

# Nomination for UBCM Community Excellence Awards *Best Practices*

## Greater Victoria Inter-Municipal Recreation Managers Committee

The Greater Victoria Region is comprised of thirteen local governments operating seven parks and recreation departments. Each department has a mandate for recreation service delivery for their respective community. However, residents look beyond local government borders for recreation opportunities and a mechanism was needed to more effectively coordinate services common to the region and to create needed new public opportunities typically beyond the resources of a single department. To address this challenge the Greater Victoria Inter-Municipal Managers Committee was established. The original mandate was to explore service partnerships with the regional health authority and to initiate a common recreation fee subsidy program in the region for low income residents. The fee subsidy program Leisure Involvement For Everyone (LIFE) has been implemented and numerous program partnerships established with Vancouver Island Health Authority. Since then many other valued regional programs have been created through the cooperation and shared resources of the Committees member organizations.

The member organizations include:

District of Saanich  
Municipality of Oak Bay  
Peninsula Recreation Commission  
Sea Parc Recreation  
Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt

Township of Esquimalt  
City of Victoria  
Westshore Parks and Recreation  
YMCA – YWCA of Greater Victoria



## **GREATER VICTORIA INTER-MUNICIPAL MANAGERS COMMITTEE**

The Greater Victoria Region is comprised of thirteen local governments including seven parks and recreation departments providing community programs and facilities. Each department and organization within the region has a mandate to provide community recreation service to the citizens within their respective community. Residents look beyond their municipal boundaries for services. A system was needed to effectively coordinate existing programs and create new innovative recreation opportunities that can address regional needs and be delivered in a consistent fashion.

To address this challenge the Greater Victoria Inter-Municipal Recreation Manager's Committee was established in the mid 1990's. One of the Committees original purpose was to implement a regional program encouraging participation by residents of low income. The Leisure Involvement For Everyone (LIFE) program was implemented successfully and the legacy of cooperation between departments has continued. Numerous regional programs have resulted through the commitment and leadership by the following organizations:

- District of Saanich
- Township of Esquimalt
- Municipality of Oak Bay
- City of Victoria
- Peninsula Recreation Commission (representing North Saanich, Central Saanich and Sidney)
- Westshore Parks and Recreation (representing View Royal, Langford, Colwood, Metchosin and the Highlands)
- Sea Parc Recreation (representing Juan de Fuca and electoral area of Sooke)

The YMCA-YWCA of Greater Victoria and the Canadian Forces Base (CFB Esquimalt) have since joined the Inter-Municipal Manager's Committee. This unique and innovative partnership transcends municipal borders and its continued success is a testament to the commitment of the communities and organizations involved. The value of this kind of regional cooperation is in maximizing shared resources, minimizing duplication of services in the region and enhancing the ability to attract corporate sponsors.

The following is a list of innovative regional programs:

1. Eat Well Get Moving (HARA.) - This initiative awards prizes to individuals and groups for filling in "tracker" cards. The cards help children and adults keep track of their daily exercise (in 15 minute increments) and servings of fruit and vegetables consumed.
2. Get Up and Go Games (HARA) - A compilation of games and activities promoting nutrition and exercise were put into portable containers allowing event organizers to use for planning. Local schools have used these packages during certain special events such as Health Week.
3. Summer Camp Nutrition Guidelines flyer (HARA.) - HARA created a flyer promoting healthy snacks, etc. that was distributed to parents through recreation centre summer camp programs. The guidelines also serve as a tool for camp leaders planning to serve food.
4. Highway to Health (Regional Active Communities Committee) - Part of the Regional Active Communities Plan 'Highway to Health' is an activity tracker program that is free for participants and will be promoted throughout the region. Current registrations for this program exceed 1,400.

5. Walking Clinics (Regional Active Communities Committee) - Clinics designed by staff in conjunction with a local business that specializes in running and walking gear and programs.
6. www.youthvictoria.com website (GROOVY) - This interactive website promotes activities in the Greater Victoria area and connects youth. It hosts a forum, picture gallery, map, program info and links to support for employment, training, and help.
7. BC Youth Week celebration (GROOVY) - The Committee works together to develop a regional event to program BC Youth week.
8. www.fitinfitness.ca website - This site hosts information and links on recreation opportunities in the region including:
  - a. Centre locations and links to departmental websites
  - b. Information about regional initiatives
  - c. Drop-in activity schedules
  - d. Registration information
  - e. Will host the 'Highway to Health' activity tracker program
9. Taste of Recreation - This is a discounted (\$25) one month facility access pass available to anyone. They are accepted at all Greater Victoria Recreation Centres during the month of April. The purpose is to encourage new users to try out regional facilities and recreation activities. It has been a successful revenue generator; approximately 4000 passes are sold each year throughout the region.
10. Coast Capital Swims - FREE monthly swims are hosted at a different location each month. Each pool hosts two or three swims a year. Coast Capital Savings sponsors the program by reimbursing the departments for lifeguard wages.
11. Staff Development - The Committee organizes regional staff training opportunities for recreation staff to learn and network. The High Five program has been included in the training of summer camp supervisors. Speakers have also been brought in to discuss specific issues such as marketing techniques. Due to cost sharing arrangements between the various departments this type of training is affordable to all departments in the region.
12. Active Parent Pass - In partnership with the Vancouver Island Health Authority the Committee provides a "5 punch pass" to parents postpartum. The passes are distributed by the Public Health Nursing - Postnatal Follow-up Program.
13. Move for Health Day - Each recreation centre offers drop-in activities on Move for Health Day for \$2 each.
14. Leisure Involvement For Everyone (L.I.F.E.) - A regional program offering those on low income free access to "drop-in" activities such as swimming, skating, weight room and fitness classes. Innovative planning has resulted in participants being admitted at our front desks under virtually the same pass system that exists for regular users. Because linking all the Victoria CLASS systems would not have been feasible, stickers were created for the reverse side of the CLASS membership passes allowing staff to check off each of the permitted 52 drop-in visits per year. Participants also receive several vouchers that provide up to 50% discount on registered programs.
15. Expired Bus Pass Program -All facilities in the region accept expired monthly bus passes for one drop in admission. In return, the regional facilities are able to advertise a joint initiative on the back of one BC Transit bus throughout the year at no charge.
16. 2 for 1 Inter-Municipal Recreation Pass - the Committee developed this pass to distribute to schools and larger organizations. This pass is good for drop in admission (2 for 1) at any recreational facility in the region.

The Greater Victoria Inter-Municipal Recreation Manager's Committee has increased the social, cultural and physical health benefits of recreation in our community. Opportunities to participate in low cost recreation activities have resulted in greater participation and access to recreation.

At the beginning of each new year members of the Committee volunteer to be responsible for the various initiatives. Typically, one or two members will also sit on sub-committees. The subcommittees are comprised of Program Coordinators and representatives from partner organizations such as the Vancouver Island Health Authority. Subcommittees meet regularly to address specific issues including:

1. Health Promotion - This Committee has forged a strong alliance with the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) and is known as the Health and Recreation Alliance (HARA). HARA's flagship program is called Eat Well, Get Moving and is distributed to local elementary schools through the respective Community Health Nurses.
2. Regional Active Communities Committee - This Committee includes a partnership with local business and Vancouver Island Health Authority to implement the Regional Active Communities Plan.
3. Youth Programming - This Committee is known as Great Recreation Opportunities Organized for Victoria Youth (GROOVY). The Committee is instrumental in tying together regional youth activities and promoting these through a common website. The Committee also coordinates events promoting BC Youth Week.

*The Greater Victoria Intermunicipal Recreation Managers Committee provides a proven model for other communities operating adjacent to other similar agencies to emulate. The model has fostered program efficiencies between partner organizations, created valued new regional programs and services through shared resources, and has met public recreation needs beyond the capacity of individual departments.*