



536 East Avenue / La Grange, Illinois 60525 / P 708.588.2280 / F 708.354.0535 / ilipra.org

Contact:

Illinois Park & Recreation Association
Heather Weishaar
heather@ilipra.org
708-588-2280

For Immediate Release

**West Chicago Park District Employee Awarded for Professionalism at
IAPD/IPRA Conference**

La Grange, IL– On January 26, 2024, the Illinois Park & Recreation Association (IPRA) honored Sara Wittek from the West Chicago Park District with the IPRA Young Professional of the Year Award, for her commitment and excellent service to parks, recreation, and conservation in Illinois. Ms. Wittek was recognized during the IAPD/IPRA Awards Program at the IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference, held at the Hyatt Regency Chicago.

The IPRA Young Professional of the Year Award recognizes an up-and-coming leader in the field of parks and recreation, is given to an individual with less than eight years of experience, and someone who shows a great deal of promise in becoming a future leader in the field.

In her role as Recreation Manager since August 2022, Sara has emerged as a dynamic and dedicated leader, overseeing special events and elevating the quality of recreational experiences for the community. Responsible for managing a full-time Recreation Supervisor and diverse programming, including special interests, summer camps, preschool, and before-and-after care, Sara's positive attitude and commitment to outstanding service have proven instrumental in her success.

Sara's dedication to professional development is evident in her recent achievement of the CPRP certification. Beyond her role at the West Chicago Park District, she serves as the Membership Chair for Women in Leisure Studies, a Commissioner for the Carol Stream Park District, and a member of the Rotary Club in Carol Stream. Her contributions as the Special Event co-chair for the Illinois Park and Recreation Association further showcase her commitment to community engagement. In 2023, Sara's innovative event planning, including Puzzle Pursuit, WeGo Workshops, Slices with Santa, and Cinco de Mayo Color Crawl, has not only diversified the community's recreational offerings but also driven an increase in Special Event revenue, highlighting her ability to deliver positive outcomes.

'Congratulations to Sara for being recognized by her peers with this award for her leadership and commitment to the profession,' Suzi Wirtz, IOM, IPRA Executive Director. 'I personally am

Learn. Connect. Inspire.



536 East Avenue / La Grange, Illinois 60525 / P 708.588.2280 / F 708.354.0535 / ilpra.org

thrilled to watch emerging young talent, innovative creativity and impactful contributions like those from Sara and am excited to watch her help shape the future of the profession and the association.”

A complete list of IPRA Award winners is available on the IPRA website, ILipra.org.

Established in 1944, the Illinois Park & Recreation Association (IPRA) serves nearly 3,000 park, recreation, and conservation professionals throughout the state, and is a national leader in providing premier education, networking, and resources. For more information about IPRA, its board and mission, please visit the IPRA website: www.Ilipra.org.

###