



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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A Message From the Executive Director

“Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible without surrender...” —Max Ehrmann.

It is easy to get caught up in the noise and haste that life presents to us on a daily basis. It can be overwhelming. M-NASR participants have to maneuver through this thing called “life” every day. As I see the residents of our Member Districts enjoying M-NASR programs, I am truly in awe. There are challenges that present every program, and yet our participants embrace the challenges and move past them. They definitely don’t surrender.

M-NASR’s mission is as follows: The Maine-Niles Association of Special Recreation

is dedicated to improving the quality of life and, through advocacy and awareness, promoting a successful leisure lifestyle for individuals with disabilities. Our participants improve the quality of life through the people they touch, be it their family members, M-NASR staff, or M-NASR volunteers. As much as M-NASR strives to create a safe, positive program setting, our participants give back to us a thousand percent more. They do this silently. The act of participation speaks volumes.

Thank you to all of the thousands of M-NASR participants. You make M-NASR and the world a better place.

Sue Bear

Executive Director

M-NASR Keeps on Rolling

M-NASR’s number one goal is to provide safe, fun programs, and we take safety very seriously. Even though we are not in the transportation business, M-NASR provides many rides to and from our programs. We offer centrally-located pick-up and drop-off points as well as door-to-door transportation. We pride ourselves in making sure everything is safe and carefully planned. Our Agency believes that communication is extremely important, and we provide our participants and families with the transportation information in a timely fashion.

M-NASR drivers must complete an extensive training program which includes: a driver orientation, a successful completion of a physical (drug & alcohol tests), and a vision, hearing, and lifting test. We also complete a driver abstract and criminal background check on each driver. A copy of their routes is

given to each driver prior to each program to make sure they are familiar with the pick-up and drop-off locations. As an extra safety precaution, we perform random evaluations on our drivers to encourage good driving habits. Our drivers and bus aides are dedicated to their responsibilities throughout the year by their attendance which shows they were seriously committed to carrying out M-NASR’s mission.

This past year we provided approximately 20,000 rides to and from M-NASR programs utilizing our seven wheelchair-accessible vehicles. Without these vehicles, many of our participants simply would not be able to enjoy M-NASR programs as they have no other transportation option. You can see that it clearly takes much effort to ensure that our transportation services are safe and accommodating for our participants.

Kelly Brunning

Senior Operations Manager



You Make a Difference—Volunteer at M-NASR

Volunteers are one of M-NASR's most important resources. They come from all walks of life and bring a vast array of experience to our Agency. Countless hours are spent by volunteers as they help our participants enjoy a successful leisure lifestyle. As an added bonus, volunteers tell us that donating their time and energy provides them with a very meaningful experience—a true win-win situation. We applaud our volunteers for the many, many hours they've dedicated to M-NASR.

Anfal Aamir	Madeline Dort	Olivia Johnson	Sophie Miller	Mark Schultz
Ervina Ajkic	Renee Drase	Jensy Joseph	Audrey Moss	Hayley Semple
Hibba Alhasan	Annette Egel	Jessica Kalathil	Abigail Murray	Anjali Shah
Danielle Andreolas	Orli Elovic	Tim Kalkirtz	Sandra Nahhas	Tracy Simkins
Christian Antosz	Daisha Etienne	Moiz Khan	Nicolette Neverly	Julia Sirvinskas
Caroline Araneta	Taylor Evonitz	Laura Koller	Lynette Nimmo	Jason Spitzer
Kathy Arena	Tom Gehr	Steve Koller	Simone Perrin	Fiona Spuria
Tom Artz	Gaby Goldman	Kaitlyn Koller	Elizabeth Petersen	Julia Spuria
Ryan Bezz	Adam Gomez	Lane Krauss	Margaret Petersen	Sean Stachorek
Sarah Biagi	David Gonzalez-Velez	Ryan Krischke	Catherine Petersen	Caden Stachorek
Madeline Biagi	Sarah Grimson	Jacob Lakin	Sarah Pinkerton	Tammy Stachorek
Tim Brunning	Jean Gross	Jim Lange	Dominique Pinto	Steve Stachorek
Lauren Buell	Sarah Gross	Olivia Laterille	Madison Purtell	Hannah Swanson
Christina Chavira	Neveen Habeeb	Margaret Lynn	Sarah Quinlivani	Mathai Teena
Irin Choi	Sheena Hager	Jackson Magad	Carmen Raciti	Zach Thomas
Jackie Chris	James Hammack	Simra Malik	Joe Retondo	Jimmy Toliopoulos
Paul Cozzi	Anna Harbeck	Thomas Marinis	Lillie Robinson	Mayra Trujillo
Danny Cozzi	Megan Hennessy	Bill Marinis	Ellen Rosenblatt	Bob Vaessen
Brian Daly	Sidney Hines	Stephanie Marinis	Pat Ruth	Marco Verceles
Antionette Defrenza	Michael Hoffman	Christina Martin	Michael Ruth	Kiana Weston
Katie Dingle	Gigi Hreczuch	Jovy Max	Jake Salvatore	Brooke Wils
Michael Dolezal	William Huddleston	Maureen McCarthy	Stephanie Saunders	Kevin Wilson
Stephanie Donado	John Griffith	Kyle McDill	Lacey Schultz	Erin Wilson

Quest for Success

Independence. It's something we all value, particularly when we are teens and young adults. How are teens



and young adults with intellectual disabilities able to continue developing and maintaining the skills and abilities they gained through their school transitional programs?

M-NASR recognizes the role that Therapeutic Recreation plays when supporting independence in teens and young adults. Our Quest for Success program offers weekly sessions that continue to hone the skills needed for safety, money management, using technology, healthy living, and service learning.

What used to be a single, in-house session, Quest for Success has been extended to a second session that allows participants to practice their skills during community outings.

- Teens and young adults have explored public transportation in their community and learned how to read an "L" train map.

- The participants practiced their positive socialization skills during a lesson on good sportsmanship, and, after the lesson, the participants broke up into teams for a bocchia game encouraging and supporting each other during the game.
- Participants used 21st century technology to further their development of interpersonal communication skills with friends and family. Through email and text messaging the participants practiced ordering food, reporting an emergency, and inviting friends to a party!
- Participants have recently completed two service-learning projects where they have made dog treats for the four-legged members of the community and holiday decorations for a local nursing home!



The mission of Quest for Success is to help participants recognize their abilities and consistently provide opportunities for independent growth and skill development. The magic of this program is the participants and the variety of abilities that they bring with them.

Mel Lofgren
Youth/Teen Recreation Specialist

Supporting Partners Make a Difference!

M-NASR sincerely thanks the following individuals and businesses for their financial support or in-kind contributions throughout the year.



YOU helped us provide:

- Over \$67,000 in Program/Day Camp Scholarships
- A memorable Seattle vacation trip
- Nine Special Olympics sports for close to 200 Special Olympics athletes
- More than 20,000 program/camp rides in M-NASR's vehicles
- The Chicago Metro Boccia Cup tournament and ITRS Basketball tournament

Organizations

2nd Chance, the Chance Cole Walker Foundation
 Allstate Giving Campaign
 AnceL Glink
 Best Bus Sales
 Binny's Beverage Depot
 Bredemann Chevrolet and Toyota
 Central Consolidated School District
 #62 – Central & Chippewa School
 Chicago Board of Trade
 Chicago Sky
 City of Des Plaines
 Classic Cinemas
 Costco
 Des Plaines Community Foundation
 Des Plaines Park District
 Finish Line Youth Foundation
 Freedom Golf Assn.
 Patricia Nelson Gebeck, CPA
 Golf-Maine Park District
 Heisman Trophy Trust
 Henrietta Lang Burk Fund, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee
 Illinois Bone & Joint Institute
 Julia S. Molloy Education Center
 Kiwanis Club of Des Plaines
 Kiwanis Club of Skokie Valley
 Knights of Columbus Council #4338
 Kohl's
 koller&associates llc
 Levin Ginsburg
 Liponi Foundation
 Machinery Movers, Riggers & Machinery Erectors Union Local 136
 mb financial bank, Morton Grove
 Maine West High School
 Morton Grove Foundation
 Morton Grove Moose Lodge #376
 Morton Grove Park District
 Morton Grove School District
 #70 – Parkview School
 Muslim Community Center Inc.
 Niles North High School
 Niles Park District
 Niles Township
 Niles West High School
 North Shore Martial Arts
 Optimist Club of Des Plaines
 Optimist Club of Niles

Park Ridge Community Fund
 Park Ridge Lions Club
 Park Ridge Park District
 Rivers Casino
 Rudy's Cycle & Fitness
 Signs Plus
 Skokie Park District
 St. Isaac Jogues Parish
 Starbucks, Morton Grove
 Sunshine through Golf Foundation
 TGRWA Structural Engineers
 TJ Maxx
 United Way
 Village of Lincolnwood Parks & Recreation
 Village of Skokie
 World Sport Chicago
 Zia's Trattoria
 Zip Specialties, Inc.

Individuals

Anonymous
 Blaise & Kathryn Arena
 Vickie Atsaves
 Robert & Diane Bauer
 Michael Bazarek
 Suzanne Bear
 Brian & Sarah Belisle
 Paul & Sue Betts
 Gina Blease
 Andy & Patti Bonk
 Julia Brichacek
 Mr. & Mrs. Carl Bronder
 Tim & Kelly Brunning
 Tom Byczek
 Calabrese Family
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 Gretchen Chrzan
 Representative John D'Amico
 Anil & Prafulla Desai
 The Erskine Family
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 John Ford
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John & Peggy Gilarski
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 Jan Hincapie
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 Joe Vanderberg
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 Joseph Wojtowicz
 Joan Wroblewski
 John & Lenore Zumph

In Memorium

Virginia Bear
 Florence Betts
 Ken Betts
 Ruth Kahnweiler
 Dolores Winkler
 Fritz Winkler
 Suzanne Yates

In Honor of

Andrew Buell
 John Finley
 Michael Reilly
 M-NASR Staff
 Monique C. Streff

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of our supporters. 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

The Sensory Room Benefits Begin!

Through Therapeutic Recreation, M-NASR's mission focuses on improving the quality of life for individuals with disabilities. This summer, the benefits of our programming soared to new levels as Des Plaines Park District and M-NASR celebrated the grand opening of our Sensory Room at the Des Plaines Leisure Center!

Through a generous grant provided by Rivers Casino in Des Plaines, our organizations were able to work together to create an atmosphere that offers countless emotional, social, intellectual, and physical benefits to not only our participants, but to everyone in the community. Careful consideration went into planning the contents of this room, from the calming color of the walls to the wheelchair accessibility of the floors, not to mention the high level of technology showcased in the equipment.

Our Vibroacoustic Learning Chair concentrates on proprioception and auditory senses. By providing pressure and vibration while surrounding an individual with music, this chair is a comfort for someone needing security.



Another piece is our Soundbeam 5, which converts physical movements into sound and music, an amazing option for an individual who does not often perceive control in their environment.



To reach those who would benefit from multi-sensory feedback and movement breaks, our Gesturetek Cube provides seemingly endless options of

interactive pictures projected onto the floor. Our participants can use this equipment for some friendly competition with a floor hockey game, to a visual game of "don't break the ice" as they step on snowy patches to uncover fish beneath them!

M-NASR's Teen Connections camp was lucky enough to hold our program in the classroom adjacent to the Sensory Room this summer, in addition to Des Plaines Park District's campers who had assistance from M-NASR Inclusion Companions being right down the hall. Approximately 75% of our Teen Connections campers had individualized behavior plans that included "taking a break" as a main coping skill, and they made use of this space on a daily basis. Individuals who have a sensory processing disorder, autism, a brain injury, Attention Deficit Disorder, or a behavioral disorder certainly benefit from using this room, but there is something in this space that can assist any individual. There are additional advantages obtained from using the Sensory Room:



- developing independence and self-efficacy
- decreasing aggressive behaviors
- self-regulation
- decreasing anxiety
- activation of lesser-known sensory areas
- education and resources for the community, their families, and friends
- and much more.

M-NASR is excited to expand our programming in the Sensory Room in the upcoming year, and we're sure to have many additional success stories to share in 2017!

Lauren Ruiz
Program Manager

LF

You are cordially invited to attend the 26th Annual Liponi Foundation for Special Recreation Dinner Dance

with Silent Auction on Saturday, March 4, 2017. Taking place at the Chateau Ritz Banquet Hall in Niles, this major event generates funds to help support the mission 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 for participants who could otherwise not afford to attend these programs. Join us for an elegant adult evening which includes cocktails, a lavish dinner, and dancing. Coupled with the scrumptious dinner, guests are invited to bid on a multitude of valuable and unique items in the silent and live auctions. Tickets to this fabulous event are \$100 per person. This is not a M-NASR program. For more information, please contact Stella LiPomi, Liponi Liaison, at (847) 966-5522 ext. 3015.



Medical Trends in Inclusion

M-NASR's Inclusion Team pride themselves in providing the safest environment for children, teens, and adults with disabilities who participate within their Member Park District programs. During the past year, M-NASR has seen an increase in the amount of requests for Inclusion Companions to assist participants who have medical conditions. A few examples of these medical conditions include heart conditions, respiratory conditions, diabetes, and seizure disorders. While there are parameters around the services that M-NASR staff can provide for participants who have medical conditions, M-NASR's staff are able to be an extra set of eyes and provide additional supervision to best observe if there are any concerns. In addition, they act as the "go-to person" to seek emergency medical personnel, if necessary. Most importantly, every child's needs are individually assessed, and the ultimate goal is the safety of each and every participant.

Katie DeVita
Inclusion Manager

What is Therapeutic Recreation?

You may have noticed the credentials “CTRS” after the names of many of M-NASR’s staff members. CTRS stands for Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist and is a professional recognition indicating that the individual has met standards of education, experience, and professional development within the field of Therapeutic Recreation. According to the American Therapeutic Recreation Association (ATRA), Therapeutic Recreation is a “service designed to restore, remediate, and rehabilitate a person’s level of functioning and independence in life activities, to promote health and wellness as well as reduce or eliminate the activity limitations and restrictions to participation in life situations caused by an illness or disabling condition.” CTRS holders focus on improving individuals’ quality of life in different wellness domains, including physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and leisure health. At M-NASR, participants benefit in a variety of ways that reflect the impact of Therapeutic Recreation-based programming.



Programs that impact participants’ physical health improve fine and gross motor skills, increase strength and endurance, and reduce pain and fatigue, among other physical health benefits. After participating in M-NASR programs, one participant stated, “Programs have definitely helped my mobility.” A parent of a youth participant shared that her daughter “had a very rare syndrome and her weakest skill is probably her gross motor. Through the Young Athletes program, she has been able to explore her abilities.”

Participants who benefit from increased cognitive and emotional health through program participation may experience improved mood, memory, ability to concentrate, and decision-making skills, as well as enhanced ability to identify, display, and manage emotions. A parent of a youth day camper shared that after a summer of M-NASR programming, her child’s “anxiety level was reduced drastically.” When asked how M-NASR programs have affected their life, many participants and families share similar stories that include feeling happier in their everyday life and that they or their family members are always “enthusiastic about participating.”

Programs that impact participants’ social health help participants develop and practice their interpersonal communication skills and build social supports. One parent of a youth participant shared that her daughter “was able to successfully engage in her small group several times,” which was something she’d never done before. Another set of parents whose son was working on his interpersonal social skills while utilizing M-NASR’s inclusion services said, “We have seen such an improvement in this area and are thrilled!” Additionally, it seems that every M-NASR

participant is able to build social supports through our programs. One adult participant shared, “I feel [less] isolated when I do things with M-NASR,” while another adult said, “I have made many friends through M-NASR, and we do things outside of M-NASR programs.” A parent stated that “M-NASR is [her daughter’s] social life.”

A participant’s leisure health includes their ability to choose and engage in appropriate leisure activities, as well as their ability to locate and access leisure opportunities within their community. For individuals with disabilities, accessible leisure within their community can be difficult to identify. M-NASR specializes in adapting leisure activities and providing accessible opportunities for participants to engage in their community. One participant shared that she is grateful “for the opportunity to participate in events that would be [otherwise] unattainable.” Another parent was impressed that M-NASR’s staff has “responded positively to [her son’s] dietary restrictions so that he can participate fully.”

The testimonials reflect M-NASR’s ability to meet or exceed the wellness goals set for each of our diverse programs and affirms the CTRS profession and M-NASR’s CTRS’ abilities to enhance the lives of individuals with disabilities. One final statement from a participant really sums up the impact of M-NASR’s programs. This participant shared, “I look forward to every day because M-NASR is part of it... I don’t know what I would do if M-NASR was not in my life.”

Alexandra Walch
PI/VI Recreation Specialist

2017 M-NASR ANNUAL CALENDAR OF EVENTS	
Annual Recognition Night	May 10
End-of-the-Summer Celebration for participants/supporters	August 10
Annual Halloween Dance for M-NASR participants and other Special Recreation Association participants	October 20
M-NASR Annual Appeal	December
2017 CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR SUPPORTERS OF M-NASR	
Morton Grove Foundation “Taste”	March 2
Liponi Foundation Dinner Dance	March 4
Park Ridge Community Fund Harry O’Brien Spring 5K Dash	May
Liponi Annual Miniature Golf Outing	August 16
Knights of Columbus Tootsie Roll Campaign	October

M-NASR Board of Directors

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Executive Director of the Des Plaines Park District

Vice President - John Jekot

Executive Director of the Golf-Maine Park District

Treasurer - Tom Elenz

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Board Member - Jeff Wait, Executive Director of the Morton Grove Park District

Board Member - Gayle Mountcastle, Executive Director of the Park Ridge Park District

Board Member - John Ohrlund, Executive Director the Skokie Park District

Board Member - Laura McCarty, 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.



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An extension of:

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

