

M-NASR Newsletter
Continues Below

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Board Member - Jan Hincapie, Director of the Village of Lincolnwood Parks & Recreation Department

We are dedicated to improving the quality of life for individuals with disabilities by providing quality recreational programs. Through advocacy and awareness, we promote a successful leisure lifestyle.



Maine-Niles Association of Special Recreation

6820 W. Dempster Street

Morton Grove, IL 60053-2631

www.mnasr.org

An extension of:

- Des Plaines Park District
- Golf-Maine Park District
- Village of Lincolnwood
Parks and Recreation
- Morton Grove Park District
- Niles Park District
- Park Ridge Park District
- Skokie Park District





Join us as we transform life's challenges into opportunities.

Marquee

Maine-Niles Association of Special Recreation

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M-NASR

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Sustaining Longevity

Definition: lon·gev·i·ty, *noun*. Long existence or service.

Here at Maine-Niles Association of Special Recreation we embrace that term. We believe it is one of the reasons

we are able to provide a consistently safe and enjoyable atmosphere to experience our programs. I was reflecting on the quality

staff we have employed at our Agency and their length of service. The six longest-serving M-NASR employees bring a total of 134 years of experience in the field of Therapeutic Recreation. That is a significant number of years. Yes, we look positively on longevity and consistency. But, that isn't to say that change isn't a good thing.

"To sustain longevity, you have to evolve."

—Aires Spears

M-NASR is rolling out some new ways to give or donate to our Agency. Recently, we have provided the public an opportunity to donate to our Agency in three different ways. Online donations, AmazonSmile, and Giving Tuesday are all opportunities

for M-NASR's friends and families to donate. Check out Development Officer Peggy Wilson's article on page two to find out how you can contribute to M-NASR.

So, as I said, longevity and consistency are pillars of our Agency and change can be "a good thing." Speaking of change, if you have any of it lying around—be it in the bottom of your purse or under your car seat—maybe you can help us celebrate "change" and donate it to M-NASR, online of course.

Sue Bear

Executive Director

Inclusion is On the Rise!

M-NASR and our Member Park Districts believe that every individual should be provided with recreational opportunities, whether through M-NASR's programs, the Member Park District Inclusion services, or both!



Inclusion registrations are certainly on the rise for individuals with disabilities choosing to participate in their Member Park District programs. As summer is the largest season for Inclusion registrations, let's focus on the Inclusion trends for the past few summers:

- During the summer of 2015, there was a record number of 880 Inclusion registrations within our Member District programs and summer camps.
- This is almost twice as many registrations as the summer of 2014 and over two and a half times more registrations than in the summer of 2010.

It is great to see that families are taking advantage of all that their Member Districts have to offer! M-NASR is grateful that today's youth, teens, and adults of all ability levels have a variety of recreational opportunities from which to choose within our community.

Tracy Gillingham
Inclusion Manager

Supporters Truly Make a Difference!

A sincere thank you goes to all of the caring individuals, organizations, and foundations that gave their support to M-NASR throughout the year. Your involvement truly impacted someone's life in a positive and meaningful way.

Highlights of what your commitment helped us to provide include:

- Purchase of seven iPads™ for Day Camps
- Over \$40,000 in Program/Day Camp Scholarships
- A special Recognition Night honoring our participants
- A memorable Walt Disney World trip
- Almost 22,000 program/camp rides in M-NASR's vans
- Creation of a Sensory Room



ORGANIZATIONS

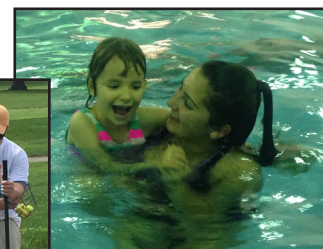
2nd Chance, the Chance Cole
Walker Foundation
Allstate Giving Campaign
American Legion Post #134
Best Bus Sales
Bredemann Chevrolet and Toyota
Chicago Board of Trade
City of Des Plaines
Daniel F. and Ada L. Rice Foundation
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Des Plaines Park District
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Grainger
Heisman Trophy Trust
Henrietta Lang Burk Fund, Bank
of America, N.A. Trustee
Kiwanis Club of Des Plaines
Kiwanis Club of Skokie Valley
Knights of Columbus Council #4338
koller&associates llc
Liponi Foundation
Loyal Order of Moose – Lodge 376
Machinery Movers, Riggers & Machinery
Erectors Union Local 136
MB Financial Bank, Morton Grove
Morton Grove Foundation
Morton Grove Moose Lodge
Morton Grove Park District
Muslim Community Center Inc.
Niles Park District
Niles Township
NorthShore University HealthSystems
Optimist Club of Des Plaines
Optimist Club of Niles
Park Ridge Community Fund
Park Ridge Lions Club
Park Ridge Baseball and Softball
Park Ridge Park District
Rivers Casino
Rudy's Cycle and Fitness
Signs Plus
Skokie Park District

Sunshine Through Golf Foundation
United Way
Village of Lincolnwood
Parks and Recreation
Village of Skokie
White Eagle Banquets
and Restaurant
World Sport Chicago
Zia's Trattoria

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Sybil Wijas
Peggy Wilson
Kathy Wischhusen
Ms. Cindy Wroblewski
Mr. & Mrs. John Zumph
Anonymous Donors



Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this list. We apologize if we have mistakenly omitted any donors. Please contact us at (847) 966-5522 so that we can correct any errors that may have inadvertently occurred.

Peggy Wilson
Development Officer

Difference Makers

For many of us, not a day goes by in which we haven't had the opportunity to help another person. From very simple things such as holding a door for someone whose arms are full, to more time-consuming tasks such as driving a friend to the airport, we are constantly provided with opportunities to do something positive for others. Even if these small things happen without a second thought, some of us go beyond everyday tasks and strive to help those in need. We may volunteer for a soup kitchen, offer to paint someone's house, or travel abroad to tutor children.



If we stop to think about all that we can do for others and strive to make these things happen, the feelings of accomplishment and purpose that result are some of the most positive emotions one can experience.

For individuals with disabilities, these feelings of accomplishment and purpose may be more difficult to come by but are certainly just as important. For someone who has Cerebral Palsy, uses a power wheelchair, and has limited use of their arms and hands, a task such as holding a door for someone might seem impossible. Similarly, an individual who cannot hear or see may not have much confidence in their abilities to help someone who is homeless. However, in supporting M-NASR's mission of improving quality of life through advocacy and awareness, the PI/VI area's "Difference Makers" program assists these individuals with overcoming their barriers and celebrating their amazing abilities to help others.

"Difference Makers" was specially designed for our adult participants with physical and/or visual impairments. Participants in this program range in age from 33 to 92 years

old and have a variety of disabilities including Traumatic Brain Injury, Cerebral Palsy, visual impairments, Parkinson's Disease, and hearing impairments. Since the program was designed in 2012, this group of caring and compassionate individuals has helped dozens of organizations in need in Chicago and surrounding suburbs. With adapted equipment and staffing assistance provided based on the unique needs of each person in the program, our participants focus on their individual strengths, talents, and abilities while completing each project. Projects have included making sack lunches for homeless shelters, creating scarves and hats for families in transition, baking homemade dog biscuits and designing toys for animal shelters, building teddy bears for children in emergency situations, putting together care kits for armed forces overseas, making fruit baskets for neighbors, decorating wreaths for people living in nursing homes,



and making Valentine's Day cards and birthday cards for veterans and friends, amongst many other touching acts!

The hard work that our "Difference Makers" put into every single project they complete is incredible, and their willingness and excitement to bring joy to others who will receive these items is truly motivating. While it seems that M-NASR's pride for this group cannot possibly continue growing, each season brings new accomplishments, and the number of people in need who have been touched by our group continues to soar! They are an inspiration for all of us to do whatever we can to help others and are true "Difference Makers"!

Lauren Ruiz
Program Manager

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You are cordially invited to attend the Silver Anniversary Liponi Foundation for Special Recreation Dinner Dance with Silent Auction on Saturday, March 5, 2016. This major event generates funds to help support the needs of M-NASR. In addition to providing funds to purchase wheelchair-accessible vehicles, the Foundation purchases program equipment for M-NASR and also lends a helping hand in the form of financial aid

*1991
2016*

for participants who could otherwise not afford to attend these programs. Join us for an elegant adult evening which includes cocktails, a sumptuous dinner, and dancing. In addition to the delectable dining, guests are invited to bid on a vast array of valuable and unique items in the silent and live auctions. Tickets are \$90 per person if pre-paid by February 26 or \$100 per person at the door. This is not a M-NASR program. For more information, please contact Stella LiPomi, Liponi Liaison, at (847) 966-5522 ext. 3015.

*25th
Anniversary*

Make A Difference—Support M-NASR

Your support will impact the lives of so many individuals and their families. Here are some ways you, too, can make a difference!

The **Annual Appeal** in December is an excellent opportunity to give. Each and every contribution, regardless of type or size, is significant because it helps keep services accessible and affordable. Last year M-NASR received over \$5,000 from caring individuals. This year we hope to exceed that dollar amount to give everyone the benefits of an active and healthy lifestyle! You can now donate online on M-NASR’s website or with the giving envelope that will be mailed out in November.



New this year, on Tuesday, December 1, 2015, M-NASR will be participating in **#GIVINGTUESDAY**. Since its founding in 2012, **#GIVINGTUESDAY** has inspired giving around the world, resulting in greater

donations, volunteer hours, and activities that bring about real change in communities. We invite you to join the movement and give to M-NASR online on December 1, 2015. If you choose to give online on **#GIVINGTUESDAY**, the Liponi Foundation will match your gift 100%. Your \$50 gift turns into \$100. The Liponi Foundation will match up to \$5,000.

Getting ready for holiday shopping and Cyber Monday—you can now support M-NASR every time you shop online. Simply sign up for **amazonsmile** and choose Maine-Niles Association of Special Recreation as your charitable organization. The Smile Foundation will donate 0.5% of your purchase; it’s as easy as that with no cost to you!



Ask your employer to match! Check with your employer for details about their **matching program**. You may double, or even triple your contribution!

Peggy Wilson
Development Officer

2016 M-NASR ANNUAL CALENDAR OF EVENTS	
Annual Recognition Night	May 4
End-of-the-Summer Celebration for participants/supporters	August 11
Annual Halloween Dance for M-NASR participants and other Special Recreation Association participants	October 21
M-NASR Annual Appeal	December
2016 CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR SUPPORTERS OF M-NASR	
Morton Grove Foundation “Taste”	March 3
Liponi Foundation Dinner Dance	March 5
Liponi Annual Miniature Golf Outing	August 17
Knights of Columbus Tootsie Roll Campaign	October

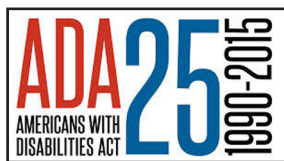
A Star is Born!

The “M” in M-NASR now means something different for several participants in the new A Star is Born program—music! During the fall 2015 season, M-NASR introduced a new, all-inclusive on-going program, A Star is Born: Singing the Songs of Broadway! in cooperation with EDGE of Orion production company. Director Orion Couling has worked with individuals with special needs in the past, even producing full musicals with individuals with special needs comprising the entire cast! A Star is Born will be covering a variety of musical production classes with hopes of producing a M-NASR musical in the future! This first class, Singing the Songs of Broadway, helped participants take their singing-in-the-shower days and build up to singing with others. The class will differ each season, building on skills for a full musical production. With stage action, choreography, and even more musical aspects to learn, participants will never want to miss a class! One of our full-time staff recently visited the class and stated, “The energy in the class was like a shot of espresso at 7:00 in the evening!” Orion is not only teaching the participants how to sing but also incorporating music therapy in this enthralling cultural arts program! Be on the lookout for a musical in M-NASR’s brochure in the future!

Olivia Antosz
Inclusion Recreation Specialist

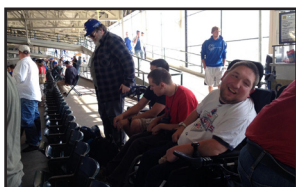
ADA—Then and Now

Twenty-five years ago, our nation committed itself to eliminating discrimination against people with disabilities. On July 26, 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law by President George H. W. Bush; but the history of the ADA started much earlier. The story began a long time ago throughout the United States when people with disabilities began to challenge societal barriers that excluded them from their communities and when parents of children with disabilities began to fight against their kids' exclusion and segregation.



As the PI/VI Recreation Specialist at M-NASR, I find it hard to believe that the ADA is only as old as I am. It's quite startling to think that the main entrance of our building did not require an accessible entrance 25 years ago. Nonetheless, the ADA has provided increased opportunities and equality to individuals with disabilities ranging from employment, public services, and protection against discrimination. There is plenty left to be accomplished, but the "ADA 25" celebration is meant to focus on the progress and achievements that have been made.

One achievement I want to focus on is accessibility at sporting events. This past summer, I attended two Cubs games with PI/VI participants and was blown away by how easy it was for them to experience Wrigley Field (minus parking, of course). Not knowing exactly where I could drop off my group, I pulled over a block away when I saw a Cubs employee. To my surprise, I was directed to the corner



Helping to Shape our Youth

It is a well-known fact that all individuals benefit from engaging in exercise. Being active helps people gain health advantages such as establishing a sense of accomplishment, improving self-esteem, coping with difficult emotions, and many other benefits. M-NASR believes that making exercise a priority helps individuals build and maintain a healthy leisure lifestyle.

The Youth/Teen area at M-NASR is committed to encouraging participants to be more physically active and to incorporate exercise into their daily routine. We believe that fitness can be fun and have added new and engaging exercise and movement-based programs that help our youth be more active. During the fall season we introduced Teen Zumba™ and will be adding a Martial Arts class for teens in the winter. Our traditional ongoing programs also keep our participants moving! Kids' Swim East and West programs are popular with our participants; we have also begun to incorporate more physical activity into our teen

of Addison and Sheffield—right next to a main gate. There, another staff helped us locate a wheelchair for one of our participants and he then guided our group to our seats. We had easy access to bathrooms and concessions with a staff always nearby to assist us if needed. After the game, the same gentleman that helped us to our seats guided us to the same gate where I was again able to bring our van.



This is all thanks to the ADA and a subsequent court case: *Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America v. The University of Michigan* (2008). The case claimed that Michigan Stadium violated the Americans with Disabilities Act in its \$226-million renovation by failing to add enough seats for fans with disabilities or accommodate the needs for accessible restrooms, concessions, and parking. Additionally, the distribution of the accessible seating was an issue, with nearly all the seats being provided in one area. The settlement required the stadium to add 329 wheelchair seats throughout the stadium and an additional 135 accessible seats in clubhouses to go along with the existing 88 wheelchair seats by 2010. This case set a precedent for the uniform distribution of accessible seating. The agreement is now a blueprint for all stadiums and other public facilities regarding accessibility.

Without this ruling and the ADA, our experience at Wrigley Field may not have been the same. Now, individuals with disabilities are able to have the same experience as anyone else at sporting events across the country. There is definitely a great deal more to accomplish, but let's remember and celebrate the progress we have made thus far.

Stephen Cozzi
PI/VI Recreation Specialist

programs such as Club Teen and Teen Scene. In both of these teen programs, there is time dedicated each day to physical fitness by including activities such as swimming, walking, following fitness videos, and trying out new sports. Because we believe that building healthy habits starts young, we are continuing to offer the Special Olympics Young Athletes program for children ages 2-7. In this program, participants learn essential skills related to specific sports as well as work toward increasing listening skills, building positive experiences, and improving social interactions. M-NASR has a strong Special Olympics athletics line up, and our Young Athletes program is a good introduction for children into the Special Olympics community.

M-NASR is excited to offer programs that can help youth and teens reach their healthy leisure goals!

Kathy Wischhusen
Youth/Teen Recreation Specialist