

Northern Suburban Special Recreation Association (NSSRA)

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WOW

NEWS

News from the Northern Suburban Special Recreation Association

Mark Your Calendar - The Stars will Shine on May 6

Join us on Friday, May 6 for the 2005 Shining Stars Awards and Recognition Banquet. This "black-tie optional" event will be held at the Wyndham Hotel (formerly the Double Tree Guest Suites) in Glenview.

The gala, a joint effort between NSSRA and the Northern Suburban Special Recreation Foundation will feature a cocktail hour, banquet fare, award presentations, silent auction, and dancing. A wide variety of items will be showcased in the silent auction, and will include sports memorabilia, dining, entertainment and merchandise from local retailers.

We are seeking local corporations, service organizations, and individuals to sponsor this event. Foundation Coordinator Janice Merkin says, "This is a great opportunity for businesses to link their products and services to an inspiring cause, and generate community awareness." Table sponsorships are available for \$500 for a table of 10 guests. Additionally, individuals and groups may



Recreation Specialist Candice Sloss presents the Participant of the Year award to a very happy Brett Bieser at last year's Shining Stars Awards Banquet.

Three Year Plan Update

In the middle of 2003 the NSSRA Board approved a three-year plan for activity in 2004, 2005, and 2006. This plan was intended to maintain our programs and called for modest increases in 2004, 2005, and 2006 to support NSSRA efforts to better serve you.

For 2005 our Board approved a 5% increase in property tax support, and deferred some expenses that were scheduled for 2005. Those are on the agenda for 2006 now, along

begin discussions about three-year plan activity for 2007, 2008, and 2009. One of the key aspects of our plan development is our work with families who have kids who are aging out of the public school system. We continue to work closely with area nonprofit organizations and faith-based organizations to develop a day program for adults with disabilities. We are calling this the Enriched Lifestyles for Adults (ELA) program, and it will feature fitness, leisure activities, and more.

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each of you knows, gasoline at the pump rose 20% last year. An increase of 1.7% would not have paid for that. Our utility costs rose as well, along with health insurance premiums. Other benefits cost rose by as much as 80%! In 2005 the \$49,000 increase allows NSSRA to continue all of our programs and to do so without significantly increasing our user fees.

More exciting news about the special recreation levy came from Lake Forest, where the City decided to use the authority given by the General Assembly. Prior to 2005 the City funded its share of NSSRA costs out of the Parks & Recreation Department budget. Now, Lake Forest funds its share of NSSRA costs out of the special recreation levy. Congratulations to the City for this decision!

Finally, the NSSRA partner park districts and cities continue to add power door openers to recreation centers, make recreation buildings accessible, make playground surfaces accessible, and do more to make all of their programs and services, not just NSSRA, usable by people with disabilities.

The average property tax cost to a home in the NSSRA communities, for NSSRA, remains at about \$18 annually. So what can you buy for \$18? Here is a partial list, tell me which is the best bargain:

- 1/2 a tank of gas in an SUV;
- a large pizza and cheese sticks;
- 4 lattes and muffins at Starbucks;
- 2 buckets of golf balls at a golf course driving range;
- a U2 compact disc;
- 3 swimming pool one-day admissions;
- and 250 weekly recreation programs for people with disabilities, support for about 1,000 inclusion placements annually, trips for people with disabilities, special events on holidays for people with disabilities, transportation of people with disabilities to and from recreation programs, and consultation on ways people with disabilities can improve their quality of life through better fitness and active recreation choices.

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than do families without a person with a disability. Think about it: almost everything costs more. Food costs more, babysitters cost more, clothing costs more, insurance costs more, housing costs more, transportation costs more, the total spent on visits to doctors and therapists is more...the list goes on and on. In fact one of the only things that does not cost more per purchase are NSSRA recreation programs.

On top of this unique problem, some NSSRA families have the same experiences as other families. A mother passes away, a child has surgery, a father is laid off, or the parents divorce. These real-life situations can happen to all families.

The NSSRA Board of Directors recognizes these realities. Three decades ago the Board agreed that families experiencing economic difficulty would not be left out

Helping Hand Cont'd. on Page 6

and donations. For further information, call Janice Merkin, (847) 509-9400, ext. 21.

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- Ravinia Festival



Mike Walther

of NSSRA programs, and our Reduced Fee Program was started. This discreet and confidential process is managed by the NSSRA Executive Director, and only 2 NSSRA employees are involved.

We have for many years sought support for the Reduced Fee Program from service clubs, community donors, and since 1998, the Northern Suburban Special Recreation Foundation. We ask those groups to pay the fees for families who temporarily cannot do so. In 2004 the Foundation paid more than \$20,000 in fees for more than 200 registrants. The fees were for programs like day camp, Special Olympics sports teams, social programs, and swim lessons. Overall NSSRA received more than \$450,000 in program registration fees for about 6,000 registrants.

NSSRA wants your family member to be in our programs. If and when a family crisis arises, don't be embarrassed. Please use our Reduced Fee Program. Just call Carolina Medina, our Registrar, to start the process. It is important to us that your family member with a disability stay in NSSRA programs.

collection through future NSSRF fundraising events.

Mike's love of sports and desire to help others led him to the NSSRA. He was first introduced to the organization by the Bausches who invited him to play in the Swing NSSRA outing in 2003. After having a wonderful experience, meeting many of the NSSRA staff and learning more about the mission of the organization, Mike decided to do more than just attend events. He was thrilled to be invited to join the Board of Trustees and hopes that over time the awareness of the NSSRA can be expanded so that more people who would benefit from the programs and services will participate.

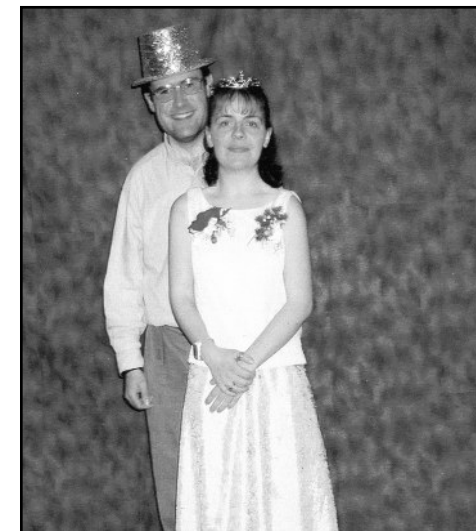
September, 2005: SWING NSSRA (date to be determined)

December, 2005: Holiday Showcase (date to be determined)

NSSRA's annual Spring Formal will be held at the Glencoe Community Center on May 13. Get dressed up and join us for some dancing and refreshments. This is one of the most anticipated events of the spring.

After an evening of fun mingling with friends and cutting the rug, a royal court will be selected. Last year, Julie Rudenberg represented NSSRA on the royal court. For registration details, please see the spring 2005 brochure.

Sean Breen, representing NSSRA, and Missy Brun from M-NASR, pictured to the right, were the king and queen from 2003.



Come Show Your Support for Camp Hug the Bear

It's the third year of the Camp Hug the Bear at the Glenview Park District's Park Center. This summer camp is designed for children between the ages of two and six who are on the autistic spectrum. To help offset camp expenses, NSSRA staff, NSSRF Trustee Mia McNary and family members of campers will host a fundraiser at Hackney's in Glenview on June 17. This event will feature a buffet

dinner and exciting silent and live auction items. For information about the fundraiser at Hackney's, please contact Foundation Coordinator Janice Merkin at (847) 509-9400, ext. 21 or email jmerkin@nssra.org. If you have questions about Camp Hug the Bear, please contact Manager of Cooperative Programs Dawn Schaefer at (847) 509-9400, ext. 25 or email dschaefer@nssra.org.

Safety/Important Information Corner...

Program Drop-off and Pick-up

For the safety of all participants, **parents must personally check in with a program leader** when dropping off and picking up their child. Staff cannot leave a program or other participants to escort an individual from or to a vehicle. Therefore, parents are asked to park and check in with the program leader at both drop off and pick up for all programs.

Late Pick-Up Policy

If parents/guardians are not on time for picking up participants, a late fee will be assessed. After a ten-minute grace period, a \$10 fee will be charged for every 15 minutes or portion thereof.

SSRA's new Recreation Specialist who works in Physical and Fitness. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a bachelor's degree in Leisure Studies and a minor in Therapeutic Recreation. Kristin recently completed her internship at the Special Recreation Services of the City of Waukegan. She takes the position held by Tracey Crawford. She is excited to take the position held by Tracey Crawford at the Northeast DuPage Special

Recreation Specialist as the Public Information Specialist. His family recently relocated from Florida to Waukegan. He comes to us with extensive experience in recreation. Dave says, "I really enjoy creating programs that I can improve on the overall look and quality of the materials." This position was vacated by Tracey Crawford at the Deerfield Park

Recreation Specialist. Prior to working for us, Juan was a driver for many of our programs. Juan also has extensive experience in Chicago and the surrounding area. He enjoys watching movies, taking his dog to the beach, and spending time with his family. He says, "I enjoy working with the staff and I always try to do my best."

Tracey Crawford has assumed new duties, and becomes the Director of Human Resources and Finances. Randi Crawford is working on special projects for Executive Director John Ostermann becomes the manager of the Deerfield Park office, and working on special projects for Executive Director Tracey Crawford.

Thanks to Our Recent Part-Time Staff, Volunteers

Victoria Ackerman, Constansa Alexander, Benjamin Alpert, Lisa Anderson, Larita Anthony, George Baab, Carrie Baker, Heidi Blackwell, Tory Blackwell, Barb Boris, Shawn Briggs, Tarra Carson, Fei-Ting Chang, Judith Charles, Mallory Charatz, Julie Chernawsky, Rick Ciccione, Dave Dockery, Scott Drucker, Andrew Elek, Bailey Estabrooke, Florin Fortofoi, Lindsay Frankel, Sheri Fritsche, Tina Gabrielson, Willy Garcia, Gracie Ghuman, Roni Gordon, Catherine Groden, Brittany Haracz, Andrew Heckman, Syd Held, Mari, Horowitz, Kyle Iverson, Octavia Jones, Natasha Kazimirova, Matt Kelley, Tanya Kindlon, Amy Kohler, Rhiannon Krepps, Kathy Krone, Nicholas Krupp, Carly Lapin, Lori Lichtman-Sanders, Carla Lieberman, Evan Lieberman, Noah Lipsky, Cecilia Malinawski, Rashad Malloy, Jamie Mann, Maria Martin, Leon Maupin, Kellie McAvoy, Juan Meza, Brad Michalak, Joe Misk, Bill Murray, Jody Nanini, Deborah Niederst, Lynn Nord, DeAnne Nyweide, Cynthia Olthoff, Lindsay Orsi, Jason Pak, Dora Panno, Kristin Peterson, Heather Peterson, Monique Pigeon, Lisa Pines, Mark Razniewski, Steven Rish, Jeanine Robbins, Kenneth Robbins, Joyce Romero, Michael Roskin, Melissa Salgado, Carmina Salgado, Michelle Schneider, Christine Schulz, Dave Schulz, Jay Schwartz, Aviva Senser, Barry Siegel, Kelly Simon, Stephanie Small, Olivia Spear, Dena Stamatoukos, Zachary Sunderman, Tom Thurnblad, Bradley Tracz, Amanda Tuck, Andi Twarowski, Nicole Tyrpak, Alex Valvassori, Dawn Vickers, Megan Warner, Ross Waskin, Elizabeth Weaver, Courtney Weisman, Jill Weisman, Alfred Wilson, Susan Winstead, Amy Youngman, John Zachery and Fran Zera.

SWING 2004 Golf Outing A Great Success

The Wilmette Golf Club was the setting for this year's record breaking SWING golf outing held on September 23. The event was chaired by Foundation Trustees Nancy Connelly and Sue Hartemayer. Event Sponsors were Jack & Paula Salerno and Konrad & Michelle Kothmann.

Through the generous support of our sponsors; Bear Stearns & Co., Jennings Chevrolet/VW, Jack & Nancy Robinson, The Connelly Foundation and Ridgebrook Travel/Educational Tours, NSSRA raised over \$100,000 to support

NSSRA programs and services. Event Sponsors, Konrad Kothmann and Jack Salerno worked effortlessly to make this event a tremendous success. Over 128 golfers enjoyed a day of fun, sun, lunch and raffles and prizes.

Next year, SWING 2005 will again be held at the Wilmette Golf Club. Sponsorship opportunities are available for SWING 2005. For more information, please contact Janice Merkin, Foundation Coordinator at (847) 509-9400, ext. 21 or email jmerkin@nssra.org.



From left to right: Konrad Kothmann, Steve Smith, Jack Salerno, Mike Rooney and Dave Connelly.

Holiday Showcase 2004

On December 11 NSSRA held our spectacular Holiday Showcase at the Patty Turner Senior Center in Deerfield. With over 75 participants, families, donors, staff and volunteers the event was thoroughly enjoyed by all those in attendance.

With mouth-watering sandwiches and other lunch delights from Kalish Catering the guests enjoyed a karate show, holiday dancers and more. The silent auction raised funds and showcased some furniture and art pieces made by NSSRA participants.

The staff auction was particularly exciting. Recreation packages such as Chicago Bears tickets, Shedd Aquarium visits and a day on



A special thanks to NSSRF for the beautiful baskets and auction items used in the silent and staff auctions. Look for details for the 2005 Holiday Showcase in future NSSRA publications. If you are interested in

Join the PAC (Program Advisory Committee)

NSSRA staff invite you to join the Program Advisory Committee (PAC). We need you to give your input, share your vision, and help mold the future of recreation programs and services for individuals with disabilities in our communities.

If you are interested in joining the PAC or want to hear more about the committee, please contact Tracey Crawford, Superintendent of Recreation at

2005 PAC Meeting Dates:

All meetings are at 10am or 7 pm at the NSSRA office.

Wednesday, January 19

Wednesday, February 23

Wednesday, March 23

Wednesday, April 20

Wednesday, May 18

Wednesday, September 21

Wednesday, October 26

Wednesday, November 30