



# NSSRA

## Fact Sheet

## Northern Suburban Special Recreation Association

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### MISSION & HISTORY

NSSRA is a partnership of 12 municipal recreation agencies and park districts on the North Shore. Formed in March of 1970, it was the first “special recreation” association in the country. The mission of NSSRA is to ensure that recreation opportunities are available for adults and children with disabilities. NSSRA has grown from a small organization serving 26 children with mental retardation to a comprehensive recreation and leisure services agency serving 5,000 registrants a year with disabilities. The success of NSSRA was instrumental in convincing members of the Illinois General Assembly to pass laws allowing park districts and cities to join together to provide leisure services for people with disabilities, supported by local property taxes.

### PARTNER AGENCIES

NSSRA is an intergovernmental partnership of the Park Districts of Deerfield, Glencoe, Glenview, Highland Park, Kenilworth, Lake Bluff, Northbrook, Northfield, Wilmette, and Winnetka, the City of Lake Forest, and the Village of Riverwoods.



### RECREATION PROGRAMS

NSSRA provides year round recreation programs for the residents of the partner communities. The Association offers a wide range of cultural, sport, social, physical, outdoor and special event programs. NSSRA programs offer the same type of experiences for people with disabilities as are available through park district or recreation departments for people without disabilities.

NSSRA conducts approximately 700 programs and events throughout the year. Most agency programs are planned and conducted by full time staff trained in the provision of recreation activities for people with disabilities. NSSRA programs include extensive involvement in Special Olympics, after school, evening, and weekend activities for all ages, special events, trips such as the Maine trip, vacations and social activities.

### INDIVIDUALS SERVED

Adults and children with mental, physical, emotional or other disabilities that live within the 12 partner areas are eligible for service. NSSRA serves people with physical and mental disabilities, visual impairments, learning disabilities, behavior disorders, cardiovascular accidents, Alzheimer’s Disease, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, and other conditions or disorders, as well as individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. Individuals residing outside the NSSRA partner boundaries are eligible only for cooperative programs, or after payment of an administrative fee for nonresidents.

*(continued)*





### **INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY**

NSSRA works closely with partner park districts and cities to enable inclusive participation in recreation programs conducted by partner agencies. Recognizing that some people with disabilities prefer to have recreation opportunities in programs with people who do not have disabilities, NSSRA provides training, extra staff, or other assistance to partner park district or recreation department staff that will enable participation by people with disabilities in inclusive leisure settings. Participation in inclusive programs has grown tremendously, and is expected to continue to grow faster than any other NSSRA operation. NSSRA also provides the partner agencies with information about making new and existing recreation facilities and areas accessible to people with disabilities.

### **GOVERNANCE & STAFF**

A Board of Directors made up of a representative from each of the 12 partner agencies governs NSSRA. NSSRA has a staff of 16, including the Executive Director, ten Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists, a Finance and Personnel officer, and other support staff. Programs are conducted with the help of part-time staff and volunteers.

### **INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION**

NSSRA relies on excellent rapport with its partner park districts and cities, the Northern Suburban Special Education District (NSSED), and the local school districts in order to provide the best in recreation to the special populations. This cooperation ensures the most efficient use of resources.

### **FUNDING**

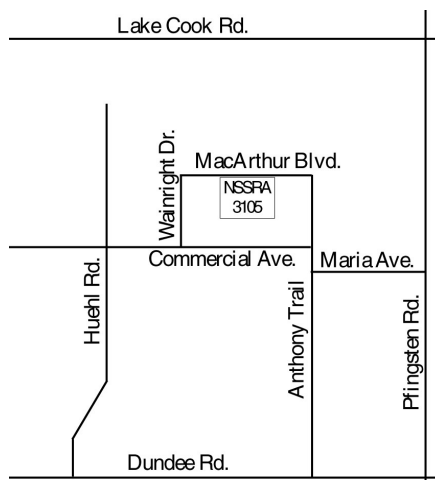
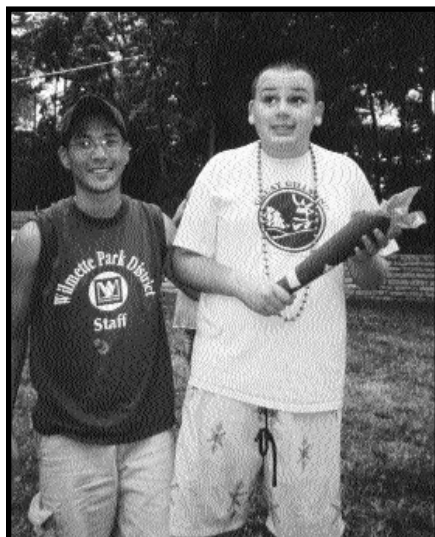
Contributions from a Special Recreation property tax levied by the partner agencies provide for approximately 39% of the operating budget. Program fees account for about 14%, Inclusion Reimbursement for 8%, and Transportation, Other Reimbursements, Interest, and Advertising Fees make up another 11%. The remaining 28% is derived from grants, donations, and fundraising.

### **SAFETY**

NSSRA is part of a self-insurance program for more than 120 Illinois park districts and special recreation associations. Our involvement includes an active safety program, which involves both full time and part time staff, in an effort to identify and avoid risk before staff, our participants, or the public cause or incur an injury or loss of property.

### **LOCATION & INFORMATION**

The NSSRA office is 3105 MacArthur Blvd., in Northbrook. NSSRA programs are conducted in area park district and recreation department facilities, schools, and other community agencies. The service area incorporates a gross population of approximately 236,000. For information about NSSRA services, check our website at [www.nssra.org](http://www.nssra.org) or call (847) 509-9400.



*NSSRA provides and facilitates recreation for adults and children who reside in partner communities.*