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PA Recreation & Park Society



2026 Awards Banquet



Thursday, March 26, 2026

79th Annual Conference & Expo

Manheim, PA

Sponsored by



PROGRAM

Welcome	Dave Hutner Recognition & Awards Committee
Recognition of Committees	Dave Hutner
Invocation	Glenn Nelson
Dinner	
Society Awards	Audrey Logar, Chair Recognition & Awards Committee
Closing Remarks	Dave Hutner
Photographs	Award Recipients
Closing	

PAJAMA JAM SOCIAL

Room: Atrium Lobby - 8:00 pm to 10:00 pm.

Following dinner & recognition of our colleagues' fabulous accomplishments, please join us for the **Pajama Jam Social**, our laid-back social where cozy meets community. Rock your favorite PJs, enjoy light snacks and drinks, and keep good vibes going with crafts, games, and plenty of laughs!

A SUMMARY OF THE AWARDS PROCESS

The Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society (PRPS) Awards Program recognizes excellence in parks and recreation through a competitive nomination process. Each summer, the Awards Committee invites nominations through PRPS communications and provides application materials on the PRPS website and through the PRPS office. Entries are submitted electronically in January and reviewed by the Recognition and Awards Committee using established criteria, with anonymous voting and no votes cast on members' own agency submissions. The Agency of the Year Award is evaluated by an independent panel of parks and recreation professionals. Please scan the QR code for more information about the PRPS awards process.



Pennsylvania Recreation & Park Society

Thank you to all volunteers who serve on the PRPS boards and committees.

Annual Conference & Expo Committee

Co-Chairs: Ally Brandt & Matt Hutchison, Jay Cerkan, Katie Cook, Heavenly Smith, Kelsey Paul, Casey Hausner, Matt Stopa, Erin Timby, Tammy Agesen, Brain Malcarne, Erin Long, Jen Fean, Jeremy Mortorff, Kelly Rebitz, Kylene Gill, Marissa Haynes, Tyler Walker, Walt Mulholland

Blogging Team

Gwen Loose, Jeff Witman, Monica Tierney, Derek Muller, Kate Moyer, Stacey Widenhofer, Ryan Griffiths, Teddy Fisher, Andy Hood, Emily Schnellbaugh

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Committee

Co-Chairs: Kathi Muller and Daphne Klahr Ally Brandt, Andrea Crouse, Ashley Broudy, Chalet Harris, Daphne Klahr, Debra Blair, Doug Knauss, Gina Batavick, Heavenly Smith, Judy Houck, Lisa Summers, Tonya Brown, Walt Mulholland, Marissa Duffy, Kealy Daye

Education Committee

Brian Malcarne, Erin Long, Jen Fean, Jeremy Mortorff, Kelly Rebitz, Kylene Gill, Marissa Haynes, Tammy Agesen, Tyler Walker, Walt Mulholland, Kealy Daye, Dan Hendey, Niki Tourscher

Finance Committee

Chair: Chris Biswick
Joe Minich, Heather Cuyler, Niki Tourscher

GAC Preschool Subcommittee

Andy Oles, Derek Dureka, Joanna Sharanpan, Tammy Cohen

Governmental Affairs Committee

Chair: Monica Tierney
Aisha Hynson, Andie Graham, Angie Nagle, Annette Logan, Don Holmes, Doug Knauss, Heather Cuyler, Kelly Rebitz, Becky Richards, Larry Williamson, Marci Mowery, Mark Palerino, Steve Stroman, Tess Croy, Niki Tourscher

Historical Committee

Chair: Bob Griffith

Leadership Development Committee

Tyler Walker, Dave Hutner, Jessica Cirilo, Heavenly Smith, Ashley Broudy, Ken Lehr, Courtney Fox, Bill Salvatore, Kelsey Paul, Erin Timby

Membership Committee

Chair: Doug Knauss
Ashley Broudy, Cathy Wegener, Tammy Agesen, Erin Timby, Jason Cerkan, Judy Houck, Katie Kollar, Lynn Todd, Kelsey Paul, Marissa Haynes, Tyler Walker, Chloe Pauls, Dominic Roma, Tracy Robert

Recognition & Awards Committee

Chair: Audrey Logar
Daphne Klahr, Dave Hutner, Heather Cuyler, Jason Lang, Jim Watenpool, Joe Seltzer, Phil Brady, Tammy Agesen, Jason Cerkan, Jessica Webster

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD IN HONOR OF FRED M. COOMBS

Karen A. Sweeney, CPRP, CPSI, CPP
Doylestown Township Parks & Recreation

Karen Sweeney has dedicated 30 years to advancing the parks and recreation profession through visionary leadership, innovation, and meaningful community impact. Her achievements include helping create transformative community spaces such as Central Park and Kids' Castle, securing funding for major capital projects, and building public awareness through strong partnerships and engaging events.



Throughout her career, she has elevated parks and recreation as a vital community service by offering accessible, creative programming, including the beloved summer concert series and unique initiatives such as Fido Float. She also spearheaded the construction of a state-of-the-art amphitheater and helped secure support for the Community Recreation Center, which opened in fall 2025, addressing community needs with lasting solutions.

A dedicated advocate for the profession, she has served in leadership roles within professional organizations and has strengthened professional development opportunities for parks and recreation professionals across Pennsylvania. Through her mentorship, writing, research, and public speaking, she has inspired colleagues and emerging leaders alike.

As she approaches her retirement in May 2026, her legacy of leadership, mentorship, and community impact will continue to shape parks and recreation in Doylestown and far beyond.

— Congratulations! —

The Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society extends its sincere congratulations to all those who were honored this evening. Each individual, group, and agency is acknowledged for the positive impact they have made on those served by our profession.

2026 RECOGNITION & AWARDS COMMITTEE

Audrey Logar, CPRP, Chair, Camp Hill Recreation

Tammy Agesen, CPRE, AFO, Lancaster County Dept. of Parks & Recreation

Phil Brady, CPRP, AFO, Plymouth Township Recreation & Park Department

Jay Cerkan, A Pocono Country Place, POA

Heather Cuyler, CPRP, CPSI, Pashek + MTR

Dave Hutner, Cranberry Township Parks & Recreation

Dr. Daphne Klahr, CPRE, Reading Recreation Commission

Jason Lang, MS, CPRE, East Goshen Township Park & Recreation Department

Joe Seltzer, Montgomery County Parks

Jim Watenpool, CPRP, Retired

Jessica Webster, Dauphin County Parks & Rec. Dept.

AGENCY OF THE YEAR AWARD BLUE RIBBON PANEL OF JUDGES

Stacie Anaya, CPRE, Director
City of Lewisville Parks and Recreation, Texas

Christopher Clouden, MSL, Director
Lancaster County Parks & Recreation, South Carolina

Dr. Christina Perry, Director of Organizational Learning
Peregrine Global Services, Wyoming

Dr. Jamie Rae Walker
Associate Professor and Urban and Municipal Park Specialist
Texas A & M University, Texas



EXCELLENCE IN RECREATION AND PARKS

Carlisle Parks and Recreation

Carlisle Skate Spot Mural

Director of Parks and Recreation: Andrea Crouse

Program leader: Anne Monko, Recreation and Pool Manager

An octopus-and-waves mural transformed the graffiti-covered embankment walls of the bowl and quarter pipe at the Carlisle Skate Spot into a bright, colorful work of art. Led by Carlisle Parks and Recreation and designed by a local skater, the community-painted mural was brought to life by teaching artist Aron Rook and hundreds of community members. Carlisle Parks and Recreation designated the bowl for graffiti art, preserving an important form of expression within skateboarding culture.

Cheltenham Parks & Recreation

Revitalization and Repurposing Glenside Memorial Hall

Director of Parks and Recreation: Bill Salvatore

Program leaders: The Cheltenham Parks and Recreation Team

Glenside Memorial Hall required major repairs and renovations far beyond what its limited usage could justify. Cheltenham Parks and Recreation completed a highly efficient, largely in-house revitalization that restored functionality, expanded program capacity, and eliminated barriers of use. Due to all the renovations they have been able to increase classes which includes esports and gaming lab, special events and community rentals which has increased community engagement and participation.

Cranberry Township Parks & Recreation

Certified Programs—Early Learning Center, Mini-Movers Summer Camp, and Kids Club Before and After Care

Director of Parks and Recreation: Dave Blair

Program leaders: *Amanda Bartell, Program Supervisor, Hunter Berneburg, Program Supervisor and Kyle Kenia, Manager of Parks and Recreation*

Cranberry Township has long focused on offering Accredited, regionally respected programs that meet the community needs. In 2025, the township delivered three Department of Health and Safety State-Certified programs including the Cranberry Township Early Learning Center, the Kids Club Before-and After School program and the Mini-Movers Summer Camp. Together, these high-quality programs served more than 500 children throughout the year, offering families a safe, enriching and dependable childcare and educational experience.

Cranberry Township Parks & Recreation

Sensory Programs

Director of Parks and Recreation: Dave Blair

Program leaders: *Jimmy Border, Program Supervisor, Kyle Kenia, Manager of Parks & Recreation*

The Sensory Program initiative aims to ensure that all families -especially those with children with disabilities – have equitable access to events and programs. This also

OUTSTANDING NEW PROFESSIONAL

Ally Brandt

West Whiteland Township Parks & Recreation

Ally began her full-time parks and recreation career in June 2021 as Park and Recreation Director for East Hanover Township, Dauphin County. During her tenure, she demonstrated strong initiative by laying the groundwork for a certified inclusive playground, establishing a native wildflower meadow, and rebuilding community relationships. Since joining West Whiteland Township in July 2022 as Park, Recreation, and Events Coordinator, she has played a critical role in strengthening and elevating the Township's parks and recreation services. During her time at West Whiteland Township she has developed and delivered 23 recreation programs serving more than 480 participants and successfully coordinated 13 large-scale community events that collectively attracted nearly 10,000 attendees. She actively recruits, supports, and coordinates volunteers, resulting in more than 500 hours of volunteer service in a single year.

DISTINGUISHED MEMBER AWARD IN HONOR OF ROBERT D. GRIFFITH

Sarah A. Prebis, CPRP

Upper Gwynedd Township Parks and Recreation

Sarah is a highly accomplished parks and recreation professional with more than two decades of dedicated service. Her experience and passion have played a key role in the success of programs and events in Upper Gwynedd Township. During her six years with the Township as the Director of Parks and Recreation, she has introduced numerous innovative programs, including a Pre-K Camp for children ages 3–5, a Parent/Child Messy Art class, summer and winter Teen Trip Camps, and a Babysitting CPR class for teens and tweens. She has also expanded existing programs, doubling Teen Trip Camp enrollment and adding specialty camps and after-school opportunities that maximize the Township's Community Center.

Sarah has also led the development of popular community events, including a Solar Eclipse Preview Party, the 250th Birthday Party Series, and an Eagles Super Bowl Pep Rally. Beyond her work locally, she has made a significant impact through her leadership with PRPS. She currently serves as Secretary on the PRPS District 3 Executive Board and previously served as District 3 Ski Social Coordinator from 2010 to 2020, while also contributing to multiple conference committees throughout her career. In addition, she serves as Publicity Chairperson for the Montgomery County Senior Games and leads Upper Gwynedd's Annual Senior Basketball Tournament each spring. Through her innovation, leadership, and longstanding commitment to PRPS and the parks and recreation profession, Sarah continues to make a meaningful impact on both her community and the field as a whole.

AGENCY OF THE YEAR AWARD

Pottstown Parks & Recreation

Director: Michael Lenhart

Parks & Recreation Coordinator: Andie Graham

For more than 60 years, the department has served as the heartbeat of a post-industrial borough, demonstrating that limited resources can achieve remarkable results through dedication and community support. Managing 18 park properties across more than 100 acres with just four full-time employees, Pottstown Parks & Recreation has transformed its resources into a premier regional recreation destination. Recent accomplishments include installing a 110-foot steel pedestrian bridge at Riverfront Park and restoring critical connections along the Schuylkill River Trail. Even amid challenges such as recurring flooding along Manatawny Creek, the team's proactive response has ensured that community traditions and events continue uninterrupted.

Pottstown's impact extends well beyond infrastructure through its commitment to inclusive recreation and strong partnerships. By securing more than \$800,000 in grant funding for neighborhood pocket parks, the department has expanded access to recreation, including ADA-accessible miniature golf and inclusive playgrounds. Signature events like the Pottstown Rumble, the world's largest grass-court volleyball tournament, the Native American Powwow, and the USA BMX Quaker State Nationals bring visitors from across the region while strengthening community pride. Through innovative programming, creative partnerships, and a deep commitment to its residents, Pottstown Parks & Recreation continues to enrich the community every day.



EXCELLENCE IN RECREATION AND PARKS

spurred additional development, including the launch of sensory-friendly open gym sessions that offer families a safe place to play, explore and build connections. Recognizing that special events can be overwhelming due to crowds, noise and visual stimulation, the Township has dedicated sensory hours across a wide range of special events including their Easter Hippy Hop Egg Hunt, Milk and Cookies with Santa and many more.

Borough of Lansdale Parks & Recreation

Wedgewood Park Traffic Garden

Director of Parks and Recreation and Program leader: Courtney Fox, CPRP, CPO

The Wedgewood Park Traffic Garden is a scaled down roadway that allows children to practice the rules of the road, develop safe cycling and pedestrian habits, and build confidence navigating traffic patterns. Adults participating alongside their children also benefit, reinforcing or learning bicycle safety practices themselves. BJ Breish, Lansdale Borough Council and Chair of the Parks and Recreation commented

Manheim Township Department of Recreation

Low Sensory Spooky Soiree

Recreation Director: Matthew Stopa, CPRP

Program leader: Chaley Bulla, Recreation Program Manager

The Low Sensory Spooky Soiree was created to make Halloween accessible for all. Through intentional sensory-friendly planning, this event allows participants and families the ability to experience the joy of Halloween in a comfortable, supportive environment. By reimagining a traditional Halloween event with reduced noise, controlled lighting, structured activities, and designated quiet spaces, the program removes common participation barriers from individuals with sensory sensitivities while preserving the fun and spirit of the holiday.

Middletown Township

Charity Car Wash

Parks and Recreation Director: Paul Kopera

Program leaders: Nicole Tener, Program Specialist, Joanne Morelli, Program Specialist, Patrick Graham, Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation, Carol Garner Camp Site Supervisor

The Charity Car Wash is a signature parks and recreation youth service initiative that teaches kindness, teamwork, and civic responsibility through hands-on community impact. Engaging more than 1,000 campers over the last four years working together joyfully and purposefully, washed approximately 300+ vehicles and the program has raised over \$8,000 for local children's charities while uniting families, residents and community partners. Fully led by parks and recreation staff, this growing tradition demonstrates how recreation programs can meaningfully develop compassionate youth and strengthen community connections.

EXCELLENCE IN RECREATION AND PARKS

Township of Pine

Little Community Planners Academy by Camp Pine

Director: Tyler Walker, CPRP

Program leaders: Gina Kampi, Recreation Program Coordinator,

Olivia Mohler, Municipal Intern

As part of Township of Pine’s comprehensive planning efforts, a unique collaboration between the community planning department and the summer camp program was created. The Little Community Planners Academy offered a week of engaging camp activities that gathered valuable feedback on how young children use local parks and what improvements they hope to see. At the same time, participants learned about local government through hands-on, creative, and age-appropriate experiences.

Schuylkill Haven Recreation Department

Trout Revitalization and Community Rodeo

Recreation team: Mykal McCulloch, Darle Cresswell, Christie Taraschuk

Program leader: Mykal McCulloch, Park and Facilities Manager

Schuylkill Haven’s Trout Revitalization and Community Rodeo uniquely blends hands-on environmental restoration, youth education, and multigenerational community celebration into a single, repeatable program. What began as a river cleanup and conservation effort has evolved into a signature event that directly engages many citizens in improving water quality, restoring habitat by stocking fish, and learning stewardship principles, then celebrates those efforts through a community-wide recreation event.

Upper Allen Township Parks Department

Winding Hill Park North Train Watching Platform

Parks Director: Chad Krebs

Program leaders: Chad Krebs, Parks Director , Eduardo Mera-Aguilar, Assistant Parks Director

Upper Allen has a park named Winding Hill Park that has a railroad track immediately adjacent to the entire length on one side. When staff noticed park attendees migrating to watch trains pass, they were concerned about safety and accessibility. They placed funds in the budget to construct a viewing platform right next to the tracks but fenced in. They partnered with “Operation Lifesaver” a national rail safety education organization. The platform features full accessibility, benches, and a radio connection to the conductors. It is an up-close opportunity to see trains passing by. The sound, vibration, diesel smell, wind and visual impact allows even the hearing and seeing impaired to enjoy the experience.

GREEN AND SUSTAINABLE PARK AWARD

Concord Township

Beaver Valley Neighborhood Park

Township Manager: Amanda Serock

Director of Parks & Recreation: Steve Jacobs

The Beaver Valley Neighborhood Park is located in the southern portion of Concord Township at 40 Beaver Valley Rd. The site borders Chadds Ford Township and is a 10-minute walk to a federal park (First State National Historical Park), making it an accessible destination for both local and visiting park goers. Utilizing DCNR grant monies, the Township purchased the 2-acre property with a commitment to open space & sustainability. In June 2025, after multiple years of planning, the park was constructed.

Previously, the site had been overgrown with invasives and was vulnerable to flooding, due to its proximity to wetland areas. Through the development process, invasives were removed, and land management best practices were adopted, which has helped to improve stormwater runoff. Overall, minimal earthwork was done to the site. The wetland buffer was protected, and soils were restored to support healthy plant growth and water infiltration. To further help restore the landscape and enhance the canopy, twenty-four (24) 2”- 3” caliper native trees were planted.

COMMUNITY CHAMPION AWARD

Sean Casey

Casey’s Clubhouse

Sean Casey, who grew up in Upper St. Clair Township, is a former Major League Baseball player whose lifelong passion for recreation shaped both his youth and professional career. After retiring from MLB, he founded Casey’s Clubhouse in 2011 to create inclusive athletic opportunities for athletes of all abilities. What began as a baseball program has grown to include football, cheer, strength and conditioning, and travel baseball—providing individuals with disabilities the chance to participate in sports and community activities.

Casey’s Clubhouse also operates Next Inning, a work-readiness program that provides participants with hands-on experience in areas such as concessions, announcing, field operations, and customer service. With support from staff and job coaches, athletes build confidence and practical skills in a supportive environment. Through partnerships with Upper St. Clair Township and local organizations, the program now brings together families and volunteers from more than 70 ZIP codes across Western Pennsylvania and beyond, continuing Sean’s mission to foster confidence, opportunity, and community for athletes on and off the field.