change is important and needed to stay in tune and ahead of what’s best for our community.

Part of Autumn being my favorite time of year is that the Annual Conference on Recreation takes place. It has always supported me that added boost of the refresh button by providing great networking and education that I need to close out the busy spring and summer and clear the path for the planning season ahead. This year is no different, and maybe even more needed, even though we will not be in person together at Lake Morey with the beautiful landscape around us as we learn, network and empower – empower ourselves and others to do our best.

If you haven’t registered for the virtual conference yet, please make it a priority. The committee has done an impressive job putting everything together! We are only a few weeks away from amazing sessions and conversations. I look forward to virtually seeing you, learning with you and from you and collectively pushing that refresh button.

We hope to see you all soon!
I want to start off this message with a big, virtual high five and hug - we have made it to September! When you have a minute today, go take a moment to yourself and look in the mirror. What you will see is an amazing professional that has helped lead their community and organization through some of the most trying times we may all ever experience. I know you are all tired, overwhelmed, nervous, and unsure. But you are all also dedicated, positive, creative, and essential. You all inspire me everyday and I am so proud of the professionals that make up our association – you!

I have officially been in Vermont for a year now with the VRPA, and what a year it has been! I have spent this year learning and growing with all of you, and I continue to be inspired by every parks and recreation professional member we have. When thrown a Pandemic, you rose up and figured out ways to deliver essential childcare, meals, and operations from your own homes. You lead the re-opening of our state through summer camp programs and parks that allowed children and families the small bit of “normalcy” they have been craving. Never once did I hear a complaint from anyone in our field. Instead I heard creative ideas, suggestions, and saw hard work. Be proud of all you accomplished this summer.

Your stories deserve to be heard, and that will be my goal this year as your number 1 advocate, to support you in whatever ways you need. Our calendar for the remainder of the year may look different than in year’s past, but the support that the VRPA provides has become more necessary than ever to help relay your needs. We will organize discussions and trainings around subject matters that need to be addressed. We will provide advocacy for you at the State level to ensure you are considered in future funding opportunities. And we will continue to provide networking opportunities to help you grow and learn from others around you.

I would like to thank all our new members & supporters that have joined VRPA this year and welcome you to an amazing group of Parks & Recreation professionals. I would also like to extend an extra big thank you to those that have volunteered so much of their time on our various committees this year to help plan all the meetings and training opportunities we have been able to provide. It is inspiring to see all the talented and hard-working professionals come together to do great things – keep up the amazing work everyone!

If you didn’t already register, join us for our first ever virtual conference September 23rd & 24th. Not only will this be a great way to obtain some very affordable CEU credits but attending will help support the VRPA and all that we do. With so many trainings and events cancelled this past year, our association is in need of your support in the year ahead. Please reach out if you have new training ideas that would be valuable to yourself and your organizations and we will work hard to make those happen. We welcome new members, and hope to see you all again soon!

Until then, keep up the amazing work, and I look forward to “seeing” you all during our Conference in September.

Sincerely,

Jessica Brodie, Executive Director
In 2007, Kym Duchesneau joined the Town of Milton Recreation Department as Assistant Recreation Coordinator, having served on the Recreation Commission for a few years before that, and became the Recreation Director in 2010. She has transformed the department in her thirteen years with Milton Recreation - her “can do” attitude, thoughtful and caring demeanor, organizational skills and relationships within the community have allowed her to connect and develop programs that serve all sectors of our community.

The Recreation Department frequently is the first contact many citizens and visitors have with the Town. The goodwill created by Kym and her assistant Ben over the years has been very beneficial for both the residents and the Town. Citizens’ regular positive interaction with the recreation staff humanizes the rest of Town government. Staff members regularly hear positive comments about Kym, Ben and the Milton Recreation Department.

Kym has worked closely with the Recreation Commission during her tenure to ensure that residents were being heard and served. Always conscientious of the needs of the community, Kym has provided numerous programs for all age groups for every season throughout her tenure. Of the many events and programs Kym has organized and helped facilitate over the years, the one that I believe has had the most impact on the community is the annual Milton Activities Fair. She organized this in her first year with the department in collaboration with the other local organizations. This event allowed her to pull together all those town organizations she had become so familiar with to create a “one-stop-shopping” experience of youth sports, arts, the historical society, and others for the community. It has been extremely successful and I’m sure will continue for years to come thanks to Kym.

Over the years, Kym has also planned and managed many Park improvement projects. Projects include a significant renovation of the Bombardier Park West Fieldhouse, building of the Dog Park, expansion of fields, new playground equipment, other amenities and recently the addition of a gigantic Adirondack chair to which we will dedicate to her in the coming days.

Another quality that has distinguished Kym in her role was her willingness to attend the events. I cannot recall a recent recreation event that Kym and usually her husband Seth haven’t attended. This dedication and commitment to the success of every recreation event and to our community will be an important element in Kym’s legacy. As she now looks forward to retiring from the position of Milton Recreation Director on September 4th and looks to attend those same events in a different capacity, the Town of Milton recognizes that the Town is a far better place thanks to Kym Duchesneau and we wish her well in her new endeavors.

Kym Duchesneau

“...the Town of Milton recognizes that the Town is a far better place thanks to Kym Duchesneau”
Making The Greens Less White

If “the outdoors is for everyone,” then there’s work to do to make outdoor spaces more welcoming to people of color. (Excerpt from the August issue of Vermont Sports Magazine article “Whose Woods Are These?”)

By Luke Zarzecki/Vermont Sports Magazine

On July 22nd, Michael Brune, the executive director of the Sierra Club, came out with an apology: “It’s time to take down some of our own monuments, starting with some truth-telling about the Sierra Club’s early history,” Brune wrote in an open letter. Brune described John Muir, the ‘father of the National Parks’, as prone to racist comments and early Sierra Club leaders Joseph LeConte and David Starr Jordan as white supremacists.

“For all the harms the Sierra Club has caused, and continues to cause, to Black people, Indigenous people, and other people of color, I am deeply sorry,” Brune wrote. He then pledged $5 million to invest in greater diversity among the staff and to build racial justice into their environmental work.

It was a long-overdue admission about Muir who has been a patron saint of sorts for nature-lovers and icon of the American West.

And it prompted The Washington Post to write about how other organizations in the environmental and conservation arenas are rethinking where they stand on diversity and racial justice.

“That story is huge, everyone’s talking about it now,” said Carolyn Finney, speaking from her apartment in Burlington on July 23 about both the Sierra Club apology and The Washington Post’s follow up story. “With all that’s gone on, this has been a challenging year. This is exciting and exhausting and depressing and rage-inducing and promising – I feel so many different things about the moment,” she said.

Finney has become one of the thought leaders at the intersection of the environmental and racial justice movements.

Her path there, though, has been roundabout. She worked as an actor for 11 years, lived in Nepal and did five years of backpacking trips in Africa and Asia, before going back to school to study gender, race and environmentalism and earn her Ph.D.

She is also the author of Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors and a former member of the National Parks Advisory Board (a position she—and the rest of the board—resigned from in 2018, following Ryan Zinke’s appointment as U.S. Secretary of the Interior).

Finney describes herself as a “storyteller, author and cultural geographer [who is] deeply interested in issues related to identity, difference, creativity, and resilience.”

She moved to Vermont in September 2019 for a two-year residency in the Franklin Environmental Center at Middlebury College.

“She is no stranger to racism within outdoor recreation and academia’s environmental field. “It doesn’t have to be that someone called you the ‘N’ word,” she explained. “It could be that someone just gives you a funny look. I get stared at a lot, I have stories throughout my life of people just stopping me on a hike and wanting to talk about my hair and ask me really personal questions or ask me if I’m mixed. And it’s always white people who ask me.”

She noted that it is hard for her, and many other folks of color, to be an individual in the outdoors.

“It doesn’t matter how rich you are, how educated you are, as a Black person. Every Black person in this country has to pay the Black tax. And part of the Black tax is that we are never allowed to be individuals, we always represent the race. So, in a country that promotes individualism, one of those things about individualism is that you can go hiking by yourself and climb the mountain and be yourself. But as an African-American person, you don’t have that same freedom. You get challenged in multiple ways.”

Finney is encouraged as she sees the Sierra Club and other environmental organizations begin to address a history of racism. And she believes Vermonters, in general, are working at combatting racism as well. “I think you’ve got people here who are ready. They want to do something about it, and it’s genuine. The real gift of people in Vermont is this sense of community.”

BUILDING SPACES

Mariah Rivera, a rising senior at the University of Vermont, is one of those trying to change how people of color experience the outdoors in Vermont. She is a leader with People of Color Outdoors (POCO), a UVM group similar to the university’s Outing Club, that focuses on getting people of color into the backcountry and making outdoor recreation more inclusive.
“When I came to Vermont, I got involved with (POCO) and that really exposed me to the world of outdoor recreation and all these different things you can do,” Rivera said, explaining that she didn’t have those opportunities as a child. “Growing up in a Bridgeport, Ct., I didn’t have much access except through a neighborhood park.”

Now a wildlife biology major at UVM’s Rubenstein School of Natural Resources, she spends her time kayaking, canoeing and watching wildlife.

Rivera decided to study conservation after volunteering at Connecticut’s Beardsley Zoo. There, she took trips to do conservation work and discovered a deep appreciation for nature. Today, in addition to leading POCO’s trips, she strives to share her passion for the outdoors and nature with others.

“(POCO) focuses on building community within the POC community at UVM, while creating a safe space for POCs who don’t feel comfortable being in these new outdoor spaces or on the regular Outing Club trips on their own,” Rivera said.

“I think (these spaces) are really important because looking at outdoor recreation, access is an issue. Historically, the outdoors did push Black and brown folk and other people of color out of those spaces,” she says. “For example, John Muir spoke poorly of Native Americans on multiple occasions. In “Our National Parks,” a 1901 essay collection written to promote tourism to the parks, Muir wrote, ‘As to Indians, most of them are dead or civilized into useless innocence.’ Theodore Roosevelt was a notorious white supremacist. His conservation efforts came at the expense of some Native American tribes.”

Today, she adds, “There are individuals who might be going back into the outdoors totally on their own and being that outlier who wants to explore nature,” Rivera said. “Creating these groups and creating these spaces gives POC the support to explore that interest.”

UVM, like most institutions founded in the 1800s, has a racist past as well. According to the UVM’s newspaper, The Vermont Cynic, for 73 years, fraternity members at the university would dance in black face during the winter carnival. Over 8,000 seats would fill to watch the annual show, known as the Kake Walk. In 1969 the event was finally cancelled, despite earlier protests from Black athletes at the time such as LeRoy Williams, Jr. ’57, who captained the football team. Even as recently as 2017, some of the spectators at a UVM/St. Michael’s College men’s basketball game reportedly jeered as a group of St. Mike’s players and their white coach knelt for the national anthem in protest of racial injustice.

“UVM has put a lot of work in, but there is still a lot to be done,” said Miguel Reda, a 2017 graduate who helped to lead trips with ALANA GEAR (the group that became POCO). “I had experience camping and paddling and backpacking so I started out with the Outing Club, but I soon realized that many people of color weren’t comfortable there.”

Today, Reda heads up the men’s clothing division at Outdoor Gear Exchange and has worked with the company to help make outdoor experiences more accessible to both people of color and the LGBTQ community.

“We’ve partnered with Petra Cliffs to do Pride Climb Nights once a month, and it was really cool to get the Brotherhood of Climbers here to do a session one day. Just having all these climbers of color in one place felt really good,” says Reda, who was born in Guatemala, grew up in western Massachusetts and got into hiking, camping and climbing on family trips to the Adirondacks.

As Reda acknowledges, “Unless your family takes you skiing or hiking or climbing or sailing, you probably are not going to take up one of these technical sports unless you are introduced to them at college.” And that’s why he sees college programs as being key to helping diversify both Vermont and outdoor recreation.

Story Continues… [Read full story here >>]

Craig Whipple:
Retiring from the VT Department of Forests, Parks, & Recreation

Change is hard, isn’t it? But it is exciting, inspiring and energizing, too. It is so important for key players in every organization to transition from time to time if only to make sure the organization stays fresh and relevant. As some of you may have heard, I have decided to step aside as Director of Vermont State Parks. I’m convinced now is the right time for a transition for State Parks and for me personally. Having spent almost four decades helping to provide outdoor recreation opportunities for people, I look back with pride and satisfaction knowing full well the value those experiences have on people’s lives and how they are stronger and healthier emotionally and physically because of it. The countless stories and testimonials about the family memories, the fun and adventure and the resulting strong bonds that are formed have inspired me to keep at it for all those years. Right now because of the pandemic and several other factors at play leading up to it, there has never been a better appreciation for the value of being outdoors nor has there ever been stronger support for our industry. Transition is good during times of strength.

We are lucky we have found ourselves in this line of work. I am sure you all agree. We get to make people’s lives better…every day. We get to make our communities and our state better places to live…every day. So, a little advice from me as I jog off into the sunset is to always keep in mind WHY we do what we do. Be proud and soak up that satisfaction that we are making a difference and making our world a better place. All my best to you.

Craig Whipple
Around the State

VERMONT SENIOR GAMES FORGES AHEAD WITH THREE 2020 EVENTS

The Vermont Senior Games Association, like most recreation organizations, was forced to cancel the vast majority of its events scheduled for 2020. Indeed, nationwide 33 states – plus all of Canada – opted not to stage Senior Games athletics because of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic.

After much planning and consideration, the Vermont Senior Games Association felt confident that, working closely with our host facilities, it would be able to stage three outdoor events safely and ensure quality competitions for the athletes. The VSGA golf tournament took place on August 10 at the Neshobe Course in Brandon. Tennis was scheduled at the Burlington Tennis Club on August 22 and 23, and finally three days of pickleball brackets were played out on September 11–13 at the Davis Park Courts in Shelburne.

Somewhat surprisingly, athlete participation for the golf and tennis tournaments in 2020 significantly surpassed the 2019 Vermont Senior Games numbers. Limits on out-of-state athletes suppressed pickleball rosters some, but registrations were strong nevertheless.

The golf event medalists were the husband-and-wife team of Kate and Greg Mitchell from Essex Jct. Greg fired the low round of the day overall in carding a stellar score of 83, while Kate navigated the meandering Neshobe lay-out in 91 strokes.

Twenty medals were awarded at the singles competition on Saturday August 22 at BTC. The most competitive age group, both in terms of athletes participating and quality of play, was the youngest men’s group, ages 50 – 54. BTC Club Champion John Tashiro emerged as a very worthy gold medalist. Fellow club members Jerry Knickerbocker and Hugh Garavan shared the top spots, earning the silver and bronze medals, respectively.

The women’s bracket was a round-robin featuring athletes ranging in age from 61 all the way up to 82. After a lengthy session of matches, Deborah Larkin made the drive all the way up from North Pownal, Vermont worth it with her undefeated gold medal performance.

In the five-player round-robin pitting the men aged 55 – 69 against each other, Bill Fraser Harris of Charlotte dominated, winning all four of his matches without dropping a single game.

Finally, three admirable gents faced off in the eldest bracket of the day, all of them between 86 – 89 years young. Middlebury’s Dexter Lewis showed off a feisty array of shots and the court coverage of a player decades younger to take the gold medal in that group. Two Shelburne natives, Angelo Pizzagalli and Berni Burg, took home the silver and bronze after some epic matches.

Unfortunately, Sunday’s doubles matches had to be rescheduled due to rain.

Questions? Contact:
George Moltz | Vermont Senior Games Coordinator
gwmoltz@gmail.com | 802-779-5119
Facility Feature

by: Nick Miele, Ludlow Parks & Recreation Department

The spring baseball season may have been cancelled, but that did not stop the offseason progress as Ludlow Parks and Recreation prepared for future seasons. The plans for the project began last fall with a goal to install the new scoreboard before the first home game of the year. However, the Covid-19 pandemic sidelined everything from youth sports to the professional level. There was so much uncertainty as to when the athletes would return to the field, but I treated the unique situation by completing the projects that normally would have been a low priority during a full season. Now certainly the centerpiece of the any field is the scoreboard and why shouldn’t it be? It's simply the device that allows everyone to be on the same page. The previous scoreboard was mounted on steel posts that were beginning to rust, did not consistently work, with bulbs that were malfunctioning, and it simply was not wireless. LaValley Building Supply in Ludlow, certainly did not disappoint when they recently donated a magnificent 4-by-9-foot Daktronics wireless scoreboard which can be controlled from any part of the field to keep all players, coaches and fans in tune with the game. The scoreboard is certainly impressive and will be showcased for many seasons to come, but the LaValley’s sign that sits on top of the scoreboard is certainly the real deal. In order to prepare for the installation, the posts needed to be sanded, primed and painted. After, one long hot week in June, the site work was complete and now scoreboard was ready to be mounted. LaValley not only donated the scoreboard, but they also put in the hard work mounting the scoreboard. LaValley sent their boom truck over for an afternoon to install the scoreboard and sign that sits in center field. “The Ludlow Little League field on 219 Pleasant St. Extension has certainly seen some noteworthy improvements, but nothing that compares to this, especially when the lights are bright” said Nick Miele, Ludlow Parks and Recreation Director. “In time, the athletes will be back on the field ready to go, eager for player introductions on Opening Day 2021 and now we have a center piece to take us to the next level."
Last Chance to Register

September 23 & 24, 2020

It’s hard to believe that summer is winding down and Labor Day weekend just happened. As we transition from summer to fall, please consider investing in yourself and your communities by joining us at the 77th Annual Vermont Conference on Recreation this September 23rd & 24th from your own personal virtual spaceship. The conference committee has been hard at work pulling together this year’s conference, which features Michael Kirschman, your Keynote speaker, high quality education sessions, ample time for networking with colleagues and exhibitors and finally, Vermont’s Finest Silent Auction with thousands of dollars in merchandise, gift cards and products.

We’ve all accomplished so much, supporting our communities and providing opportunities for the citizens of our state to find constants and normalcy in an ever changing world. The past 6 months have been nothing but problem solving, creative development and rolling out programs, events and facilities we’ve done for years in a very different way. As we round the corner into a new season, we face more challenges and opportunities but hopefully, also an opportunity to catch our breath, and fill our own cups.

One of the best ways to re-energize, re-connect with peers, and grow after a busy summer season is at the annual Vermont Conference on Recreation. There’s nothing like filling a ballroom full of Parks and Recreation professionals and seeing what happens. Although the location will be more “screen” than the usual scene as we host our conference virtually this year, the conference committee has yet again put together an all-star line-up of speakers and social events.

This is traditionally our association’s largest event and even though we will not be meeting in person at Lake Morey Resort, we hope you will still consider joining us to both network and support the Association. Our members include Vermont’s diverse recreation community, including municipal and state recreation professionals, recreation non-profits, volunteers and commercial partners from throughout Vermont, New England, and beyond.

We hope to see you at this memorable and historic event!

Adriane Martin, CPRP, 2020 Conference Chair
Jessica Brodie, VRPA, Executive Director
2020 CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Tuesday, September 22
Pre-Conference Bonus Sessions!
- MyRec.com Recreation Software User Group
- RecTrac Recreation Software User Group

Welcome & Conference Overview
8:00 AM
SILENT AUCTION Opens

Live Chat “Learn-A-Latte”
8:30 AM

BLOCK 1 - Educational Sessions
1. Innovative Programming: Engaging Teens in Nature-Based Programming
2. What is it Worth? The True Value of Open Space
3. Work-Life/Play Balance

10:30-11:00 AM
“Grab a Coffee & Learn S’More”

 BLOCK 2 - Educational Sessions
1. Power of Partnerships – Trails & Trail Programming
2. Leading with Health in Mind

Welcome & KEYNOTE
12:30-1:45 PM
All In A Day’s Work
Michael Kinschman, Director, Virginia Beach PAR

BLOCK 3 - Educational Sessions
1. Rise Up – The Art of Mastering Leadership Presence
2. Using the Town Forest Recreation Planning Toolkit
3. Building Community in an Isolated World

Social Hour & Live Chat
3:30-4:30 PM
“It’s 5 O’Clock Somewhere”

Thursday, September 24
Welcome & Conference Overview
8-8:30 AM
Live Chat
8:30-9:00 AM
“Learn-A-Latte: If one is good, two is better”

BLOCK 1 - Educational Sessions
9-10:10 AM
1. The Three O’s of a Great Day at Work
2. Parks Planning, Public Engagement & COVID-19
3. Preventing & Addressing Substance Misuse: What Departments Can Do

Live Chat
10:30-11:30 AM
“Grab a Coffee or Tea - You Know the Drill”

BLOCK 2 - Educational Sessions
11-12:10 PM
1. Recovery is Not Enough... We Need Transformation
2. Creating Resilient and Adaptive Waterfront: From Vision to Implementation

Lunch & Learn’s (30 min speed sessions)
12:30-1PM
1. Google Docs/Sheets/Forms
2. Keeping Your Playground Clean – New Guidelines
3. Marketing Lessons Learned from COVID-19
4. E-Bikes – What Kind is That?
5. Rec Facilities as Emergency Shelters/Thrive Centers
6. Budget Recovery

BLOCK 3 - Educational Sessions
1:45-2:55 PM
1. If You Can’t Write the Checks Nothing Else Matters
2. Power of Partnerships - Recruiting & Retaining Volunteers
3. Event Emergency Planning

Call To Action “Endnote”
3PM
Ems Cordova, Vice President of Public Policy and Advocacy, NRPA

Silent Auction Closes
4:15 PM

WHAT ARE ATTENDEES SAYING ABOUT VRPA CONFERENCE?

THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF THESE SESSIONS RESONATES WITH PROFESSIONALS FROM MULTIPLE PARKS, RECREATIONAL AND LEISURE INDUSTRIES THROUGHOUT THE STATE.

THIS CONFERENCE HAS A WIDE ARRAY OF TOPICS THAT COULD BENEFIT ANY PROFESSIONAL IN THE RECREATION INDUSTRY.
There is a lot of uncertainty in the world right now due to the coronavirus pandemic. One thing we are sure of is that kids, teens and adults need outdoor activity to keep themselves healthy—both physically and mentally.

Making time for free, unstructured play is tricky in our 24/7 world, but research tells us that carving out time and space for outdoor play and activity is worth it. For children, playtime allows them to be in control and use their imaginations all while developing a range of important skills. There are benefits for teens and adults as well. Not only does exercising outdoors lead to better physical health, but it may contribute to increased energy, reduced anger, tension and depression.

So, as communities begin to slowly and safely reopen their parks and playgrounds, it’s important to offer play and recreation solutions that help individuals of all ages stay active and healthy.

Landscape Structures Inc., based in Delano, Minn., has curated a collection of dynamic playground designs to give parks and recreation departments innovative and iconic choices at an affordable price point. Included in this collection is the new Tree Tops playstructure. This new offering delivers the feel of exploring a forest canopy branch by branch. However, beyond the normal ups and downs of traditional tree climbing, this wondrously abstract playground design allows kids to navigate across wiggly bridges, roar down two different slides and so much more.

If an entirely new playground isn’t in the current plan, adding freestanding play components is a great way to freshen up the play experience. Even better, offering spinners, bouncers and spring riders to visitors allows them to adhere to the social distancing guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

Extreme fitness is gaining popularity because of current T.V. shows, and these high-intensity strength training courses encourage kids, teens and adults to get and stay fit. FitCore™ Extreme obstacle courses can be designed for teens and adults, or for kids ages 5 to 12 to deliver exciting fitness challenges in community parks, schools and neighborhood gathering areas. Obstacles for 5- to 12-year-olds provide the right amount of challenge to build physical and mental agility. While FitCore Extreme obstacles designed for teens and adults invite friendly competition. Communities can choose from predesigned courses or create a customized course to challenge upper- and lower-body strength, coordination as well as problem-solving skills.

In addition to these extreme fitness environments, traditional outdoor fitness equipment remains popular in communities. The HealthBeat® Outdoor Fitness System targets three core fitness areas—muscle strength, cardiovascular health, and balance and flexibility—through 14 workout stations. Park planners can include all 14 stations, focus on just one or two core fitness areas, or mix and match among them.

As more communities begin to reopen and create their new normal following the coronavirus pandemic, it’s important to remember that everyone will benefit from outdoor play and recreation. Choose to invest in amenities that will boost community members’ physical and mental wellbeing.

Learn more about the new great designs available as well as extreme and traditional fitness equipment from Landscape Structures by visiting playlsi.com. Or contact your local playground consultant—O’Brien & Sons, Inc.—to get started on playground and fitness environment designs that meets your community’s needs.
The Vermont Recreation and Parks Association (VRPA) will be holding its annual Silent Auction, themed ‘Vermont’s Finest’ at the State Conference on Recreation held on September 23rd & 24th, 2020. This auction showcases premiere Vermont products, retailers, attractions, lodging, restaurants, adventures, skiing, golf, publications, and more. In this 77th year of the conference, the Auction will go virtual on the online bidding site “32 Auctions”.

We are thankful to all of the businesses and organizations that continue to support the VRPA through their donations for the silent auction. This auction has grown to be a highlight of the conference, and we plan for just as many great opportunities this year as well!

Silent Auction bidding will open online at the start of the conference and close at 4:15pm on Thursday the 24th. Silent Auction winning bidders will be mailed their items after the conference, or a pick-up would be arranged for larger items. Proceeds from the auction help provide conference scholarships for students and educational opportunities for members.

One auction item to highlight is the Hand Sanitizing Station being donated this year by Landscape Structures. Thank you to all of our donors!

Theresa S. Brungardt was a pioneer and outstanding leader of parks and recreation in Vermont. She began her career in 1917 when she joined the staff of the National Recreation Association during World War 1. She was Vermont’s first state Director of Recreation, having been appointed by Governor Wills in 1943. She traveled tirelessly throughout Vermont to help communities with their recreation programs. Many of the community recreation departments today could trace their origins back to technical assistance and inspiration provided by Mrs. Brungardt. She was nationally recognized for her expertise and in 1952 was elected the first female president of the American Recreation Society. Her involvement continued after her retirement in 1964 when she was an active member of the Citizens Board Member Branch of NRPA. She was inducted into the NRPA Hall of Fame in 1997.

Even though we will not be gathering in person this fall along the beautiful shore of Lake Morey Resort, we want to be sure we do not forget our history. The leaders of yesterday have helped each one of us get to where we are today, and Mrs. Brungardt was no exception. Let’s not forget all that has been achieved in the past as we carve a new path forward into the future. Vermont is full of amazing Parks & Recreation Professionals that will help revive our communities after a pandemic, and I think we can all look back at Mrs. B’s accomplishments to find some inspiration to move forward.

Our Annual Theresa S. Brungardt Awards will not be featured during this year’s conference, but we hope and plan to celebrate all the amazing work you all have accomplished this past year as soon as we can all gather together again. Continue to work hard being the inspiring professionals you are because your work is making a difference.

Read more about the history of Mrs. Brungardt in this Power Point Presentation created by Conference Committee members Muriel Moore and Candice Holbrook.

Remembering and Honoring our past

THERESA S. BRUNGARDT
Program Spotlight

Athletic Camps
Hi, I am Jen Cotton, Athletic Program Supervisor for BPRW. I oversee 14 summer athletic camps and 2 summer athletic programs including basketball, baseball, tennis (5 camps), ultimate, disc golf, skate camps (4 camps), volleyball, track & field and soccer. These camps were held at a variety of our parks: Leddy, Calahan, Oakledge, Skatepark, Seltz, and the track & field at Burlington High School. Through all of our athletic programs and camps, we served 304 total participants.

Recreation & Nutrition
My name is Sarah Carter, and I’m the Champlain Senior Center Director at Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront. The Recreation & Nutrition Program has five sites throughout the city where anyone under 18 can receive a meal and participate in activities. So far this summer we’ve served almost 8,000 meals!

“Champ Camp”
My name is Susan Carter and I’m a Recreation Specialist for Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront. I coordinated a seven-week State of Vermont licensed camp at the Miller Community & Recreation Center in Burlington. Champ Camp accommodated 50 kids each day providing a safe, fun, and a free day-camp experience. We had 15 staff as part of the camp and successfully followed all of the licensing regulations along with the COVID-19 camp guidelines. Camp staff, campers, and camper families agree that it was a fun and safe camp experience.

I also coordinated four Wicked Cool for Kids Science Camps at the Old North End Community Center in Burlington. These contracted camps provided campers with themes: Wicked Cool Vet Camp, Wicked Cool Rocket Camp, and Wicked Cool Mini Craft Mania 1 & 2. We also offered a one-week virtual Chess Wizards camp for kids which was also a contracted camp.

I was also able to offer our popular Pony Camp again this summer, following the COVID-19 summer camp guidelines. This camp took place at Kim Johansen’s Livery Horse Farm for eight campers and two Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront camp staff. Campers learned about the care of horses along with riding instruction.

Champlain Senior Center
My name is Sarah Carter, and I’m the Champlain Senior Center Director at Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront. It has been a very interesting spring and summer for the Center. Due to Covid-19, the Center was closed for programming on March 13. With the help from Age Well and fellow coworkers Susan Carter and Mulu Tewelde, on March 16 we began to deliver Meals on Wheels to all of the seniors in our community who received 7 meals and milk every Monday. The Center has delivered over 3,000 meals to seniors around Burlington. Outreach by phone was established to check on seniors for socialization and needs. We also started a bingo and coffee hour talk over conference calls for the seniors. Age Well was so kind to donate funds to start a Sunshine Bag that we began delivering Friday. The bag included fruit, dry goods and packets of crossword puzzles, word searches, and adult coloring pages. Skinny Pancake is also delivering a free Friday meal from their Shift Meal Program, and Intervale Gardens brings in fresh vegetables for the bag.

We started in-person programming on July 18 on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00am to 1:30pm following the Vermont Department of Health senior center guidelines. On those days, we have a bag meal provided by Age Well. While at the Center, the seniors participate in bingo, adult coloring, senior trivia, bowling, reminiscing and getting to reconnect.

A Wednesday Bane Builders class is offered in the morning from 10:30am to 11:30am. Starting on August 19 a Wednesday afternoon class will start with “DIY Pickles in a Jar” class.

On the evening of Friday, August 28 the Center will have an outdoor senior movie in the back parking lot at the Old North End Community Center with hot dogs, chips, drinks and dessert. Our September calendar is busy with a new water colors class, flu shot clinic, e-biking demonstration, introduction to Chrome books, and much more. We are celebrating September with National Senior Center Month! A proclamation by Mayor Weinberger will be held on Tuesday, September 1 at 2:15pm at the Old North End Community Center. Come join us for the celebration!

PAL Summer Camp
My name is Nick Marinelli I am a Recreation Specialist for Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront (BPRW). This summer I had the pleasure of leading the team that ran PAL Camp at the Miller Recreation Center. This camp is a partnership between BPRW, Burlington City Arts, and Fletcher Free Library. Under the unusual circumstances this year Burlington City Arts and Fletcher Free Library were unable to come and interact with camp. Instead, staff and the campers found ways to work with them remotely. Burlington City Arts zoomed in on Tuesdays and Thursdays to show and discuss art work from the local gallery. They then walked the campers through an art project for that day. The campers took this new format in stride and did some amazing artwork. They engaged over zoom to ask the gallery amazing questions and dive into the world of art.

Watching the camp unfold at the end of summer I was very proud of our staff, our campers, and our community. We all met the challenges of the summer as a team and had fun and learned. The campers knew camp would look different but they made sure to come to camp and interact, learn, and play in a safe and joyful way. The true heroes of the summer (as always) were our seasonal staff. Despite a pandemic and an ever-changing world they came to camp every day with a smile. They led the campers through a wonderful summer in a very hard time. They prepared the kids for a school year of challenges and odd schedules. This was the biggest goal accomplished this summer. The camps and staff set up children in our community for success this school year and beyond.
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❑ Friend

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** (inc. link from VRPA website)

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