



Awards Ceremony



March 19, 2025

Table of Contents

Award Descriptions	3-4	Therapeutic Recreation Award	21-22
Agency Awards	8-10	Community Professional Award	23
Regional Awards	11-15	O'Brien Humanitarian Award	24-25
Outstanding Commercial Partner	16	Honored Retirees/In Memoriam	26
Government Official Award	17-18	Past Award Recipients	27-32
Nancy White New Professional Award	20	Annual Golf Outing	33
		Thank You	34

Awards Committee Message



A well-recognized honors and awards program is a key attribute of any highly respected technical or professional association. Currently, the Massachusetts Recreation and Park Association has a vigorous program to honor outstanding achievement and meritorious service in the various areas served by the MRPA. Through its honors and awards program, MRPA is proud to recognize the exceptional accomplishments of the professionals in our field who help us grow and become better leaders in our Communities. On behalf of the Awards Committee, thank you to everyone who nominated these outstanding professionals and programs, and congratulations to all those we are able to recognize today.

Award Descriptions



Special Citation

This award can be presented to an individual, group, or organization that has promoted and encouraged recreation and leisure services.

Agency of the Year

Design of Facility - given to the agency that used creative and innovative concepts and ideas around a new or renovated facility that has been built or is in the process of being built.

Program Outreach - given to the agency that used creative and innovative concepts or ideas around a new or improved program over and above regular programming that demonstrates a great benefit to the community/facility.

Community Impact of the Year

This award is given to a town or city that is a member of MRPA that has provided an outstanding service, program, and or event to their community in 2025. The town or city will be nominated by someone in their MRPA region. Each region will be represented and will have a town or city given an award.

Outstanding Commercial Partner

This award recognizes a vendor, company, or individual who has significantly contributed to the field of parks and recreation and developed a strong partnership with MRPA, a local organization or agency. This vendor, company, or individual has shown great leadership and support to the parks and recreation field by providing equipment, volunteer time, in-kind services or other contributions to a project or program that benefits the community and demonstrates the importance of parks and recreation. The Corporate Partner must be a Massachusetts Recreation and Parks Association member.

Government Official of the Year

This award is given to a Senator, Representative, Mayor, Town Manager, Town Administrator, etc. who has displayed dedication and advocacy on behalf of Parks and Recreation in a community.

Award Descriptions



Oustanding Student

This award is given to a student in a college setting that shows appreciation and dedication to the park and recreation industry and contributed their dedication to their college or university. They must demonstrate serious interest in pursuing a career in the field of Parks, Recreation, and Leisure Service or Therapeutic Recreation.

Nancy White New Professional of the Year

This award is given to a new member of the MRPA who has been in the park and recreation field full-time for less than five (5) years. This person has made outstanding contributions to the profession and their community.

Therapeutic Recreation Award

This award is presented to an individual or department that is increasing accessibility within their community through Therapeutic Recreation, Inclusion or Adaptive programs and services. Recipients of this award have created an innovative program or event for individuals with varying ability levels or is a professional who is going above and beyond in their work with disability inclusion and accessibility.

Community Professional of the Year

This award is given to a member of MRPA that has provided outstanding service and dedication to their community and continues to improve the field of park and recreation. This person can serve in any specialty area within the park and recreation industry.

The Peter C. & Eric W. O'Brien Humanitarian Award

This award is the highest honor bestowed by the MRPA and recognizes a park and recreation professional who has demonstrated the advancement of the parks and recreation industry. This person is a respected member of the community and maintains a strong dedication and passion for parks and recreation in Massachusetts. This award was established by the Massachusetts Recreation and Park Association's Executive Board in 1980, in memory of Peter C. and Eric W. O'Brien, long-time members of our association.

Special Citation

City of Waltham

Mayor Jeanette A McCarthy



Mayor Jeannette McCarthy has passion and dedication for the parks, recreation, and leisure amenities offered to the residents of Waltham. She dreams, creates, and inspires residents to make happier and healthier versions of themselves through many opportunities.

Within the Community and Cultural Center, a variety of Mayor McCarthy inspired amenities can be found, Skate N Scoot, Bowling, Wii Sports Room, the Chill Zone (a free teen program operating up to four days a week, during the school year), the Recreation Department main offices and home to the Waltham Family School.

The mayor is seen at nearly every family event sponsored by the Recreation Department as well as social service agency. It is not unusual to see the mayor scooting in the Skate N Scoot, bowling in our bowling alley, or visiting with residents at Prospect Hill Park's Amusement Area. All free amenities to residents.

Through creative collaboration with the City Council, they and the Mayor have allocated funding for the many youth, family, and senior projects. The newly renovated Senior Center, Public Schools, Waltham Community and Cultural Center, as well as parks and recreational facilities, are just a few projects that have been revitalized under her tenure including the following parks and facilities.

Since 2024 Mayor Jeannette A. McCarthy and the City Council have invested \$37,118,022.00 in capital improvements to the City's Parks and Recreational amenities.

Mayor Jeannette A. McCarthy has made the City of Waltham feel like home. The residents are her family, and her love and passion transcend every decision she makes when governing our community.

Agency of the Year - Design of Facility

City of Waltham *Universal Playground*



Past:

The property formally known as Walter E Fernald Developmental Center was founded in 1848 and moved to the current Waltham property in 1887. This facility was founded to support people with intellectual disabilities. At the facilities peak, over 7,000 residents and staff lived, learned, and played at this location.

Present:

Through a decade of community input and revitalization planning, the former Walker E Fernald School will be upcycled to utilize pieces of the past while creating new opportunities for play, recreation, leisure, and living to current and future City of Waltham residents.

The design for this property highlights the history of the property, pays respect to the residents, employees, their families, and welcomes the Waltham community. 16.6 acres (passive and active play) as well as the 48-acre section (now a restored nature area) will open in early 2025.

Agency of the Year -Program Outreach

Town of Brookline Recreation *Equity Initiative*



When the Town of Brookline received funding through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), it made a deliberate decision to use these funds to provide direct support to children and families in need, ensuring access to recreational opportunities without financial barriers. Over two years, the Brookline Recreation Department awarded \$788,558 in scholarships and free programming through ARPA and internal funds. This funding enabled 1,734 program registrations across all department offerings.

This initiative allowed individuals and families to participate in town sports, swim lessons, vendor specialty programs, ice skating and childcare services. It provided summer day camps to those who historically could not afford it, and welcomed families to participate in community events by providing transportation options and free entry.

As the department transitions beyond ARPA funding, it remains committed to reducing financial barriers by continuing to offer no-cost services. With the support of the Brookline Parks and Recreation Commission, the department will provide free programming to residents most in need, ensuring that the essential services of Parks and Recreation remain accessible to all. Beyond internal staff, this initiative was made possible through the support of Brookline residents, the Select Board, the Parks and Recreation Commission, the WA26 Committee, and the many elected and appointed officials who played a role in this process. While Brookline Recreation is receiving this award, this achievement reflects of a town-wide commitment to equity and access.

Regional Community Impact of the Year

Cape & Islands Chatham Recreation & Beaches



This past year, our team focused on offering special events. We worked collaboratively to provide a wide range of events for families and individuals of all ages, including our Halloween Egg Hunt, Family Bingo, and Family Dodgeball, fostering community engagement and connection.

Our division played a key role in overseeing the construction of a state-of-the-art pickleball facility, featuring six new courts. The facility's inaugural season was a resounding success, drawing in over 450 members. To support the continued growth of the sport, we also established the Friends of Pickleball, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of pickleball in our community.

Another significant accomplishment was overseeing the creation of an inclusive playground designed to accommodate individuals of all ages and abilities. The new playground features innovative play structures, an ADA-compliant pathway, and solid surfacing to ensure full accessibility for all members of the community.

The Chatham Recreation & Beaches division remains committed to fostering inclusivity, wellness, and enjoyment through teamwork and the continued offering of dynamic events and programs that benefit our community.

Regional Community Impact of the Year

South Shore Easton Recreation



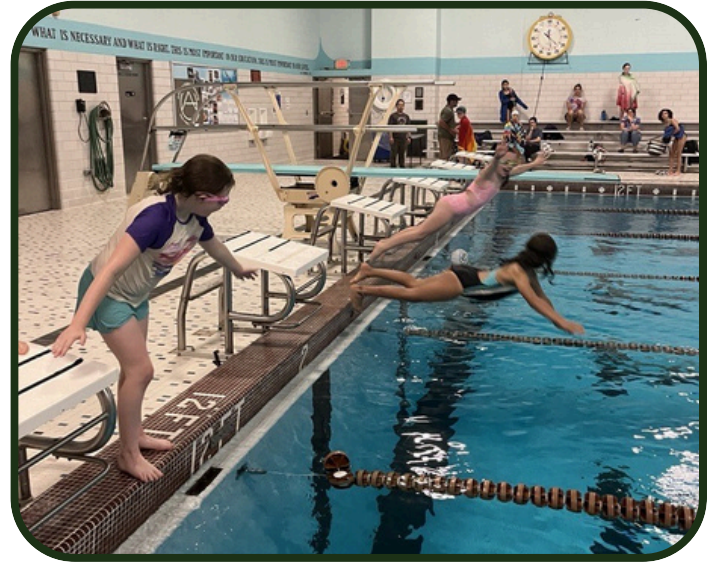
Easton is a historic and proud community that provides a great place to live, learn, and enjoy life. It is also home to a number of organizations that have made meaningful efforts to foster inclusivity. The town's Shared Mission Group was established 2-years ago, as leaders of local businesses, town offices and committees, and programming agencies formed a volunteer network focused on enhancing engagement of all residents, and achieving more together.

To date, the Shared Mission Group has grown to 13 organizations, each bringing a unique perspective, resources, and a priority of inclusion. This shared purpose has led to an immediate community-wide impact.

Together we have been able to develop inclusive programming, contributed to grant writing efforts, made investments in accessibility of facilities, shared facilities, and have collaborated on community-wide sensory friendly events. The group has also provided invaluable perspective on behalf of people with disabilities, and individuals with different backgrounds on town-wide initiatives such as our Outdoor Space & Recreation Plan, our Vulnerability Plan, and our year-long Tricentennial celebration. This initiative is a living embodiment that with a unified purpose, community-wide inclusion is possible.

Regional Community Impact of the Year

Western Amherst Recreation Department



The Amherst Recreation Department achieved a significant milestone last Fall by becoming the first Recreation Department in Massachusetts to receive the Sensory Inclusive Certification from KultureCity. This achievement reflects the department's commitment to ensuring that all residents, regardless of their abilities, have equal access to recreational opportunities. To achieve this distinction, the department undertook trainings to enhance their understanding of sensory sensitivities and learn how to best support individuals with autism, ADHD, dementia, PTSD, and other sensory needs.

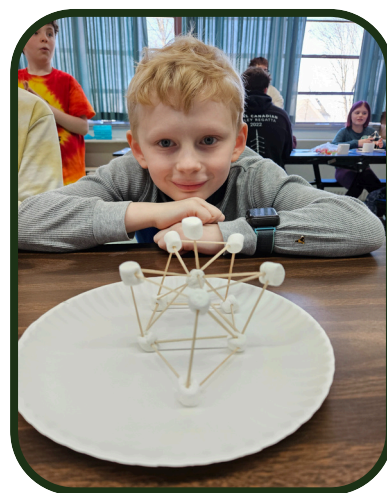
Furthermore, the department invested in creating a more sensory-friendly environment. This included providing a range of sensory tools, such as noise-canceling headphones, earplugs, sensory fidget toys, weighted lap pads, and verbal cue cards, to help individuals adapt the environment to their sensory needs. These items are available at Town events in our Sensory Friendly Tent, at our camps, aquatics, and after-school programs. Recognizing the importance of accessible programming for water safety, Amherst Recreation expanded its offerings to include adaptive swim lessons and an inclusive competitive swim team.

Lifeguards and coaches underwent additional training to adapt their skill set to better meet the needs of individuals with visible and invisible disabilities. These programs also utilize specialized equipment like adaptive floats and life vests as well as waterproof sensory tools to help ensure that swimming is enjoyable and accessible for all. Beyond sensory-friendly programs, the Amherst Recreation Department is actively engaged in initiatives that foster youth development and community well-being. The department has partnered with the School District, other Town Departments (including the Police Department), and local higher education institutions to offer before-school programs for grades 7-8. This program, Morning Movement and Mentoring, focuses on supporting students' mental and physical well-being, improving academic success with homework help, and fostering a strong sense of community. Furthermore, the department has partnered with RISE, a national non-profit organization, to offer two sessions of a youth leadership program. This program aims to create a safe and inclusive space for youth to build trust and break down barriers, foster meaningful dialogue and develop relationships among participants, explore the challenges faced by different communities, discuss their collective responsibility to create positive change, and improve communication and understanding between youth and the Amherst Police Department. By fostering a welcoming and supportive environment and engaging in initiatives that promote youth development and community well-being, the Amherst Recreation Department is committed to creating a more inclusive and equitable community for all residents.

Regional Community Impact of the Year

Metro West

Newton Parks, Recreation & Culture Department



In January 2024 the Newton Teacher's Union voted to go on strike started leaving thousands of families in the school district without a place for kids to be safe and stimulated. With 1 days' notice, Newton Parks, Recreation & Culture quickly pulled together a program for Friday January 19th. The programs team gathered supplies, planned activities, hired staff, stood up registration, spread the word to families, and coordinated free lunches for the Friday program. Realizing the strike would likely continue, the weekend provided more time to plan and coordinate activities for the duration of the break.

For 11 school days from Friday January 19th through Friday, February 2nd, full and part time staff at Newton Parks, Recreation & Culture worked together to offer standard and extended day programming to youth in kindergarten through 6th grade. School sports, academic clubs and all school related programs were cancelled, allowing us to hire our seasonal high school aged staff to assist in running programs, which provided a productive outlet for these teenagers during the school strike days. In total, we employed 42 part-time staff members, 8 full-time staff members and supported 1,171 total participants during the 11 days of programming.

In addition to the school day programming that was offered, we continued with our regularly scheduled night-time and weekend programming for residents of all ages to provide recreational outlets and a sense of normalcy in an otherwise uncertain time. This immediate action and special programming provided a beneficial community impact.

Regional Community Impact of the Year

North East *Danvers Recreation*



Danvers Recreation's Summer Discovery Program stands as a hallmark of innovation and inclusivity. Tailored specifically for state-designated Emergency Assistance (EA) families (<https://www.mass.gov/emergency-housing-assistance>), this program was held throughout the summer at the Holten Richmond Middle School and program provided life-changing opportunities for children and families living in hotels along Route 1 who otherwise lacked access to safe recreational environments.

The 8-week program catered to children in grades K-8, with dedicated staff who ensured a variety of enriching experiences, including physical activities, entertainment visitors, and collaborative programming with other summer initiatives like the Falcons Summer Fun Program and Parks Program. Weekly field trips, transportation provided by local bus companies, and a partnership with Danvers Public Schools for breakfast and lunch ensured that participants received not only engaging recreation but also proper nutrition and a safe environment. Serving primarily Haitian immigrant families seeking asylum, this program addressed critical community needs while fostering inclusion, belonging, and joy.

The overwhelming success of this initiative underscores the department's commitment to going above and beyond in creating programs that truly transform lives and welcome all into the Danvers community.

Regional Community Impact of the Year

Central

Northborough, Southborough, & Shrewsbury



Rec Connect

Rec Connect is a collaborative initiative between the Northborough, Southborough, and Shrewsbury Recreation Departments, created to provide engaging recreational and social opportunities for community members with diverse abilities.

Designed with inclusivity in mind, Rec Connect offers adaptive programs where individuals with disabilities, along with their families and friends, can come together to build meaningful relationships, develop life skills, and enjoy a variety of recreational activities, community outings, and special events. Each program is staff-supported to ensure a welcoming and structured environment for all participants.

Rec Connect was established in direct response to a growing community need. For years, residents in these towns advocated for equal recreational opportunities for their family members with disabilities. Recognizing the importance of a thoughtfully designed and professionally implemented program, the three towns joined forces — leveraging expertise in Therapeutic Recreation — to create Rec Connect.

Since launching in the fall of 2023, Rec Connect has hosted numerous successful events and programs, including outings to sporting events, dinner and movie nights, theater trips, bowling, adaptive tennis, family science nights, social dances, and more.

Through shared resources, innovative thinking, and ongoing collaboration, Northborough, Southborough, and Shrewsbury have seamlessly integrated adaptive and inclusive programming into their recreation departments like never before. As a result, Rec Connect has reached hundreds of families, fostered deeper community connections, and enriched the lives of participants in a meaningful way.

Regional Community Impact of the Year

Central

Northborough, Southborough, & Shrewsbury



Outstanding Commercial Partner

Green Acres Landscaping & Construction



The Outstanding Commercial Partner award goes to Green Acres (GA) Landscaping & Construction of Lakeville, Massachusetts. This family-owned business demonstrates the passion and dedication that the owner and his family bring to each and every park they are awarded to build, fix, or create. It is very common to see the owner Joseph Barbosa on a piece of equipment, getting his hands dirty and personally invested in each project.

His family and their children can be found testing out the final product of their work, after each park opens. Safety of each construction site, as well as final design, is a primary focus. GA goes above and beyond for each park project, big or small, to ensure they are comfortable and always exceed the expectations or requirements at each location.

Communication and attention to detail are also paramount with GA. GA communicates well with the designers, and numerous City Departments to make sure everyone understands each project, task and obstacle. Daily phone calls, weekly meetings, and written reports are standard practice from this family-owned business. Throughout our history of working together, Green Acres has been known to present a solution before presenting any concern or problem. They provide adjustments and enhancements to better the design or project at no cost to the city. Their employees show their pride and high level of professionalism in each and every project. It has been a great pleasure and honor to have such a long and rich working relationship with Green Acres and their family.

Government Official of the Year

Senator Michael Rush
Norfolk & Suffolk District



Mike Rush is the Majority Whip of the Massachusetts State Senate. He proudly serves the people of the Norfolk and Suffolk District, which includes five neighborhoods in the city of Boston and the towns of Dedham, Norwood, Walpole, and Westwood in Norfolk County. Prior to being elected to the Senate, Mike served as a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Mike is a former high school history teacher, an Eagle Scout, an Iraq War Veteran and a Commander in the United States Navy Reserves. Currently, Mike sits on the national Board of Trustees for the US Navy Seabee Historical Foundation, the Boston Public Library Board of Trustees, and the Board of State Library Trustees. Additionally, Mike serves as Senate Chair of the State Parks Legislative Caucus. Mike has enjoyed participating in MRPA Advocacy Day at the State House where he has highlighted the legislation he has sponsored. Most recently, Senator Rush has filed legislation which would create State Parks Day in the Commonwealth to recognize the importance of promoting, enhancing, and maintaining our State Parks system. He has also filed legislation which would require no less than 20 minutes per day and no less than 100 minutes per week of recess in public schools. He and his wife live in West Roxbury with their three children.

Nancy White New Professional Award

James Bunnell
Fitchburg Parks and Recreation



A good leader is measured by how much better he/she makes the others around him/her better. James has positively impacted the city, in a variety of different ways in a little over the two years in the position. He has been able to successfully build back and rebrand the Parks and Recreation Department, a brand that was ultimately, forgotten about in the city for many years before his arrival. The department which consists of James and his assistant are frequently out in the community engaging in events, working with different groups and organizations, and providing opportunities for people to participate and enjoy a variety of different activities while improving the 40+ beautiful facilities the city has to offer with only 4 staff to maintain them all. By no means should the importance of the organization, creativity, and improvements he has made be downplayed, most notably, he has been able to acquire substantial funding through various grants, earmarks, and other streams for the departments. In acquiring all this funding it has allowed programming to be offered at very little to no cost and has expedited improvements to the parks. Lastly, James is always willing to help and go out of his way for the betterment of the City. He will never ask something of someone that he is not willing to do himself, it oftentimes goes unnoticed or under the radar but this is something that a dollar amount cannot be placed on.

Therapeutic Recreation Award

Melanie Pimentel
Brookline Recreation



Melanie Pimentel, is a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) serving the Town of Brookline, Massachusetts. In this full time role, Melanie is responsible for developing and leading a wide range of adaptive recreational programs that promote healthy lifestyles and improve the quality of life for participants. These include not only traditional sports – but life enriching activities such as dinner groups, dance classes, trips to Broadway shows, and weekly physical activity groups. She works tirelessly to create year-round activities tailored to individuals with varying needs, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to engage in recreation. Her role as the local program coordinator for the Special Olympics Brookline chapter, one of the largest in the state, is a prime example of her commitment to inclusion. Over 100 athletes benefit from the unified and traditional sports opportunities she coordinates, giving them a chance to compete, connect, and thrive as athletes. One of Melanie’s key contributions has been her expertise and efforts in developing and implementing inclusion support plans for participants across the recreation department’s entire program outfit. By working closely with colleagues, participants, and their families, Melanie ensures that each individual has the necessary resources and accommodations to take part in all activities fully and comfortably. This personalized approach not only addresses the unique needs of each participant but also fosters an environment of understanding and respect throughout the department’s programming where inclusion is not traditionally found.

In addition to her hands-on work with participants, Melanie oversees part-time therapeutic recreation staff and manages over 100 volunteers, ensuring that all individuals are well-equipped to support the department’s inclusive mission. Melanie’s compassionate, thoughtful approach has helped create a Recreation Department that stands as a model for inclusion, accessibility, and community engagement. Her work ensures that Brookline residents, regardless of ability, can experience the impact of recreation in an environment that celebrates diversity and promotes well-being. Through her dedication, she continues to make a lasting impact on the Brookline community, helping to create a more vibrant, connected, and inclusive space for all. We are so proud to have her on our Team.

Community Professional Award

Ryan Jette
Franklin *Recreation*



Ryan Jette has been a Town of Franklin employee for over 25 years. He served as the Recreation Program Coordinator for 2 years before being promoted to Director in 2001. He is a lifelong resident of Franklin and has dedicated his entire life to making the community a better place to live. Ryan served as the ADA Coordinator for the Town for 6 years and he is committed to making Franklin parks and playgrounds accessible for all.

In 2007, Ryan was presented with the Heights Award, recognizing leaders in Women's Sports. The Mass State Lottery honors individuals who have made significant contributions to the development and advancement of women's sports and who through influence or personal achievement, inspire girls and women to succeed in youth sports.

Also in 2007, Ryan was presented with an Official Citation from the Massachusetts Senate and the House of Representatives, receiving the Unsung Hero Award from the United Chamber of Commerce because of dedicated service and unwavering support for the Franklin community.

He is most known for his advocacy for youth sports in Franklin. Having created many new programs and facilities; including NFL Flag Football, NHL Street Hockey, Jr. NBA/WNBA, Pee Wee Baseball, Girls Field hockey, Girls Lacrosse, and many other youth sports initiatives. Anyone that knows Ryan, knows that he is always willing to help a fellow colleague with developing a new program, or construction of a new facility. He has extensive experience designing and constructing playgrounds and turf fields. In 2024, he helped build 3 new playgrounds in Franklin and 2 turf batting cage facilities. He has a deep passion for helping others and creating the citizens for tomorrow.

Peter C. & Eric W. O'Brien Humanitarian Award

Brendan Egan
Burlington *Recreation*



Brendan Egan began in the field of parks & recreation at the age of 14, keeping score in his hometown Bidy Basketball league followed by a summer program position with the Wallingford (CT) Parks & Recreation Dept. He continued to work in community recreation through college, including a second job with the Ulbrich Boys & Girls Club. He attended Franklin Pierce University and upon graduating accepted a full-time position at the Ulbrich Boys & Girls Club. In 1998 Brendan moved to Beverly, MA with his wife Amy and began a new position with the Town of Amesbury, as their first Youth Director. Looking to advance in the field Brendan was hired by the Burlington Recreation Department as their Recreation Supervisor. In 2009 he was hired by the Town of Marblehead as the Superintendent of Recreation and Parks before returning to Burlington in 2014 as the Director of Parks & Recreation.

Brendan has been an active member of MRPA since 1999. He served on the MRPA Conference Committee from 2002 – 2011 and was a session presenter at the annual State Conference during that time. Brendan has been a member of the Executive Board, serving as Vice President (2008), President-Elect (2009), and President (2010) of MRPA, and has served as the Northeast Region co-chair from 2012 to 2017. He was the recipient of the New Professional of the Year award in 2006, the Community Professional of the Year award in 2018, chaired the MRPA Entertainment Showcase from 2007 – 2014 and has served on the Awards Committee. Brendan is a member of NRPA and is a frequent attendee of the National Congress. With encouragement and a lot of preparation from the program team in Burlington, Brendan presented at the NRPA conference in 2019.

Over the years, Brendan has looked at the operations at Burlington Parks & Recreation and worked with the team to implement ways to improve work flow. Brendan has worked diligently with the maintenance team to improve the playability of the athletic fields in Burlington and began working with Tom Irwin, Inc. to develop and implement a comprehensive field management plan. In 2021, the maintenance team moved into their new home, a 28,000 square foot state of the art facility. With Brendan's guidance, the Program Division has thrived! Over the last 10 years, they have seen unique program growth of 86% and special events have grown by 62%. In 2014, he hired the Department's first Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (part-time) to provide access to more diverse, meaningful recreation opportunities for those with a disability. The position quickly became full-time in 2017, beginning the Therapeutic Recreation division of the department. Over the last years this division has grown significantly under his leadership. Brendan has worked with the team at BPRD to update and develop new facilities and programs for the residents of Burlington. Some of these include construction of Burlington's first dog park, pickleball courts, a cricket pitch, a fully accessible treehouse and the renovation of a number of courts and fields. He encourages collaborations with other community groups such as Burlington Garden Club, Eagle Scouts and other Town Departments including Disability Access and Burlington Public Schools. Brendan loves working with the team at BPRD and looks forward to the challenges each day brings. He is extremely grateful for the support of his wife Amy and their two children Carter and Claire.

Peter C. & Eric W. O'Brien Humanitarian Award

Brendan Egan
Burlington Recreation



Our Honored Retirees



Peter Centola
Watertown Recreation



Gail Carmody
Beverly Recreation

In Memoriam



Lawrence "Larry" Crowley

Danvers Recreation



Anthony "Juju" Mucciaccio

Dedham Parks and Recreation

In Memoriam



David Pearlman

Wayland Recreation



Donald "Don" E. Roberts

Burlington Recreation

Our Past Award Recipients

Legislator Award

- 1999 Walter DeFilippi, R-West Springfield**
- 2000 John Lepper, R-Attleboro**
- 2001 Cheryl Jacques, D-Needham**
- 2002 James McGovern, Worcester**
- 2003 John Olver, Pittsfield**
- 2005 Pamela Resor, Acton**
- 2006 Frank Smizik Brookline**
- 2007 Marie St. Fleur, 5th District**
- 2008 Thomas McGee, 3rd Essex & Middlesex**
- 2009 Lewis Evangelidis, 1st District Worcester**
- 2010 Mary E. Grant, Beverly**
- 2012 Stephen Kulik, Worthington**
- 2013 Jerry Parisella, Beverly**
- 2014 Denise Garlick, Needham**
- 2016 Carolyn Dykema, 8th Middlesex**
- 2017 Carmine Gentile, State Representative**
- 2017 Richard Ross, State Senator**
- 2018 Hannah Kane, State Representative**
- 2020 Lou Kafka, R-Sharon**
- 2022 Robert Hedlund - Mayor of Weymouth**
- 2023 Michelle Ciccolo - State Representative**
- 2024 Marcus Vaughn & Edward R. Philips**

Our Past Award Recipients

Outstanding Student of the Year

- 1990 Diana Casey, U-Mass**
- 1991 Betsey Morrow, Gordon College**
- 1992 Karen Kaminsky, Springfield College**
- 1993 Dawn Buckley, Gordon College**
- 1994 Mary-Theresa Kujath, Springfield College**
- 1995 Robin Burrows, Springfield College**
- 1996 Beth Lindsay, Gordon College**
- 1997 Alison Bache, Gordon College**
- 1997 Robin VerPlank, Springfield College**
- 1999 Tesa Christy, Gordon College**
- 2001 Karyn MacNeill, Danvers – Intern**
- 2002 Angela Linsalata, Gordon College**
- 2004 Emily Manion, Bridgewater State**
- 2005 Karianne Kelley, New Hampshire**
- 2006 Bethany Pinkham, Gordon College**
- 2007 Maureen Michaud, Bridgewater State**
- 2008 Alexa Richards, UNH**
- 2011 Nicholas Fitzgerald, Gordon College**
- 2015 Erik McCarthy, Salem State**
- 2016 Elliabeth Parent, UNH**
- 2017 Sarah Hootstein, Bridgewater State**
- 2018 Christine Ouellette, Bridgewater State**
- 2019 Becca Varney, Bridgewater State**
- 2021 Christian Draus, Gordon College**
- 2022 Paige Bagley, UNH**
- 2024 Julia Ryan, UNH & Brenna Waldinger, Xavier University**

Our Past Award Recipients

Therapeutic Recreation of the Year

- 1984 Sharon Nichols, Northeastern University**
- 1985 Barbara Bromfield, New England Sinai Hospital**
- 1986 Susan Dunn, Fernald State School**
- 1987 Frank Robinson, Northeastern University**
- 1988 Nancy Linn Swain, Fernald State School**
- 1989 Deborah Coloyan, Greenway Rehab Center**
- 1990 Susan Moriarty & WEFSS, Templeton Colony**
- 1991 Karen Peirce, Newton**
- 1991 Wendy Pearl, Newton/Wellesley Hospital**
- 1992 Karen Simmons, Fernald State School**
- 1993 Donna Parker, Therapeutic Rec Specialist**
- 1994 Peggy Hannon-Rizza, Fernald State School**
- 1995 Karen Autrey, Mediplex Rehab**
- 1996 Bernadette Mackin, Mediplex Rehab**
- 1997 Christine Petrillo, Youville Hospital**
- 2003 Stephen Kelley, Bournewood Hospital**
- 2005 Mark Kelly, Newton Parks & Recreation**
- 2012 Anna Wood, Sudbury**
- 2013 Brandon Fitts, Brookline**
- 2014 Chenine Peloquin, EMARC**
- 2015 Michelle Davies, Barnstable**
- 2023 Kate DeAngelis, Lexington**
- 2024 Melissa Carter, Natick**

Our Past Award Recipients

Nancy White New Professional of the Year

2000	Melissa Battite, Brookline
2001	Renee Tavares, Fairhaven
2002	Matthew Casparius, Brookline
2003	Jennifer Pinkham, Peabody
2004	Karyn MacNeill, Manchester
2005	Heather Maietta, Arlington
2006	Brendan Egan, Burlington
2007	Joscelyn Ruelle-Kersker, Beverly
2008	Andrea Egmont, Newburyport
2009	Jon Marshall, Natick
2011	Melissa Roy, Hamilton/Wenham
2012	Jessica Cooney, Dover
2013	Peter Coleman, Lexington
2014	Damion Clements, Truro
2015	Amber Comeau, Sudbury
2016	Mark Ghiloni, Dover
2017	Melissa Rier, Acton
2018	Jeff Tomaino, Worcester
2019	Andrew St. George, Upton
2020	Catherine Seastedt, Norwood
2021	Matt Cauchon, Stoughton
2022	Thomas Romano, Lexington
2023	Molly Reid, Stoughton
2024	Lisa Shepple, Bolton

Our Past Award Recipients

Community Professional of the Year

1984	William Hedlund, Braintree	2004	Dan Keefe, III, Natick
1985	William Aguiar, Somerset	2005	Stanley Walczak, Chicopee
1985	Brian Elliott, Northampton	2006	Ned Bangs, Marshfield
1986	William Kilcoyne, Wayland	2007	Bruce Doig, Beverly
1987	Gary Hardenbrook, Shrewsbury	2008	Karen Simmons, Lexington
1988	Cynthia Erho, Montague	2009	Matthew Casparius, Manchester
1989	Dale Connor, Norwell	2011	Melissa Battite, Brookline
1990	Dan Brosnan, Arlington	2012	Jan Kasetta, Wellesley
1991	Donald Roberts, Burlington	2013	Nancy McShea, Wayland/Sudbury
1992	Nancy White, Needham	2014	Barry DeBlasio, Plymouth
1993	Lawrence Crowley, Danvers	2015	Sheila Butts, Lexington
1994	Richard Walker, Peabody	2016	Jen Davis, Peabody
1995	Edward J. Moriarty, Springfield	2017	Lisa Paradis, Brookline
1996	Russell Halloran, Newton	2018	Brendan Eagan, Burlington
1997	Patricia Carey, Needham	2019	Trisha Powell, Framingham
1998	Anthony Herdemian, Wilbraham	2020	Jen Anderson, Grafton
1999	David MacTavish, Dover	2021	John Gleason, Barnstable
2000	Patricia Machado, Barnstable	2022	Christine Dean, Lexington
2001	Stacy Barr, Attleboro	2023	Julie Harrington, Medway
2002	Joan Fairbank, Beverly	2024	Erin LeBlanc, Millis
2003	Gerald Miller, Norwood		

Our Past Award Recipients

Peter C. & Eric W. O'Brien Humanitarian Award

1980	Peter C. O'Brien, Posthumously	2001	Angela Snell, Shrewsbury
1981	Chester Sawtell, Sawtell Bros.	2002	Dr. Peggy Hothem, Gordon College
1982	Kenneth C. White, Littleton	2003	Cynthia Erho, Greenfield
1983	Dr. Evelyn Kirrane, Brookline	2004	Kathryn Garcia, Southborough
1984	David Clifton, Sharon	2005	Patty Carey, Needham
1985	Thomas Taylor, Worcester	2006	R. Thomas Hamond, Marblehead
1986	Roland Kerkhoff, Creative Craft	2007	Robert Lynch, Brookline
1987	Michael Rourke, Natick	2008	Barry Welch, Quincy
1988	Roger LaPlant, Chicopee	2009	Pat Armstrong, Yarmouth
1989	Eric O'Brien, Medfield	2012	Karen Simmons, Lexington
1990	Louis Ghiloni, Marlboro	2013	Nancy White, Brewster
1991	Danner DeStephano, Concord	2014	Peggy Hannon-Rizza, Billerica
1992	Russell Halloran, Newton	2015	Nancy McShea, Sudbury
1993	John M. Whalen, E. Longmeadow	2016	Melissa Battite, Brookline
1994	William Kilcoyne, Wayland	2017	Patti Machado, Barnstable
1995	Gwen Kermode, Natick	2018	Jennifer Davis, Peabody
1996	Doug MacDougall, Weston	2019	Robert Antonelli, Jr., Worcester
1997	William Hedlund, Braintree	2020	Bruce Doig, Beverly
1998	Gary Briere, Boston	2022	Dan Keefe, Natick
1999	John Hutchinson, Wellesley	2023	Barry DeBlasio, Plymouth
2000	Richard Cugini, Natick	2024	Sharon Locke, Weston

2024 MRPA Annual Golf Outing Winners



Golf Tournament Champion:

Paul McCarthy
Katherine Brenna
Jessie Hampson
Jeff DiSalvo



Longest Drive: Ena Baker



Closest to Pin: Tyler Radicioni

MRPA would like to
thank all of you for
joining us in
celebrating our
colleagues. See you
in 2026!

