



BUFFALO
GROVE
PARK
DISTRICT



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Buffalo Grove Park District Receives Two Recent Awards

(Buffalo Grove Park District, Buffalo Grove, IL) - Within one month of each other, the Buffalo Grove Park District and one of its staff members have been the recipients of prominent awards in the industry.

On October 21, the Buffalo Grove Park District received the Illinois Association of Park Districts Best of the Best Intergovernmental Cooperation Award for their longtime partnerships with Kildeer-Countryside Elementary District 96. The award was announced at an awards banquet at Chevy Chase Country Club in Wheeling.

The Buffalo Grove Park District and Kildeer-Countryside Elementary District 96 have a long history of intergovernmental partnerships. Over the years, those projects include new school gymnasiums, summer camp at school sites, and a stage with lighting in a school gymnasium. The sharing of resources has helped keep costs down for the residents of the two governmental entities.

The most recent partnerships between the two entities include the construction of a 200 meter track, and interior building improvements at Twin Groves Middle School and Prairie School.

The \$576,506 track was paid for by School District 96, and built on Park District property at Woodland Park, which is located adjacent to Twin Groves Middle School. In addition to the financial benefit of School District 96 not having to purchase land to house a track, the additional benefit to the community through this partnership is that residents also get to utilize the new track as part of Park District programs.

The interior building project at Twin Groves Middle School included improvements to the south entrance and corridor, washrooms, a new office and storage room that is exclusively for Park District use, and improvements to two gymnasiums.

The improvements at Prairie School included work to the cafeteria and washrooms, as well as a new office and storage room that is exclusively for Park District use, and improvements to the gymnasium.

The Park Districts financial contribution to both projects totaled \$503,088. In addition to the use of the school for programming throughout the year, the Park District also received much needed office and storage space, as well as keys to access the school buildings when the school is closed.

Another partnership that was recently reached was with the newly formed Exceptional Learners Collaborative (ELC). The Exceptional Learners Collaborative is a special education cooperative and joint agreement between three school districts located in Buffalo Grove. They represent Kildeer Countryside School District 96, Lincolnshire-Prairie View School District 103, and Adlai E. Stevenson High School District 125. The ELC serves seven elementary schools, three junior high/middle schools, and one high school, providing services to students ages 3 through 22 years of age, identified with special needs. Communities being served include Buffalo Grove, Kildeer, Long Grove, Lincolnshire, Riverwoods, Prairie View, Hawthorn Woods, Vernon Hills, Mundelein, Lake Zurich, and Mettawa.

While this entity is a cooperative of three school districts that serve the same constituents as the Buffalo Grove Park District, it was through the longtime relationship with Kildeer-Countryside Elementary District 96 that initiated this new intergovernmental agreement with the Collaborative.

The three member districts agreed that it was time to unify special education programs and create this new collaborative. The 2015-2016 school year was the first school year the ELC provided quality special education services to students and staff within the three member districts.

When the Collaborative was first being created, there was the issue of where to house their administrative offices. It was during a meeting regarding the new track at Twin Groves Middle School that Park District officials suggested they take a look at vacant space at the District's fitness center that used to be a spa.

Not only was the space adequate for the Collaborative's administrative offices; there is also enough room to run student testing and evaluations.

By renting the space from the Park District, the member school districts that make up the Collaborative are able to save their tax payers money by getting a discounted rate. By renting the space to the Collaborative, the Park District is able generate revenue for the District that would have otherwise been paid to a private developer. By sharing resources, the residents of the community benefit the most.

The multiple intergovernmental agreements between Kildeer Countryside School District 96 and the Buffalo Grove Park District have benefitted the residents of Buffalo Grove in so many ways. The sharing of resources is a significant cost benefit; however, even more beneficial is the quality of life improvement that the residents are able to enjoy. By having access to school buildings, the Park District is able to provide the community with so many more recreational opportunities that would have otherwise not been available.

Exactly one month later on November 21, the Illinois Parks and Recreation Association's named Buffalo Grove Park District superintendent of recreation, Erika Strojinc, the Recreation Section Professional of the Year at an awards ceremony at the Des Plaines Park District's Prairie Lakes Community Center.

A 2001 graduate of Buffalo Grove High School, Erika Strojinc was first hired fulltime as the Buffalo Grove Park District's assistant director of Clubhouse in December 2005. She was promoted to recreation supervisor in May 2008, and to superintendent of recreation in May 2014.

Erika's dedication in leading her staff has allowed for the success in program areas such as, aquatics, summer camps, seniors, early childhood, and special events. She had the distinction of winning the Young Professional of the Year Award in 2010 from Illinois Parks and Receptions Association. She has ambitiously taken on new challenges as superintendent, such as revamping the aquatic's programing, expanding special events, taking the lead on training for summer camps, achieving her life guard certification, certified pool operator certification, and attaining her food sanitation certification.

"Erika has had a huge impact on the community in which she grew up," said Buffalo Grove Park District executive director, Ryan Risinger. "Her hard work, combined with her talent, creativity, and leadership skills are things that we have benefitted from for many years. I am not surprised that others in our industry have taken notice and bestowed this award upon her. She is definitely very deserving of it."

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Picture #1

Buffalo Grove Park District Commissioner, Jack Scherer
Buffalo Grove Park District Commissioner, Scott Jacobson
Kildeer Countryside School District 96 Superintendent, Julie Schmidt
Buffalo Grove Park District Executive Director, Ryan Risinger
Buffalo Grove Park District Commissioner, Adriane Johnson
Buffalo Grove Park District Board President, Rick Drazner

Picture #2

IAPD Chariman, Ken Collin
Buffalo Grove Park District Executive Director, Ryan Risinger
Kildeer Countryside School District 96 Director of Facilities and Transportation, Randy Warren
Buffalo Grove Park District Commissioner, Scott Jacobson
Buffalo Grove Park District Commissioner, Dr. Larry Reiner

Picture #3

Buffalo Grove Park District Superintendent of Recreation, Erika Strojinc



