

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OAK BROOK PARK DISTRICT RECEIVES 'CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE' AWARD

The Oak Brook Park District is honored to have received the Champions for Change Award at this year's IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference in Chicago, Illinois.

The Champions for Change Award recognizes agencies with unique and exemplary practices of increasing access and fostering diversity and inclusion within their community or organization.

This past year, the Oak Brook Park District implemented several diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) related services, trainings, and programs for staff and the Oak Brook community. DEI staff trainings began as early as November 2020. The Park District staff took part in a virtual "team-building" discussion which included a Safe Zone Conversation on Racism, planning inclusive monthly celebrations for the 2021 year, and viewing the movie "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner." This training hosted by the Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA), and the fruitful discussions that took place during and after the event, began staff's commitment to internal and external DEI initiatives.

Executive Director Laure Kosey said, "As park and recreation professionals, it is our responsibility to provide a diverse range of inclusive and equitable recreation opportunities to the communities we serve. When it comes to DEI, we understand this work is never truly finished. There is still much work to be done, and the Oak Brook Park District looks forward to the continuation of learning, listening, and acting. We are humbled by this recognition and we will keep moving onward with DEI as a top priority."

Staff attended two additional Safe Zone Conversations related to LGBTQAI and LatinX. Oak Brook Park District DEI Committee members presented at the Safe Zone Conversation about LatinX, as well as at the Diversity Education Institute hosted by IAPD's Diversity Committee. Lastly, the DEI Committee hosted a "DEI 101" Lunch and Learn for staff in July 2021. The presentation included subjects such as: sexual identity, sexual orientation, race, and ethnicity.

Kosey explained, "The Oak Brook Park District and our DEI Committee are looking forward to continuing inclusive practices that make all feel welcome and aid in actualizing our mission: to provide the very best in park and recreational opportunities, facilities, and open lands for our community."

IPRA Executive Director Barbara Arango said “I am inspired by the leadership and progress of IPRA’s Champion of Change Award winner – Oak Brook Park District. I congratulate them on receiving this award and for their commitment to inclusivity.”

Questions? Please contact Marketing & Communications Manager Haley Colucci, at (630) 740-7936.