



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

For Immediate Release

Contact:

Illinois Park & Recreation Association

Heather Weishaar

heather@ilipra.org

708-588-2280

Homewood-Flossmoor Park District Recognized for Diversity and Inclusion Efforts

La Grange IL– On January 24, 2025, the Illinois Park & Recreation Association (IPRA) awarded the Homewood-Flossmoor Park District with the Champions for Change Award, honoring their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Homewood-Flossmoor Park District was recognized during the IPRA Awards Program at the IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference held at the Hyatt Regency Chicago.

The IPRA Champions for Change Award recognizes agencies with unique and exemplary practices of increasing access and fostering diversity and inclusion within their community or organization. These are measurable practices that improve the working experience and engagement levels of employees and/or the lives of all people within the community through the delivery of excellent services that improve social equity and access in the community.

The Homewood-Flossmoor Park District (HFPD) has made Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) a core value, driving meaningful change both internally and within the community. Since participating in IPRA's Racism Safe Zone Conversation in 2022, HFPD has launched initiatives such as mandatory DEI training, inclusive onboarding, and updated recruitment strategies that have increased applications from underrepresented groups by 25%.

Community highlights include PRIDE Fest and Juneteenth Celebrations, each drawing over 1,000 attendees in their first year, as well as programs that remove barriers like free dog park access and robust scholarships. Through leadership, innovative programming, and a steadfast commitment to equity, HFPD has set a powerful example of inclusivity in action.

'Congratulations to the Homewood-Flossmoor Park District on being selected by its peers for this prestigious and meaningful award. IPRA is proud to showcase their dedication to and measurable initiatives related to DEI,' Suzi Wirtz, IOM, Executive Director of IPRA. "It is truly inspiring to see the work being done that will ultimately not just change one community, but make the world a better place.'

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PARK & RECREATION ASSOCIATION

A complete list of IPRA award winners is available on the IPRA website, ilpra.org.

Established in 1944, the Illinois Park & Recreation Association (IPRA) serves over 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.

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