

SPECIAL guidelines for the formation
and development of
RECREATION
in the state of Illinois **COOPERATIVES**

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INTRODUCTION TO SPECIAL RECREATION COOPERATIVES

The concept of a special recreation cooperative developed as park districts recognized that they were not meeting the leisure needs of their special populations, including individuals with physical and mental disabilities. Committed to the idea that individuals have the need and right to make productive and enjoyable use of their leisure time within their own communities, many districts did try to offer summer camps and year round special events for their handicapped residents. However, program scope was limited, and they were meeting the need of only a fraction of those requiring services.

Many park districts attempted to expand their services to special populations through these efforts; however, they encountered three major barriers that together could not be overcome.

1. Financial restrictions on recreation budgets requiring a specific enrollment to provide a break-even program.
2. The low incidence of identified special populations in a given community, resulting in low attendance at scheduled programs specifically designed for their ability level. The park districts were forced to place individuals with extreme differences in ability level into the same activity. This situation often caused the lower level functioning individual to feel inadequate and unsuccessful, and the higher level handicapped person to feel unmotivated.
3. The inability of the districts to employ adequately trained personnel to design programs to meet the specific needs of the participants, and to offer leisure counseling services for those individuals and families involved in programs.

As the need for individualized programs became apparent, park districts began to look towards cooperative services, in order to consolidate resources and populations, and to hire a core staff of professionals trained in therapeutic recreation. Through the pooling of resources and populations, the park districts hoped to offer their special populations a program of recreational

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activities equal in diversity, frequency, and quality to those available to non disabled residents, and geared to meet the individual need of each participant.

In March, 1967, nine communities in suburban Cook County approached the concept of a joint agreement for the provision of a special recreation day camp and ongoing year-round program for special populations. Two of the larger municipalities worked with the school districts to identify the prospective populations to be served, and to evaluate the extent of needed programs. Having found a target population exceeding that which was expected, the need for supportive legislation was sought in order to acquire a funding base. With the support of the Illinois Park and Recreation Society, the Illinois Association of Park Districts, and Senator Harris Fawell, enabling legislation was soon drafted and signed into law. The Northern Suburban Special Recreation Association, the first association of it's kind in the state, was a cooperative venture of Deerfield, Glencoe, Highland Park, Highwood, Kennilworth, Northbrook, Wilmette, and Winnetka. They have since added Northfield as a member to the Association.

The formation of the three other Special Recreation Districts followed shortly. The Maine-Niles Association of Special Recreation (Des Plaines Park District, Golf-Maine Park District, Lincolnwood Recreation Board, Morion Grove Park District, Niles Park District, Park Ridge Park District and Skokie Park District) entered their joint agreement in December, 1972.

The Northwest Special Recreation Association (Arlington Heights, Buffalo Grove, Elk Grove, Hanover Park, Hoffman Estates, Mount Prospect, Palatine, Prospect Heights, River Trails, Rolling Meadows, Salt Creek, Schaumburg, and Wheeling) was founded in January, 1974.

The South Suburban Special Recreation Association (Chicago Heights, Crete, Homewood-Flossmoor, Olympia Fields, Park Forest, Park Forest South, and Stegar) was formed in June, 1973.

Each of the Special Recreation Cooperatives are committed to providing comprehensive leisure services for children and adults having diverse disabling conditions. Persons with various levels of mental retardation, physical disability, emotional disturbance, hearing impairments, visual impairments, and multiple disabilities are provided opportunities for quality leisure activities

(4)

specifically oriented toward individual ability levels and limitations. Pilot programs are being initiated to serve the newly disabled and temporarily disabled citizen. Recreation programs have been designed for accident victims, heart disease patients, stroke victims and individuals with other chronic neuromuscular disorders.

It must be realized that not every disabled individual is in need of specialized recreation services. The Special Recreation Cooperatives have taken a position of selecting and evaluating the programs of the member Park Districts as to their appropriateness for individuals with special needs. Integrated programs have been designed for those participants still able to participate in some of the ongoing Park District programs. In these cases, consultation and professional input from the staff of the Special Recreation Cooperative is provided. By offering recreation programs within the mainstream of the community, and by providing opportunities for involvement in new situations and environments, individuals with limiting conditions can learn of and become comfortable with leisure opportunities that they will later be able to pursue independently.

With the development of Special Recreation Cooperatives, a new frontier in community services has been opened. The Special Recreation Cooperatives have found that many of the people served with appropriate training and experiences, will eventually be involved in the mainstream of society. By providing them with opportunities to participate in quality leisure activities and an opportunity to develop a positive self-concept, the local park district will be providing a service that can upgrade the quality of life in the total community. The Special Recreation Cooperatives function as a significant contributing factor to after-institutional care services, and more significantly, as a community preventative measure; an alternative to institutionalization.

The remainder of this publication is devoted to the actual process involved in creating a Special Recreation Cooperative. Appendix I may be referred to in relationship to each of the following sections and provides a suggested timetable for planning and implementation.

ENABLING LEGISLATION AND LEGAL BASE

The legal base for all special recreation cooperatives is the result of Senate Bills 745 and 746 of the 1969 Illinois General Assembly.

Under the Illinois State Constitution, it is now legal for governmental agencies to enter into such agreements. The Bills noted above created the impetus to allow legal governmental bodies, not necessarily within the same community, to join together to provide services to the residents of the joined communities. It should be noted that this legislation was designed for communities with a population of 500,000 or less.

Contained below is the wording of these Bills (745, Park Districts, and 746, Municipalities) in composite form. These Bills amend the Park District and the Municipal Codes respectively.

"An act to add Sections 8-10a and 8-10b to 'The Park District Code', approved July 8, 1947, as amended. (...Sections 11-95-13 and 11-95-14 to the 'Illinois Municipal Code', approved May 29, 1961, as amended.)

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois, represented in the General Assembly:

Section 1. Sections 8-10a and 8-10b are added to the 'Park District Code', approved as amended, the added Sections to read as follows: (...Section 11-95-13 and 11-95-14 are added to the 'Illinois Municipal Code', approved May 29, 1961, as amended, the added Sections to read as follows:

Section 8-10a. Every Park District is authorized to establish, maintain and manage recreational programs for the handicapped, including both mentally and physically handicapped, to provide transportation for the handicapped to and from such programs, to provide for such examination of participants in such programs as may be deemed necessary, to charge fees for participating in such programs, the fee charged for non-residents of such districts need not be the same as the fees charged the residents of the district, and to charge fees for transportation furnished to participants.

Section 8-10b. Any 2 or more park districts are authorized to take any action jointly relating to recreational programs for the handicapped that could be taken individually and to enter into agreements to extend for a period not to exceed 3 years with other park districts and recreation boards and the corporate authorities of cities, villages and incorporated towns specified in Sections 11-95-2 and 11-95-3 of the 'Illinois Municipal Code', approved May 29, 1961, as amended, or any combination thereof, for the purpose of providing for the establishment, maintenance

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and management of joint recreational programs for the handicapped of all the participating districts and municipal areas, including provisions for transportation of participants, procedures for approval of budgets, authorization of expenditures and sharing of expenses, location of recreational areas in the area of any of the participating districts and municipalities, employment of a director and other professional workers for such program who may be employed by one participating district, municipality or board which shall be reimbursed on a mutually agreed basis by the other districts, municipalities and boards that are parties to the joint agreement, authorization for one municipality, board or district to supply professional workers for a joint program conducted in another municipality or district and to provide other requirements for operation of such joint program as may be desirable."

In summary, the two preceding Bills made possible two or more park and/or municipal recreation departments joining together to provide recreation (leisure time activities) for the handicapped members of their community. There is no maximum number of districts necessary, nor is there any commitment to necessarily provide any specific programming for any particular group of handicapped people. It should also be noted that there are no age limitations, therefore, the programming may be for individuals of all ages.

Finally, there is no requirement that programming be established using specific and, therefore, limiting criteria as to particular handicaps of the individual or individuals being served.

Funding for these Cooperatives was made possible through Senate Bill 1442 and 1443, introduced and passed in the 1972 Illinois General Assembly. These Bills allowed park districts and municipalities to levy, by referendum, up to .02 to \$100 of assessed valuation for the recreation of the handicapped. These Bills were introduced to allow for this levy without a referendum; however, they were amended to require same.

"An act to add Section 5-5 to 'The Park District Code', approved July 8, 1967, as amended. (...Section 11-95-14 of the 'Illinois Municipal Code', approved May 29, 1961, as amended.)

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois, represented in the General Assembly:

Section 5-8. Any park district that is a party to a joint agreement to provide recreational programs for the handicapped under Section 8-10B of this code may levy and collect annually tax of not to exceed .02% of the value, as equalized or assessed by the Department of local

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Government Affairs, of all taxable property in the district for the purpose of funding the district's share of the expenses of providing those programs under that joint agreement, which tax shall be levied and collected in like manner as the general taxes for the district. Such tax shall be in addition to all other taxes authorized by law to be levied and collected in the district and shall not be included within any limitation of rate contained in this Code or any other law, but shall be excluded therefrom, in addition thereto and in excess thereof.

No such tax shall be levied until the question of levying such tax has first been submitted by the board to the voters of such district at any regular or special election held in such district and has been approved by a majority of such voters voting thereon. Notice of such election shall be given and such election shall be conducted in the same manner as elections (other than the first election for officers) held by the district for election of members of its board.

If a majority of the voters of such district voting thereon at such election vote for the levy of collection of the tax provided for, such district shall be authorized and empowered to levy and collect such tax annually thereafter.

Section 2. This amandatory Act takes effect immediately upon becoming a law."

Finally, an extensive effort was expended to have the requirement for referendum removed from the legislation and it was felt that rather than amending the existing authority, it would be most advantageous to introduce two entirely new bills, Senate Bills 220 and 221. After an extensive period of work on the part of the Cooperatives in existence and other interested park district and municipal employees, passage of these bills was obtained in the 1975 Illinois General Assembly. However, they were again amended to require a referendum-by-petition clause in each bill. Senate Bills 220 and 221 read identically until the portion relating to the actual means of levying the tax. In these bills, the following has been substituted:

SB 220 - "Prior to levy and collection of such tax, the park district shall adopt a resolution that it shall levy and collect such tax, and, within 15 days after adopting the resolution, it shall be published once in a newspaper published and having a general circulation in the park district, or, if there is no such newspaper, then in some newspaper having a general circulation in the county wherein such district or the greater or greatest portion in the area of said district lies, or, if there be no such newspaper, copies of the ordinance shall be posted in at least three public places in the district.

If within this 30 day period a petition is filed, signed by electors numbering at least 5% of the total number of electors voting for park commissioners at the last preceding general park district election, but not less than 300 electors of the park district, the board shall call a special election on that question. If no such petition is filed with the secretary of the district within 30 days after the publication or posting of the resolution, then the park district shall be authorized to levy and collect such tax.

Notice of such election shall be given and such election shall be conducted in the same manner as elections (other than the first election for officers) held by the district for election of members of its board.

If a majority of the electors of such district voting thereon at such election vote for the levy and collection of the tax provided for, such district shall be authorized and empowered to levy and collect such tax annually thereafter."

SB 221 - In all cases of the words "park district" in the above bill, substitute "municipality" or municipalities"; at end of first paragraph, add "In municipalities less than 500 population in which no newspaper is published, publication may instead be made by posting a notice in three prominent places within the municipality."

Paragraph 2 reads: "If no petition is filed with the municipal clerk within 30 days after the publication, or posting the ordinance, the municipality shall then be authorized to levy and collect the tax. However, if within this 30 day period a petition is so filed, signed by electors numbering at least 5% of the number of electors voting for mayor or president at the last preceding general municipal election, but not less than 300 electors of the municipality asking that the question of levying and collecting such tax be submitted to the electors of the municipality, the corporate authorities shall call a special election in the manner provided by law to vote upon that question. Notice of such election shall be given in the same manner as the notice of other municipal elections.

This amandatory Act of 1975 is not a limit upon any municipality which is a home rule unit."

This law, then, allows park districts or municipal recreation departments which are members of a cooperative of two or more such agencies, by the use of a referendum by petition ("back door referendum") to tax their local citizens up to but not to exceed .02 per \$100 assessed valuation. The cooperative body, i.e., a special recreation district, is not a new and separate

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taxing unit, but rather an extension of those taxing units which have joined together. This tax can be levied only by the agency which is a member of the cooperative, and funds derived can be used only for the recreation programming and related services for the handicapped.

In using this legislation, agencies which plan to use this new taxing power should go for the authority to levy the full amount, .02, in their initial effort. All publicity related to this levy should stress that the cooperative will request each agency to levy only that amount necessary to provide the programs seen as needed at this time. Appendix II provides information relative to ordinances, the tax levy and posting public notice.

In general, it is advantageous to secure the involvement of the local special education cooperative and the local school districts to keep them abreast of your efforts to provide these services. The involvement of any existing parent groups established for these handicapped citizens will prove extremely beneficial.

Any publicity should reflect a strong, positive attitude declaring that your district is now going to be in a position to provide these individuals with recreational opportunities suitable to their needs and in no way detracting from any programs for the non-handicapped population.

In summary, any two or more governmental bodies may join together to provide recreation for the special populations. These governmental bodies need not necessarily be all park districts or municipal recreation departments, but may include such groups as cities or school districts. It should be noted, however, that only municipalities and park districts have the authority to levy up to .02 per \$100 of assessed valuation for this purpose under the existing laws noted above.

It should also be noted that school systems can receive funding through the Illinois Office of Education for such activities, and that cities with home rule status have the authority to levy these funds without the necessity of going to the voters for said approval.

All such cooperative agreements are required by law to be renewed every three years. However, this requirement could be reduced to cover any period of time not to exceed three years. Once the taxing authority has been passed, the Special Recreation Cooperative is ready to be organized.

ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF COOPERATIVES

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The organization and administrative structure of a Special Recreation Cooperative will generally be determined by the composition of the Governing Board and the characteristics of the communities involved. The initial organization will be determined by the contractual agreements signed by all the participating and municipal recreation boards. Prior to exploring the nature of these agreements, the make up of the Board as well as the factors determining which local communities should be members of the cooperative need to be considered.

Membership in the Cooperative.

To expedite the efficiency of the cooperative one should encourage the participation of park and recreation districts that are geographically contiguous with the boundaries of the school district's special education cooperative. These boundaries may provide definition as to the size of the cooperative while at the same time expressing a commitment to future cooperative ventures with the educational system. Special education cooperatives will generally be receptive to the Special Recreation Association concept as it is only within recent years that they have pooled resources and signed joint agreements themselves.

It is also beneficial to consider the township boundaries when determining the make up of the cooperative district. In the past, townships have been of great assistance in helping bear the financial burden through the use of federal revenue sharing funds and line item grants. Although the continuation of federal assistance is in doubt, line item grants remain very much a possibility for financial assistance. A township body has the authority to make grants to recognized mental health agencies. The existing special recreation cooperatives have set the precedent for this funding as an ancillary service to the department of mental health.

In general, membership in a Special Recreation Cooperative is established through four basic means.

1. The attendance of district representatives at organizational meetings.

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2. A letter of intent followed with a mutually agreed upon financial commitment to be used as seed money for the creation of the cooperative.
 3. The approval of an "Articles of Agreement" and subsequently a signed copy placed on file in the administrative offices.
 4. The continued involvement of a designated board member from each district as well as the commitment of the district on the whole.

Membership is agreed to on a three-year basis with provisions for the release from the agreement after one-year of financial involvement. The agreements may not be written for longer than a three-year period. Provisions for involuntary removal as well as the specifics of the fiscal year are agreed upon by each individual Board of Directors. Appendix III includes a sample resolution and guidelines for adoption.

The Administration - Articles of Agreement.

The administration base of the inter-community special recreation cooperative is usually well defined in a joint contract or Articles of Agreement covering the new agency. The authority to join in this cooperative agreement was established on August 18, 1969, with the adoption of Sections 8-10-2 of the Park District Code. Basic concerns covered in the agreement are:

- (1) Name of the Cooperative,
- (2) Purpose,
- (3) Organization and function,
- (4) Administrative District,
- (5) Administrative costs,
- (6) Assessments,
- (7) Determination of Membership,
- (8) Amendments,
- (9) Effective Dates,
- (10) Job Description of Executive Director.

The text of the agreement generally includes such information as: the limitation of the fiscal year, duties and functions of the board, meeting dates, voting procedure and officers responsibilities. These articles will be the foundation on which administrative procedure and policy will be based. (See Appendix IV for a sample of Articles of Agreement.)

The adoption of this agreement by a public municipality will be the formal legal basis for membership in the cooperative.

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Within its member districts, one district upon mutual consent, should be designated as the administrative district. This arrangement in most cases will facilitate the payroll system, allowing the cooperatives' employees participation in a group health insurance policy as well as participation in Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund.

The Governing Board.

The composition of Governing Boards may differ. Board members may consist of Directors of Parks and Recreation, Board Commissioners of the Municipality or other staff members. The selection of individuals to the cooperative governing board is critical. The person chosen to represent the district must do so in a manner that will demonstrate his acceptance of the charge given to him; that of advocating in the best interest of special populations within the entire community.

Presently Governing Boards of the existing agencies consist of all Commissioners; all Directors of Parks and Recreation; half Commissioners and half Directors; and a combination of staff persons, Directors and Commissioners. All methods have proven workable. There have, however, been cases of unnecessary time delays and breakdowns in communication where recreation staff persons have been Board Members, since they must first report to the Director before a decision can be made. In all instances, the individual must be given authority to make those decisions as designated in the Articles of Agreement.

The Governing Board is primarily a policy making body which may act as a steering unit through its committee work and community involvement.

The Organizational Structure.

The basic format for implementation of the organization has been much the same throughout all of the currently existing cooperatives. The Governing Board interviews and hires an individual as Executive Director. The Executive Director is responsible directly to the Board. Professional recreators, therapists, and/or people with related backgrounds should be hired as the

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program coordinators. A secretary should be employed, perhaps on a part-time basis at first and then full-time as the agency develops. (A sample Flow Chart is included as Appendix V.)

Financial records should either be handled by purchasing part-time services from the administrative district or through employment of a part-time bookkeeper. Existing cooperatives are only assessed fees for specific maintenance materials but are provided with maintenance staff time as part of the agreement.

Each cooperative should employ a number of part-time personnel with expertise in specific activity areas, for programs in the afternoon, evening and on the weekends. Individuals with these specific skills often turn out to be either special education teachers or students in local colleges and universities. Professionals at special facilities will also be utilized whenever it may prove beneficial to the participants.

Fees and Charges.

The fees for the activity of the cooperative will be reflective of the costs incurred. With the passing of recent legislation relative to taxing powers, there are some programs that may be subsidized more than others, i.e., swimming, ice skating, tennis. The basic concept is to maintain fees at a level comparable to similar programs in a park district. Increased expenditures for a higher staff ratio make this more difficult to accomplish. The authority to charge fees is given to the association in Section 8-10-1 of the Park District Code. This amendment also allows the fees for a non-participating district to vary from those of the member districts.

Non-resident fee policies may vary in order to more accurately meet the needs of their geographical boundaries. Non-resident fee waivers may be used to insure that all children who might attend a program of special education in the same school would not be charged different fees. Non-resident fees are usually set on a 25% to 50% above resident fees. Reciprocal agreements are often possible between special recreation cooperatives.

Citizen Advisory Board/Liaison Group.

Since the cooperative is a community service, every effort to inform the citizens of the various communities will be in the best interest of the cooperative. Citizen assistance in public relations, program planning, program enrollment and agency identification should be widely encouraged. A supportive group of lay citizens is very desirable. Size and composition of the group may vary but should include all segments of the community; consumers, parents, business people and agency representatives should all have a direct input into the cooperative. It is recommended that the formation of this group be completed after the legal contracts have been signed and before the program implementation process begins.

Program Implementation.

The major concern of the citizenry will be in the nature and quality of the programs that are available and program purposes will vary depending upon their nature and structure. Participant information will be important for the staff in program planning, and should include information on the nature and characteristics of the various disabilities. Much of the information may be obtained from the results of the recreational interest survey but additional clinical information may be required in some cases. This information in many cases may be solicited from the participants themselves or from local clinics, hospitals and other service agencies.

The existing Special Recreation Cooperatives have developed three basic program philosophies. These are:

1. Programs may be an extension of the educational program the participant is involved in. Information can be obtained from classroom teachers and professional school staff members. A leisure program can then be structured to reinforce educational objectives.
2. Program may be individualized and goal oriented. These programs can be structured to meet individual therapeutic and/or remedial needs. Valuable information may be obtained by consulting with parents, professional staff from schools and/or the community and from the agency's professional staff recommendations.

3. Programs may be leisure oriented. This will allow for individual leisure and group recreational programs.

Each agency will want to offer a well rounded program that will cover all three basic areas. The degree of emphasis will obviously vary in accordance to the types and needs of the participants. Continuing evaluation of program objectives and elements will be necessary to insure that the needs and interests of the special population being served will be met.

Program budgets should be maintained as an essential step in the financial system utilized by the cooperative. The program budget must have a direct relationship to line items in the actual agency budget and should be reflected on monthly cash-flow analysis and financial reports. There is little reason to prepare program budgets if they are not a part of a total financial system. Policies will have to be determined regarding fee structure and refunds for each activity. Fees will vary greatly depending on the nature of the activity and the amount of leadership that is required. Fee policies for those not residing within the Cooperative District should be established early so as to avoid confusion. Information on how the existing Special Recreation Cooperatives have established charges for specific activities is available upon request.

Program brochures, pamphlets, and program flyers should be utilized to inform the public of your activities. They should be attractive and should include what, when, where, who and how much. It is suggested that the number districts be listed when possible on all program information.

In addition to programmatic flyers and brochures, each special recreation cooperative should develop several manuals that will improve internal operations, staff communication and ultimately program quality, and should include:

- . policy manual
- . administrative manual
- . operations manual
- . camp manuals
- . school program manuals

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PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Once the new cooperative has been established, efforts of the Director should immediately be focused on program development and implementation. The initial six months will be a critical time in developing the Cooperative philosophy and in establishing program objectives. During this period, it is essential that the Director seek out as much information as possible that will enhance the development of a quality program to meet the needs of all special populations. It is especially important that the Director be flexible. The organization of the first six months will have lasting ramifications.

During the first six months the following activities should be undertaken:

Survey of facilities and existing programs.

The Director will want to arrange with the representative from each member district a tour of existing park district or municipal recreation facilities. This should be done early in order to become familiar with the capabilities and program potentials of the Cooperative. The availability of recreational resources of the participating park district's facilities and programs will facilitate planning relationships with the Special Education Cooperative and will serve as motivating factors in establishing Cooperative relationships and agreements between the two agencies. It is suggested that a detailed list be compiled of:

- . Available community recreation facilities.
- . Location of all potential facilities and programming areas.
- . Accessibility features of these areas and facilities.

(This would include the extent to which they will be available and the extent to which persons with limiting physical conditions, e.g. wheelchair bound persons, could be accommodated.)

- . Contact persons at each facility or area.
- . Existing programs having the potential for joint or integrated programs for the disabled and the non disabled.

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An on site tour and inspection of all of these facilities will provide the Director with first hand knowledge of potential programming resources as well as to allow him to meet the member district personnel.

The Articles of Agreement assure that each district will make facilities available to the cooperative. While touring the park district facilities the possibilities for flexibility in scheduling new programs should be noted. Since many park districts have building-use agreements with local schools, it is important to establish which districts have agreements, what those agreements are and how they are implemented. The extent of these agreements will have direct bearing on the implementation of programs for special populations. Each park district should be thoroughly surveyed in order to determine the best possible strategies to be used in program development.

Identification of school resources.

The next major task for the Director will be to identify school resources. Since schools are a natural and desirable resource for programming, several factors should be considered:

1. Location of school boundaries within the special recreation cooperative.
2. Familiarity with feeder schools in the district.
3. Identification of where children of each special disability in the area attend school.
4. Which schools have special facilities available for cooperative programming.
5. Which children attend cooperative educational programs sponsored by local school districts.

The Director of the area school cooperative will be a primary contact and should be very helpful in cooperative programming. It is imperative that the Special Recreation Cooperative initiate a positive working relationship with the schools. Since in the past many park districts have not had a successful record in programming for special populations, the schools have had a greater impact in providing recreation for special populations. Due to this fact, the endorsement of the special recreation cooperative by school

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officials will help develop early confidence by parents in programs offered by the cooperative.

Identification of other community resources.

The identification of other community resources will entail an extensive and ongoing process. The major resources of any community, in addition to the ones cited above, include human resources, commercial facility resources and community agency resources. To effect a comprehensive program all of these resources must be exploited to their fullest potential. Area reporters, news stations, local fire and police personnel, local parent organizations and local service clubs are only a few of the potential human resources. Human resources may include any individual who can facilitate program development, program implementation and/or staff training, and these resources are virtually limitless.

Commercial facilities can play a major role in programming for special populations. Facilities such as bowling alleys, tennis clubs, ice skating rinks, roller rinks and horseback riding stables are a few of the obvious ones that should be tapped as program resources. Areas such as local shopping centers, grocery stores, camp facilities, commercial factories and many more offer a variety of program potentials.

The Special Recreation Cooperative should strive to be visible in the community by utilizing commercial facilities as much as possible. The visibility of the Special Recreation Cooperative in the community will benefit community awareness and will assist in community education and acceptance.

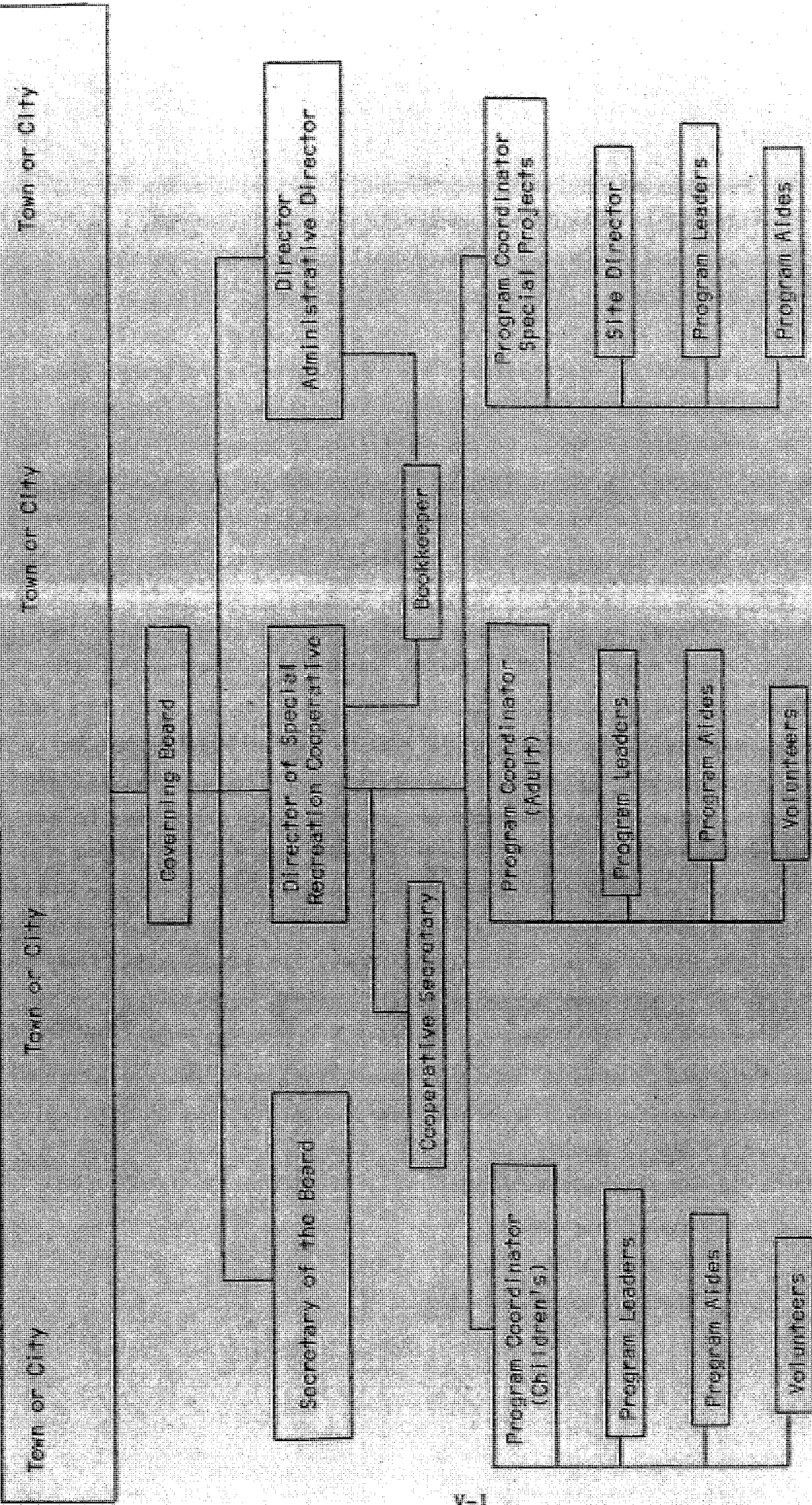
Agency resources will include local sheltered workshops, community live-in facilities and local hospitals; Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., churches 4-H and other Cooperative Extension services programs. All provide potential for integrating the special population into the community mainstream. Using existing agencies as an integral part of the program will not only reduce costs and provide visibility to the program, but will also allow the participants to interact as a part of the community in which they belong.

Identification of population and dissemination of information.

The dissemination of program information is extremely important, as it is essential that all potential program participants are made aware of the recreational opportunities available to them. All information should be disseminated in the most effective and economical way possible, via the development of an accurate mailing list. In order to effectively begin the program planning, the various special populations in the area must first be identified.

The special education co-op and local school districts can be of great assistance in this process. With regards to numbers, the school districts should have a current quadrennial special education census report available. The report provides information on the number of students receiving various special education services. For those not attending public schools, or not of school age, the local/regional offices of the departments of mental health, public health, vocational rehabilitation and services to the aging could provide the needed information. Because of various regulations and policies, these agencies may not provide mailing lists directly to the Special Recreation Cooperative. It is possible that in these cases, the schools and respective agencies would mail out program information, with the cooperative covering the cost incurred. Additional methods might be to prepare individual flyers and pamphlets to be given to various classroom teachers, case workers and other agency personnel. They in turn could distribute the information through their personal contacts with potential program participants. In these cases, it would be very important to personally inform the various agencies of your program and its possibilities. In addition, this will allow the community agencies the opportunity to provide input to program ideas and structure.

Once the identification process has been completed, it would be valuable to mail out a recreation interest survey to all potential program participants. This will greatly assist in planning and program implementation, and will allow for direct consumer input into the program offerings. Many survey instruments exist, and depending on the extent and type of information that is sought, these might be utilized and/or adopted to suit the specific needs. A sample interest survey is located in Appendix VII.



**SAMPLE FLOW CHART
FOR A
SPECIAL RECREATION COOPERATIVE**

House overturns veto; special-recreation bill now law

By **Colt Fehr**
Staff Writer

A new state law will mean new special-recreation opportunities — and more taxes — for Naperville residents.

The House took the final steps Tuesday to make Senate Bill 1881 a law, overturning an August veto by Gov. Rod Blagojevich. The Senate overturned the governor's veto Nov. 5.

The new law exempts municipal park districts from the property tax cap when levying funds of up to 4 cents per \$100 of equalized assessed valuation for programs be-

lieving residents with mental or physical disabilities.

The boost in funding will likely bring enhancements to programs and facilities in Naperville and eight other DuPage County communities served by the Western DuPage Special Recreation Association. The nine-member WDSRA board will meet in December to decide how much it will increase its levy and where the money will go, said Executive Director Jane Hodgkinson, who celebrated with colleagues in Springfield shortly after the vote was taken.

"I feel like the Senate and the House understood the importance of the issue and supported it," Hodgkinson said. "I feel wonderful."

"It is certainly a great day for the disabled population in Illinois," added Peter Murphy, general counsel to the Illinois Association of Park Districts.

The WDSRA's home office in Carol Stream will immediately realize the benefit of the new law, Hodgkinson said. After the governor's veto, the WDSRA prepared to trim its budget. Although no programs were cut, the board held one full-time employee and one contract employee they would lose their jobs

effective May 1, and planned not to hire a replacement for another employee leaving for nursing school.

"They're not going to lose their jobs now," Hodgkinson said.

Not everyone was celebrating the decision. Some lawmakers said the issue further compromises the tax cap. In a September letter to the Senate, Blagojevich acknowledged the importance of providing special recreation services. But he disagreed on raising funds by increasing property taxes.

Among local representatives, those among the 78 voting to over-

turn the veto included Patricia Belack, R-Westmont; Franky Haglren, R-Wheaton; and Jim Meyer, R-Naperville. Sandra Pinos, R-Clermont, was one of two representatives who entered a vote of "present."

Joe Dunn, R-Naperville, was among the 36 representatives who sided with the governor and declined to overturn the veto.

"There is a method for the park district to increase taxes on property and that's to go through a referendum," Dunn said late last month.

See **Veto**, Page 5

Veto

From Page 3

"The special-recreation district doesn't want to go through a referendum; they want legislators to reach into people's pocketbooks and raise the money."

The law will mean a slight increase in taxes. The WDSRA will spend about \$1.7 million this year on salaries, transportation, facility rentals and equipment to stage pro-

grams for residents in Carol Stream, Naperville, Wheaton, Warrenville, Glen Ellyn, Bloomingdale, Winfield, West Chicago and Roselle. About \$1 million of that comes from a tax of 1 cent per \$100

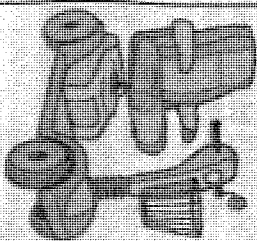
of EAV from each of its member park districts. The rest comes from donations and program fees.

The WDSRA will ask each of its member park districts to increase their special-recreation levies by the

same amount, Hodgkinson said. Raising the rate to 2 cents per \$100 of EAV would generate an additional \$400,000, Hodgkinson said. A seven-cent, continuous \$1 million more.

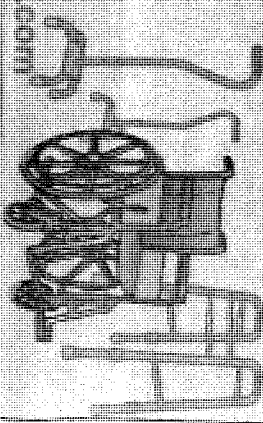
\$300,000 more in WDSRA community pays about \$7 to \$40 per year for special-recreation programs, she said. If the levy increased by 1 cent, it would cost that taxpayer \$15 to \$20.

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From Page 4

Kelly was recognized for her outstanding dedication and commitment to care and community ser-

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