

## **PETER C. O'BRIEN HUMANITARIAN AWARD**

### **BARRY WELCH QUINCY, MA**



In 1963 William F. Ryan, the first Director of Recreation for the City of Quincy and a Charter Member and Founder of MRPA, recruited high school students as volunteer councilors to staff a newly created summer day camp for children with special needs. Barry J. Welch volunteered for this program. For the next 45 years at the Quincy Recreation Department, Barry dedicated himself to the recreation profession and to the recreational needs of the citizens of the City of Quincy.

Barry's first paid position was as a Summer Recreation Leader on a city playground. During his career he has advanced through every leadership and program director position in the department. Barry was appointed Assistant Director of Recreation in 1975 and Director of Recreation in 1982 and has served the city under the administration of nine Mayors.

Utilizing the Co-op Program and the GI Bill, Barry earned a Master of Science in Leisure Studies in 1977 and a Bachelor of Science with High Honors in Recreation Education in 1975 from Boston Bouve' College of Northeastern University.

Barry has been consistently involved in MRPA and NRPA since 1970 and has acted as a presenter at conferences and C.E.U. sessions. He currently serves on the Executive Board as the South Shore Representative. Barry served as a part-time instructor in the Graduate Programs at Northeastern University, teaching courses in Recreation, Recreation Programming, and the Community School.

During his tenure as Director of Recreation, Quincy has remained strongly committed to its long time tax supported recreation programs, and currently continues to offer free supervised playgrounds, free supervised open gym programs, and free Red Cross swimming instruction. The department has instituted dozens of new self-supporting programs that are enthusiastically supported by its residents. The department organized the first municipal sponsored Senior Olympics in the Commonwealth in 1982, and in 1991 Barry helped with the organization and founding of the Massachusetts Senior Games. He became a charter member and still serves on the Board of Directors. The department has been honored by Hershey's National Track and Field, The Elks National Free Throw, and as the USLTA New England Park and Recreation Agency of the Year. The Quincy Recreation Department has a current budget of \$850,000, two full time employees, and annually averages 225 part-time or seasonal employees.

As Director of Recreation, Barry further serves the community as a member of the Council on Aging, Community Police Commission, and the Commission on the Family. As a volunteer he has also served as Chairman of the Board and founder of the Quincy Telecommunication Corporation, the local PEG access agency for the City of Quincy. Barry has received the John L. Newman award for Meritorious Services to the Mass Senior Games, National Lodge of Elks Distinguished Citizen Award, and Elected Member of the Quincy Track Club Hall of Fame.

He is an active member of the City of Quincy Flag Day Parade and Celebration Committee, which organizes the oldest continuous Flag Day Parade in the nation. He served as chairman of the committee to honor the city's first Olympic Medal winner, Karen Cashman. For many years, Barry served as a volunteer coach in the city's youth soccer and basketball leagues.

Barry, a veteran of four years in the United States Coast Guard, is a member of American Legion Post 294. Barry has been married to his wife Marilyn for 39 years; he has two children, Stacey and Brendan, both schoolteachers and two granddaughters, Elise and Ella. (A third granddaughter is due at press time!)

## **COMMUNITY PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR**

### **KAREN SIMMONS LEXINGTON, MA**



Karen Simmons has been the Director of the Lexington Recreation Department since 1996. Before beginning her duties in Lexington Karen worked for 15 years at the Fernald School in Waltham as a Recreation Therapist, Supervisor of Recreation and Program Director. Karen was the recipient of the 1992 MRPA Therapeutic Recreation Professional of the Year Award.

As Director of Recreation in Lexington, Karen oversees a department with a budget of approximately \$2,000,000 that operates entirely as an Enterprise Fund, receiving no tax levy funds for its operation. The Lexington Recreation Department offers over 400 programs for preschoolers through senior adults annually, in addition to operating a municipal golf course, 2 outdoor

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aquatic facilities, 17 tennis courts, 7 basketball courts and 38 fields. During her tenure in Lexington, Karen has recommended, received the appropriations for, and managed over \$7,800,000 in Recreation infrastructure improvements, highlighted by the reconstruction of Lincoln Park with three infill synthetic turf fields, a youth baseball and regulation softball field, accessible fitness path and activity stations, playground, and site amenities. This project received the MRPA Design of Facility Award in 2005 and the Boston Society of Landscape Architects Merit Award for Design of Park and Recreation Facilities in 2006. Karen is a member of the National Recreation and Park Association, Massachusetts Recreation and Park Association, Golf Course Superintendent's Association of America, National Golf Course Owners Association, and New England Park Association. She is both a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist and Certified Park and Recreation Professional. Karen was a member of the MRPA Conference Committee in 2005 and 2006, and is currently the Northeast Regional Representative.

## **NEW PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR**

**ANDREA EGMONT  
NEWBURYPORT, MA**

Andrea Egmont is the Supervisor of Youth Services for the City of Newburyport. She has worked in youth programming and direct service for the last 12 years, providing training for child care, after school and year round recreation staff throughout Massachusetts. Her background is in human development, substance abuse prevention, and asset building. She was hired in 2005 to create Newburyport Youth Services and has grown the department into an innovative, profit building, and well recognized and appreciated service for families in and around Newburyport. She looks forward to continuing to develop youth empowerment opportunities and exciting new recreational programs.



## **LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR**

**REPRESENTATIVE LEWIS G. EVANGELIDIS  
FIRST WORCESTER DISTRICT**



**State Representative Lew Evangelidis (R-Holden)** represents the 1st District of Worcester consisting of the towns of Holden, Hubbardston, Oakham, Princeton, Rutland, Sterling and Westminster. After a hard Republican Primary, Evangelidis continued his momentum and was elected to the legislature. This November he will be seeking his fourth term. He currently serves on the Committee to the Judiciary, Environment, Ways and Means, as well as Personnel and Administration. He is also active in a number of legislative caucuses including the Regional School caucus and the Dairy Farmers Caucus. Throughout his tenure in the House of Representatives he has been recognized for his extraordinary constituent services and dedication to the 1st District of Worcester.

Evangelidis grew up in Holden and still resides there with his wife and two daughters. He is a graduate of Wachusett High School, the University of Massachusetts, and Temple University School of Law. Prior to becoming an elected official, Evangelidis was an Assistant District Attorney in Suffolk County, as well as an Assistant State Attorney in Dade County Florida. He is easily distinguished from other members of the General Court as the tallest member of the legislature.

## **STUDENT OF THE YEAR** **ALEXA M. RICHARDS**



*Alexa Richards is from Hamilton, Massachusetts. Alexa was very active during her four years at Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School. She was a four-year varsity soccer player and was captain of the team her senior year. She also played lacrosse, and indoor and outdoor track. Alexa was a member of the Rotary Interact Club, Yearbook Staff and was president of the Foreign Language Club. Her senior year, Alexa was inducted into the National Honor Society and served as the yearbook Editor-in-Chief. After ten years of attending Glen Urquhart Summer Camp in Beverly Farms, MA, Alexa served as a CIT and eventually as a camp counselor. Alexa is currently in her senior year at the University of New Hampshire where she is majoring*

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*in Recreation Management and Policy and has an emphasis in Communications. During the school year, Alexa works as a facility supervisor at the UNH Campus Recreation Department.*

She has also done a lot of volunteer work during her time at UNH. She has worked with children with disabilities at the UNH Therapeutic Horseback Riding Program and has volunteered at the Newmarket Heritage Festival in Newmarket, NH, Todd's Trot 5K Road Race in Durham, NH and the UNH Homecoming 5K Road Race.

During the summer of 2007, Alexa interned at Campus Recreation, where she assisted in managing and supervising the summer staff. She also supervised the Department's adult summer softball league. This past summer, Alexa interned at the Manchester Parks and Recreation Department in Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts under the excellent guidance and tutelage of Matthew Casparius. It was during this experience that Alexa truly fell in love with the parks and recreation field and is excited at the prospect of working in the field after she graduates in May 2009.

"I am so honored to have been nominated and of course, to have ultimately won this special recognition. Heartfelt thanks to all my professors and mentors who have helped me in the field I love and have helped me achieve this award."

## **2008 Design of Facility Award** **City of Beverly/ Beverly Youth Collaboration** **McPherson Youth Center/Innocenti Park**

The McPherson Youth Center in Beverly is managed by collaboration between the City of Beverly and The Greater Beverly YMCA. The Beverly Youth Collaboration consists of members appointed by both the City of Beverly and the YMCA. This collaboration has existed for about 15 years with much success.

Over the past several years, the McPherson Youth Center facilities had deteriorated to the point where only a handful of children were utilizing the facility on a daily basis. Prior to this period, the center was a vibrant place with a skate park, basketball court, street hockey rink and indoor facilities for children to play games, do homework, participate in programs and socialize with their peers. When the skate park had to be closed, the courts developed large cracks and the indoor facilities had several issues, the children stopped coming and programs had to be relocated to other facilities. In addition, lead contamination was discovered at the site that had to be cleaned up.

The Youth Collaboration had been planning to upgrade the indoor and outdoor facilities for several years. Finally after receiving \$580,000 from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the City of Beverly was able to move ahead with the cleanup and renovations of the entire area including Innocenti Park, the primary softball field in the city.

Working with the Youth Collaboration and the Beverly YMCA, the City of Beverly spent about \$1M to cap and renovate several acres around the center and softball field and renovate the McPherson Youth Center, complete with a new skate park, 2 new basketball courts and 60 additional parking spaces outside the building. There were also major renovations to the interior of the center including two new ADA compliant bathrooms, a computer lab, and interactive video games to get the kids moving along with a new kitchen/lounge area for the kids. Thanks to the hard work of all the parties involved, the number of kids using the facility has jumped back up to over 100 per day after the building was reopened in the spring of 2008.

## **2008 Maintenance Innovation Award** **Wayland Park and Recreation** **Soccer Goal Improvements**



The Town of Wayland Park and Recreation Department has been struggling with the overuse of soccer fields for years. As with many municipalities the ability to rest fields and allow goalmouth areas to regenerate grass and provide for safe playing surfaces is a losing battle. To that end we have established a solution to this problem

We have taken an area approximately 12' x 20' and removed the grass down about 3". Then we put in a layer of sandy loam to level the area. We then installed artificial turf and inlaid that with a sandy loam to keep the fibers up. In addition we seeded the area with the idea that grass will have a stable surface to grow roots into.

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This has worked wonderfully for us here in Wayland. We now have a goalmouth area that is free from ruts, does not have dirt being kicked up everywhere and drain quicker than the rest of our field. It has provided a much smoother and safer environment for both the goals and field players alike. This work required only 2 days per goalmouth to complete. In addition we have done the perimeter of our field with permalines so our maintenance costs are reduced here as well as we spend less time lining this field.

When viewing the fields from a distance one does not even know the goalmouth area is not natural grass. Both our youth and adult leagues have nothing but positive statements about this maintenance improvement.

**2008 Program Outreach Award**  
**FIRE FIGHTERS IN TRAINING(F.I.T.)**  
**PEABODY RECREATION DEPARTMENT & PEABODY FIRE**  
**DEPARTMENT**



Fire Fighters In Training is a one week program designed for boys and girls entering grades 7-9. The program is offered by the Peabody Recreation Department as a result of the combined efforts of the Recreation Department and Peabody Fire Department.

The program is designed to be fun as well as educational. It provides the Fire Department with an opportunity to interact with young people in the community as well as to promote fire safety. It provides the participants an opportunity to learn more about what skills and knowledge is needed to become a firefighter. Another valuable program component is that every participant becomes certified in CPR on the very first day of the program.

The F.I.T. program took place at the City operated Brooksby Farm and its' neighbor, the Peabody Historical Society. In addition to the Fire personnel, the Fire Department arranged to have Atlantic Ambulance provide CPR training and had the State Police Arson Squad (complete with the an accelerant sniffing dog) spend a morning at the program. They also had an old construction trailer donated to the program to be used for demonstration that showed the variety of characteristics that fire has and the techniques used to fight various types of fires. A car was brought to the site to be used to demonstrate how firefighters extricate people from car wrecks using the Jaws of Life.

The enthusiasm of the participants was matched by that of the firefighters who participated in the planning and implementation of the program as is evidenced by the fact that many of the firefighters volunteered to participate in showcasing their profession to the boys and girls who participated. On the final day of the program, one participant was heard to say "My Dad didn't tell me he signed me up for this, but I'm sure glad he did!"