

# Background Information on NWSRA

## **History of NWSRA**

The Northwest Special Recreation Association (NWSRA) was formed in 1973 to provide recreation services to individuals with disabilities. NWSRA is an extension of 17 member park districts located in the northwest suburbs of Chicago. This type of agency is unique to Illinois. NWSRA offers public access, year round recreational programming to over 14,000 individuals with disabilities in its service area. NWSRA is the largest of all special recreation associations and is a leader among peers with over 18,000 registrations for programs in 2011. NWSRA is a two-time National Recreation and Park Association National Gold Medal Award winner and was recognized as a Distinguished Accredited Agency by the Illinois Park and Recreation Association, an honor only 10% of Illinois park and recreation agencies have received. The mission statement of NWSRA is “We exist to provide outstanding opportunities through recreation for children and adults with disabilities.”

## **NWSRA’s Partner Park Districts**

NWSRA serves 17 northwest suburban park districts located within Cook County and southern Lake County (see the attached map of the NWSRA service area). These park districts include Arlington Heights, Bartlett, Buffalo Grove, Elk Grove, Hanover Park, Hoffman Estates, Inverness, Mt. Prospect, Palatine, Prospect Heights, River Trails, Rolling Meadows, Salt Creek, Schaumburg, South Barrington, Streamwood and Wheeling.

## **Special Leisure Services Foundation**

In 1980, Special Leisure Services Foundation (SLSF), a 501(c)(3) organization, was formed to provide additional funding needed to maintain quality services and facilitate future growth for Northwest Special Recreation Association (NWSRA). The mission statement of SLSF is “We exist to support and promote outstanding opportunities through recreation for children and adults with disabilities in cooperation with Northwest Special Recreation Association.”

SLSF supports NWSRA programs and services utilizing funds raised through fundraising events, business partnerships, grants and individual donations. SLSF provides funding toward capital improvements, general program support, inclusion, the Kevin T. Kendrigan Memorial Scholarship Program, NWSRA Lightning athletes who can compete in Special Olympics, Paralympics and Unified Sports opportunities and accessible transportation.

## **How do individuals benefit from NWSRA services?**

NWSRA offers a variety of recreation programs throughout the year including bowling, swimming lessons, crafts, cooking, piano lessons, sports training for athletes who can compete in Special Olympics and Paralympic sports, horseback riding, social clubs and summer day camps. During holidays and between program sessions, NWSRA provides

numerous special event trips to sporting events, museums, concerts, dances and park district facilities.

The NWSRA staff is made up of professionals with degrees in Therapeutic Recreation or a closely related field. Full time program staff hold certifications in First Aid, CPR, Lifeguarding, Water Safety Instruction, through the National Park and Recreation Association, and the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation. The full time staff are supplemented by specially trained and dedicated part time staff and volunteers. A close staff to participant ratio is maintained in order to ensure quality and promote the maximum involvement of participants.

### **NWSRA Main Office**

The main office for NWSRA is located at the Park Central building, 3000 W. Central Rd., Rolling Meadows, IL. NWSRA owns the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Park Central Building as part of a condo agreement with Rolling Meadows Park District. Rolling Meadows Park District owns the basement and 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the building.

All capital improvements related to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Park Central building are the sole responsibility of Northwest Special Recreation Association.

# Member Park District Service Map

# Communities Served by NWSRA

---

