



**PRESS RELEASE
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**Becca Zajler, Northern Suburban Special Recreation Association (NSSLRA)
Recreation Manager, Celebrates 10 Years with Prestigious Win at Annual Illinois
Park & Recreation Association (IPRA) Conference**

Northbrook – February 10, 2020 – Northern Suburban Special Recreation Association (NSSLRA) is proud to announce that Becca Zajler, Recreation Manager, received the prestigious “Professional of the Year” award from Illinois Park and Recreation’s Therapeutic Recreation Section (ITRS). Announced at the annual ITRS meeting held Thursday, January 23, 2020 at the Hyatt Regency in Chicago. The award is given to professionals who have made a significant contribution to the field of therapeutic recreation.

Zajler, who marked 10 years with NSSLRA in November, was honored for her innovation, leadership and dedication to NSSLRA participants, programs and services. “Becca is so deserving of being recognized as the professional of the year by ITRS,” said NSSLRA Executive Director Craig Culp. “They got it right!”

He continued, “Becca has been such an asset for NSSLRA over the past 10 years. Her service, kindness and commitment to the participants we serve is unmatched. Ocommunities and the programming NSSLRA provides is better because of her. She is the best of the best.”

Zajler started with NSSLRA in 2009, then as the Recreation Specialist for Youth Programs. She not only developed new programs for the youth area during her tenure as specialist (2009-2013), but also identified trends in each age group and made deep connections throughout the community. She both introduced families to NSSLRA and became a true advocate for those families and their children.

“Becca is devoted to her work and the people she serves,” said NSSLRA Superintendent Candice Cunningham. “More than anything, her 10 years with NSSLRA have put on display her heart for the world to be a loving, happy place for everyone, demonstrated through her respect for people and passion for serving the community.”

Zajler’s leadership and growth were more prominently recognized in 2013 when she was promoted to Recreation Manager, overseeing NSSLRA’s adult day program, Enriched Lifestyles for Adults (ELA), NSSLRA trips, Special Olympics/Gator Athletics and NSSLRA’s intern program. There are few areas of NSSLRA programming that Becca has not impacted in the last ten years.

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Cunningham continued, “This work is so natural for Becca. Over and over, we see her effortlessly connect with participants and help them realize their greatest potential, and to observe her in these moments is inspiring. She is so deserving of the recognition as the ITRS Professional of the Year, and as her colleagues we are so proud of her.”

Founded in 1970, this year NSSRA also commemorates an anniversary, celebrating 50 years of service to children, teens and adults with disabilities living in its partner communities throughout the northern suburbs. With over 500 recreation, sport, cultural and social offerings throughout the year, NSSRA is dedicated to creating new experiences, opportunities for leisure time, skill development and perhaps most importantly, friendship.

NSSRA is partnered with the Park Districts of Deerfield, Glencoe, Glenview, Highland Park, Kenilworth, Lake Bluff, Northbrook, Northfield, Wilmette and Winnetka; the Cities of Highwood and Lake Forest; and the Village of Riverwoods.

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NSSRA provides and facilitates year-round recreation programs and services for children, teens and adults with disabilities who live in the partner communities. NSSRA is an extension of ten park districts, two cities and one village in the northern suburbs of Chicago. This partnership includes the Park Districts of Deerfield, Glencoe, Glenview, Highland Park, Lake Bluff, Kenilworth, Northbrook, Northfield, Wilmette and Winnetka; the Cities of Highwood and Lake Forest; and the Village of Riverwoods. NSSRA has been creating an environment of belonging through play since 1970, this year celebrating 50 years, and has the distinction as the first Special Recreation Association in the country. For more information about NSSRA and the programs and services it provides, visit www.nssra.org.