

# MEDIA RELEASE



For immediate release

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

**Vancouver, BC (May 5, 2021)** – Three communities have won four Provincial Awards of Excellence from BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) in recognition of their outstanding efforts and innovation in the recreation and parks sector. This year’s Awards of Excellence were presented virtually today by BCRPA on behalf of over 3,700 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 Surrey** for *Unwin Park and Jumpstart Playground* [[www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards](http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards)] – Unwin Park and Jumpstart Playground is a 12,000 square foot picturesque, inclusive play space developed in partnership with Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities. The playground, located within Unwin Park, is intentionally designed to be an imaginative, inclusive, and accessible space that provides children with physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities an environment that promotes well-being and collaborative play. The park is located within easy walking distance from eight schools within the highly diverse community of Newton.

### **Facility Excellence Award** for projects over \$1 million:

**City of Surrey** for the *North Surrey Sport and Ice Complex* [[www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards](http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards)] – The North Surrey Sport and Ice Complex is Surrey’s newest recreation facility, located in North Surrey’s diverse and growing community. The planning and design of the facility prioritizes sustainable transportation, and is easily accessible through multiple transit options while also offering bicycle racks to encourage residents to cycle to the venue. The 134,000 square foot facility was designed to be accessible to all abilities, ages, genders, and cultures and was awarded a Gold Certification Rating from the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility (RHFAC)- a rating system that evaluates the accessibility of commercial, institutional, and multi-unit residential buildings and sites.

### **Program Excellence Award** – Population over 15,000:

**District of West Vancouver** for *Feed the Need* [[www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards](http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards)] – Feed the Need is a volunteer-driven program that provides nutritious meals to vulnerable seniors in West Vancouver. The program operates out of the community’s Seniors’ Activity Centre (SAC) and began in March 2020 after the COVID-19 pandemic uncovered chronic food security issues for vulnerable citizens who lacked the means to access regular meals. Feed the Need now delivers three meals a week to 366 vulnerable seniors living in low-income subsidized housing in West Vancouver. At the end of 2020, the program had delivered more than 26,000 free meals.

BCRPA's awards committee also recognized two honourable mentions in the Program Excellence category for special events; the District of Saanich for the HeArts Together Community Art program, and the City of New Westminster for the Remembrance Day Re-imagined program were exceptional events designed for our COVID-challenging times

**Community Leadership Award:**

**Richmond Food Security Society (RFSS)** [[www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards](http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards)] – RFSS is a non-profit organization based in the city of Richmond that has focused on creating a robust local Food Security System through education, advocacy and community-building initiatives since 2010. Under the vision of 'healthy people, community and environment,' the Society empowers people through workshops, events, and programs with the skills to engage more fully in their local food system. The Society does this primarily through five ongoing community programs: community gardens, a seed library, fruit tree recovery, youth food security leaders, and teaching children how to garden.

The BCRPA Provincial Awards recognize excellence in the field of recreation as well as exceptional efforts to enhance recreation facilities, programs and services.

"These award recipients each illustrate tremendous innovation, creativity and a standard of excellence to aspire to. Each project reflects a notable dedication to accessibility and inclusion, sustainability, and a focus on enhancing the quality of life of their communities by supporting recreation opportunities that support community connection, as well as mental and physical health," said Rebecca Tunnacliffe, BCRPA Chief Executive Officer. "Once again this year, we are not able to hold our annual awards ceremony in person due to COVID-19 restrictions. If this past year has taught us anything, it's that recreation and parks have never been more important to our lives than they are right now, and our awards help further highlight the impactful work being done in communities across BC."

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.

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Images available

Background included

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**BACKGROUND:**

The British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) is the voice of public recreation and parks, and champions the sector's development of healthy people and connected communities. Representing over 95% of the provinces' local governments, we play a central role in supporting the enrichment and improvement of the

quality of life of British Columbians. Our work as a not-for-profit organization focuses on creating community connectedness and 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.

[www.bcrpa.bc.ca/about-us/](http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/about-us/)