

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD IN HONOR OF FRED M. COOMBS

John P. Mikowychok

John dedicated his entire career to enhancing the parks and recreational opportunities for residents at the local, county and statewide level. He has been an active PRPS member for over forty-five (45) years, has contributed numerous articles to the Society's magazine and has served on PRPS Conference, Membership, Governmental Affairs, Public Awareness and Professional Training Committees. John's legacy is his over 40 years of continued service to the Park Resources Branch. He has held every Branch Executive Committee position and was the editor of the "Branches" newsletter for 35 years. John volunteered to design the landscape plan for the PRPS Office property and implemented the plan through the Branch's many "work days". Whether he is writing an article, mentoring other professionals or performing as a member of the "Supreme Beings of Parks and Leisure," John's level of dedication and professionalism is second to none.

AGENCY OF THE YEAR AWARD

Sponsored by BAB Enterprises

Mechanicsburg Area Parks and Recreation

In 1976, the Mechanicsburg Area School District alongside the Upper Allen Township, Mechanicsburg and Shiremanstown Boroughs developed the first Joint Board Recreation Agreement to provide the community with a comprehensive recreational programs for all. The leaders of the Mechanicsburg Area shared a vision and foresight that many strive to acquire to this day. Since the pandemic, the department has aligned itself with the changing needs of the community and designed, implemented, and continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the programming initiatives over the past five years. The past two years, they have led their organization into a new era, "life after the pandemic" and they are constantly researching, evaluating, creating, and planning, to be the essential service and far exceed the expectations of our community.

Following dinner & recognition of our colleagues' fabulous accomplishments, please join us at the District Feud Social. DJ Dave Boice will be playing!



2024 PRPS Conference & Expo

March 12 - 15, 2024

Seven Springs Mountain Resort



PA RECREATION & PARK SOCIETY

2023 AWARDS BANQUET



TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2023

76TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXPO

HERSHEY, PA

SPONSORED BY RECREATION RESOURCE USA



PROGRAM

Welcome	Barry Bessler, Chair Recognition & Awards Committee
Presidential Citations	Tonya Brown, President
Invocation	Audrey Logar
Dinner	
Society Awards	Barry Bessler
Photographs	Award Recipients

2023 RECOGNITION AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

Barry Bessler, Chair, Retired

Tammy Agesen, Lancaster County Dept. of Parks & Recreation

Phil Brady, Plymouth Township Recreation & Park Department

Heather Cuyler, Pashek + MTR

Dave Hutner, Cranberry Township Parks & Recreation

Daphne Klahr, Reading Recreation Commission

Jason Lang, East Goshen Township Park & Recreation Department

Audrey Logar, Camp Hill Recreation

Deanna Schall, PA State Parks

Joe Seltzer, Montgomery County Parks

Jim Watenpool, Retired

AGENCY OF THE YEAR AWARD BLUE RIBBON PANEL OF JUDGES

*Barbara Heller, Practice Advisor for Parks, Recreation and Libraries, Berry Dunn,
Charlestown, MA*

Karen L. Hesser, Chief of Operations, Five Rivers Metroparks, Dayton, OH

Charlie McCabe, Parks, Open Space and Placemaking consultant, Boston, MA

*Cindie Sullivan, American Academy of Park and Recreation Administration, former
Park Facilities Manager, Somerset County (NJ) Park Commission*

*Jamie Rae Walker, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Urban and Municipal Park Specialist,
Texas A & M University*

COMMUNITY CHAMPION AWARDS

Carmen Battavio

East Goshen Township

For over 50 years, Carmen Battavio has been the soul of East Goshen Township. He has served as elected official, firefighter, open space advocate, Township beekeeper, community builder, Santa and family man.

Ron Robbins

Eastern York Recreation Authority

For 28 years, Ron Robbins has dedicated his time and talents to the Eastern York area ensuring the youth have what they need to succeed. From coaching to rehabilitating ballfields, securing donations to managing disagreements, and winterizing facilities to overseeing the funnel cake stand, Ron also serves as the Chairperson of our Park & Recreation Board. He is always thinking about the next project and how it will benefit others.

OUTSTANDING NEW PROFESSIONAL

Emily Baiada, CPRP, CYSA

Springfield Township Parks and Recreation

In her nearly eight years in the Park and Recreation field, Emily has been fortunate to share her passions with those in her community. Her love of recreation, sports, the outdoors and helping others has grown stronger as the community emphasizes the essential nature of the profession. Through her work she has made a positive impact that will hopefully pave the way for future Park and Rec Kids just like her!

DISTINGUISHED MEMBER AWARD IN HONOR OF ROBERT D. GRIFFITH

Michael J. Richino, CPRP

Whitpain Township Parks and Recreation

Mike has a positive impact on the Whitpain Township Community where he serves as the Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation. He also has been a dedicated member of PRPS since 2001. He has held Society positions at both the District and Board of Directors level. His last active involvement with PRPS was as the President of District 3 ending in 2022 and is the current D3 Past President. Mike's enthusiasm, creativity and organizational skills have benefited the Society with his involvement in past annual conferences as a co-chair of the Exhibit Hall and as a member of the Local Arrangements, Exhibit Hall and Social Committees. Throughout his 23 years, Mike has served PRPS with professionalism and dedication earning him the respect and admiration of his peers.

EXCELLENCE IN RECREATION AND PARKS

enjoy the sunny day with a treat, train to be a Paralympian, or just wanted to participate in a fun activity to get moving, Blind Sports Day had a place for everyone!

Township of Upper Providence Parks & Recreation “ADA Playground”

Director: Sue Hoffman

Township of Upper Providence is home to six unique parks with wide ranging of amazing amenities but despite all of the amenities, upon completion of a Park Master Plan in 2020, a critical need for a new, accessible playground emerged. With the combined work of the Parks and Recreation Dept, Public Works Dept., Police Dept., Fire Dept., Board of Supervisors, and several contractors, Upper Providence Township has given the community a brand new, state of the art, ADA accessible playground in the heart of the township.

Township of Upper St. Clair Recreation and Leisure Services “Lifeguard Buddies”

Director: Paul Besterman

Aquatic Coordinator: Cary Johns

Recreation and Leisure Services created the Lifeguard Buddies program in the summer of 2021 in effort to protect a kid from bullying by other children. In the summer of 2022 they had 54 kids between the ages of 6-11 participate in the feeder program for recruiting lifeguards to their facility. During this program the buddies learned the importance of the role and responsibilities of being a lifeguard.

GREEN AND SUSTAINABLE PARK AWARD City of Pittsburgh Wightman Park

Wightman Park demonstrates successful integration of green and sustainable practices that meets the recreation and stormwater infrastructure needs of an urban neighborhood in the City of Pittsburgh. Designed by Pashek + MTR for the City’s Department of Public Works, the two-acre park includes a playground, multi-use field, half-court basketball, a pavilion, walking path, restrooms, and boardwalk. About 30 acres of runoff (over 400,000 gallons per storm event) from the neighborhood flows into a rain garden in the center of the park and tanks buried under the playground, court area, and field. The park preserves existing trees, reuses pavers, uses products with recycled steel, and includes native trees and meadow plantings to increase biodiversity and wildlife habitat. It also contains an inclusive playground, accessible walks, and the City’s first adult changing table. This intergenerational park includes a boardwalk through the rain garden and educational signs to connect people to nature.

The Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society extends its sincere congratulations to all those being recognized this evening. Each individual, group, and agency is acknowledged for the positive impact they have made on those served by our profession.

A SUMMARY OF THE AWARDS PROCESS

The Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society Awards Program is a competitive process.

- The Awards Committee solicits nominations each year beginning with summer media announcements including the PRPS Weekly SCOOP and the PRPS website.
- Information and applications are available beginning in the summer on the PRPS website, by contacting the Recognition and Awards Chair, or the PRPS office. Those interested submit their entries electronically in January.
- Each member of the Recognition and Awards Committee receives an electronic copy of the nomination form for their review and evaluation against established criteria.
- Committee members vote anonymously and **do not vote** on their own agency submissions.
- The Agency of the Year Award is judged by an independent panel of experts in the field of parks and recreation.



EXCELLENCE IN RECREATION AND PARKS

Northampton Township Parks & Recreation

“Northampton Township 300th Anniversary Celebration”

Director: Jennifer Fean

Northampton Township celebrated its' 300 year Anniversary with a year long commitment to offer diversified, historically educational, culturally significant and authentic presentations to all generations of their Community to celebrate this milestone achievement.

Ohio Township Parks & Recreation

“Tree Lighting Celebration and Tree-Lit Trail”

Director: Andy Rubino

Although Ohio Township's Tree Lighting Celebration isn't a unique event, one aspect is unique. The tree lit nature trail that was on display during their Annual Tree Lighting involves the efforts of 18 different local boy scout and girl scout groups. Each group decorated a tree along the pathway to be on display at the event and through the holiday season.

Philadelphia Parks & Recreation

“Kensington Initiatives”

Director: Kathryn Ott Lovell

In 2022, working with community partners, the Free Library of Philadelphia, and many others including Philadelphia Police Department, CLIP, etc., PPR transformed Kensington neighborhood parks and rec centers (McPherson Square, Harrowgate, Hissey, Scanlon rec Center and pool) with new community-designed activations and programs. PPR provided safe and fun expanded programming to thousands of Kensington families through Kensington PlayParks and a SwimPhilly activations.

Pottstown Parks and Recreation

“Pottstown Play Streets”

Director: Michael Lenhart

Program Coordinator: Andie Graham

The Pottstown Play Streets program was created in 2022 to fulfill the varied needs to build the community mindset of the residents of Pottstown Borough. The inaugural seven-week program was offered Thursday evenings at different locations throughout the Borough. Pottstown Parks and Recreation closed a community block to traffic adjacent to the parks at each location and offered fun and games for all who cared to join. It presented an opportunity to be active outdoors during the summer and explore the neighborhood parks.

Reading Recreation Commission, Reading Area Water Authority, and City of Reading

“Wacky Water Wednesday”

Directors: Daphne E. Klahr, Ed.D., CPRE; Bill Murray; The Honorable Eddie Moran

Program Leaders: Daphne E. Klahr, Ed.D., CPRE; Bill Murray; Sgt. Darrin C. Dougherty

In response to the City of Reading's only public pool closing due to Covid-19 mandates in 2020, the Reading Recreation Commission launched a summer initiative - Wacky Water Wednesday. Every Wednesday throughout the summer, RRC staff and city officials went from one neighborhood to the next, closed streets, and opened fire hydrants so kids could cool off and have fun. This initiative has continued with a lot of support from the community and is planned already for 2023.

Quakertown Borough Parks & Recreation

“K.I.D.S. Camp”

Director: Ashton Miller

For the past 50 years, Quakertown Borough Parks and Recreation has hosted its summer K.I.D.S. What started in 1972 as a free half day summer program for 20 children a day has since grown to be a full day summer camp for low-income families, hosting over 110 children each week. The program which previously had limited resources has grown to encompass an educational component, developed community support, is accessible for low-income households, and became a staple in the community resulting in campers leaving at the end of the summer proud to be a Park and Rec Kid!

Quakertown Borough Parks & Recreation

“Sounds of Summer Concert Series”

Director: Ashton Miller

Every summer for the past six years, the Quakertown Parks & Recreation Department has hosted the Sounds of Summer Concert Series presented by Sands Auto Group at the Univest Performance Center. Over the years the department has secured more than 30 renowned artists for the concert series including Pat Benatar, The Beach Boys, and Rodney Atkins to name a few. The Sounds of Summer Concert Series supports the Boroughs revitalization efforts by bringing not only the community together but attracting individuals from all over to the community's hidden gem and promoting community pride through music.

Upper Gwynedd Township

“Blind Sports Day”

Director: Sarah Prebis

Program Coordinator: Leigha Adduci Getty

Upper Gwynedd Township Parks & Recreation partnered with the Blind Sports Organization to host, Blind Sports Day for children and families who were either blind or visually impaired. Blind Sports Day was an opportunity to introduce some of the many adaptive sports available in the community of the blind or visually impaired. Participants had the opportunity to attend introductory sessions run by experienced volunteers which included Goalball, Beep Baseball, Blind Soccer, Blind Tennis, and Beep Kickball. No experience was necessary, and all ability levels were welcome. Blind Sports Day allowed for Upper Gwynedd Township to celebrate all abilities. Whether an individual wanted to