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Message from the President

Dear NeRPA Members,

I am excited to begin my term as your president. I have been a member of this organization since 1998 and have seen many changes over the years. I am happy to see the direction that NeRPA is heading and greatly appreciate all the hard work and effort by our members, the Board and especially Jeff Hassenstab for his leadership over the past couple of years.

I have seen a number of new, young and enthusiastic members lately and feel it is critical to our organization to seize upon the momentum that has been generated. I truly feel we have an incredible mix of youth and experience that we can capitalize on.

Many challenges remain for all of us. One of the biggest challenges during the years has been our membership levels. We have seen declining numbers lately, and that has to change. Again, I feel like we are heading in the right direction. The new website is not only a tremendous tool for our members, but it is also a means to promote and market what we do. Having this in place was a major step forward and something to build from.

The interaction from the directors in the state has also provided a wealth of experience and guidance for our members. In my years in this organization, one of the things lacking was participation from the directors in the state. This is yet another exciting change that we have seen during the last couple of years.

Moving forward, I would like to thank all of you for your work, dedication and commitment to this organization. For me, NeRPA has been a tight-knit group, which I know I can turn to for great advice and some of the best networking available! If you are looking for reasons why the NeRPA exists, that, for me, is exactly the reason!

Keep up all of the great work, and I look forward to seeing you all very soon!

Nicole Meyer is a certified therapeutic recreation specialist (CTRS) and has her bachelor’s degree in neuroscience. She started Wonderfully Made as a way to reach the needs of children with special needs in her community. She provides opportunities for these kids to have fun and make friends, giving them the freedom and ability to have a social life, build self-confidence, and learn life skills that will carry them into the world. Her goal is for Wonderfully Made to be a resource for families of kids with special needs and provide recreational therapy services on a group and individual basis.

Some of the services she provides include Friendship Club, recreation therapy and focus groups. Friendship Club is a program designed to provide recreational activities for middle school and high school age kids to get involved with on Friday nights! The goal is to have fun, make friends and provide social opportunities. Activities include bowling, swimming, movie nights, etc. Recreation therapy works on social, emotional and physical goals through play and activities. By providing fun social activities and volunteer staff, Wonderfully Made hopes to give children a place to be kids as well as learn about themselves and gain confidence in who they are. Private services with a recreation therapist are available and are very individualized. The overall goal is to improve functioning and help them to be as healthy, active and independent as possible in their individual life pursuits. These services follow a standardized process of assessment, program planning, implementation and evaluation by a CTRS. Focus groups are made up of three to four kids with similar social skill needs. These groups are structured and have specific social-skill goals for each of the kids in the group. A CTRS places kids in these groups based on assessment and treatment goals in which the child could benefit from a group-therapy setting. For more information, please contact Nicole at nicole@wonderfullymadene.com.
On April 22, 2015, Rep. Glenn “GT” Thompson (R-PA) introduced with HR1906 the Access to Inpatient Rehabilitation Therapy Act of 2015. This bill amends title XVIII (Medicare) of the Social Security Act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to include recreational therapy services among the therapeutic modalities that constitute an intensive rehabilitation therapy program in determining whether inpatient services in an inpatient rehabilitation facility are reasonable and necessary.

At the time I write this letter, the bill has one co-sponsor: Rep. Butterfield (D-NC). We need the three representatives from Nebraska to sign on as co-sponsors for the bill. It is especially important that we get Rep. Smith’s attention, since he is on the Ways and Means Committee. The three individuals who currently represent Nebraska in the U.S. House of Representatives are:

1. Rep. Jeff Fortenberry (Lincoln)
2. Rep. Brad Ashford (Omaha)
3. Rep. Adrian Smith (Grand Island)

Small delegations have met with Reps. Ashford’s and Rep. Smith’s staffs, and so far neither of them has signed on, so please call your representative and ask him to support the bill. If you don’t know who your representative is, please go to www.house.gov, and enter your ZIP code.

Now contact your representative’s office and ask to make an appointment with the legislative staff members (in charge of health care issues) at the local office.

- Explain to them the benefits of recreation therapy (RT) in active treatment. Please note that we are already included in regulations that govern parks and recreation and education, and that legislation like this will help in other clinical settings.
- Describe the role of RT and how RT can help clients. Use RT since that is how the federal laws already define scope of practice.
- Describe how RT can help clients, especially with community integration.
- Describe that RT has been shown to significantly improve Functional Independence Measure scores with patients who have had stroke.
- Tell them that both Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital and Immanuel Rehabilitation Institute have large recreational therapy programs, and describe other programs in the area that have therapeutic recreation/TR/recreation therapy, including VA, etc.
- Tell them that this is a “budget-neutral” request.
- Ask them to co-sponsor the bill, and don’t take “no” for an answer.
- If they say “no,” ask them why. Contact me or a member of American Therapeutic Recreation Association’s Federal Public Policy Team to help with a good rebuttal.
- If they say “yes,” go to www.thomas.gov, and make sure they sign on. Keep calling them until the name is listed as a co-sponsor.
- Send the health care legislative aides that you met with a thank-you note.
- Submit success stories to the RAP for future coverage.

You can access additional talking points at the following link: www.atra-online.com/policy/federal-public-policy.

Thank you for helping advance the profession by advocating for this legislation. Should you have questions about this bill, please contact me at atrakari@yahoo.com, Dr. Thom Skalko at skalkot@ecu.edu, Dr. Richard Williams at williamsri@ecu.edu or Diane Skalko at dskalko@pittcoa.com.
The city of York passed a 0.5 percent sales-tax increase to fund recreation and infrastructure improvements in the spring of 2015. With the additional sales tax, the city of York and York Public Schools issued an enterlocal agreement to determine major projects to be the main focus of the sales-tax funds. Once the main projects are completed, the total cost of the project will be bonded, and then additional smaller projects will be approved and completed for the life of the bond. The two major projects include an eight-field softball/baseball complex and a railroad crossing quiet zone throughout the city limits of York.

The city of York hired Benesch out of Lincoln to be the lead engineers and designers for the complex. After months of planning, designs and discussion, the city and Benesch agreed to an eight-field multi-use softball/baseball complex. The design will include two four-field pinwheels that will have their own concession stand, crow’s nest, restrooms, office and storage facility. Seven of the fields will be considered multi-use for baseball and softball games, accommodating all ages. One field in each pinwheel will be considered the championship field. The softball championship field will be the home field for York High School softball and York College softball. The baseball championship field will have a grass infield and will only accommodate 14-and-older baseball, along with Legion and York College baseball. All fields will be lit. Also included in the complex will be a playground, batting cages and a maintenance facility.

Nemaha Sports Construction won the bid for the project with a construction start date of August 2015. The ballpark complex will be ready for games the spring of 2017.

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**Multi-Use Ballpark Complex**

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Marta Moorman’s accomplishments are many, but none more important than what she has shared with her students and fellow professionals. Her former and current students would all credit Moorman not only with thoroughly preparing them for the profession of parks and recreation but also for being a great role model. She exemplifies patience, compassion, energy and sincerity. Her knowledge about the park and recreation profession is unsurpassed. Combine those traits with her passion, and you have a very special person.

Moorman’s local, state and national professional service includes: Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies, Patriot Park Development Committee, reviewer for the Journal of Park and Recreation Administration, Academy of Leisure Sciences Operations Manual Committee, Kearney Trails Committee, City of Kearney Park and Recreation Advisory Board member, NeRPA committee chair, NeRPA Conference Planning Committee, Rowe Sanctuary Committee, and music minister at the Prince of Peace Catholic Church and Newman Center.

At the University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK), she currently serves on the Ad Hoc Department Needs Committee, HPERLS (Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Leisure Studies) Scholarship Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, Graduate Program Committee, Henning Family Scholarship Committee, UNK Suspension Appeals Committee, and the UNK Faculty Senate Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee. She is also the Recreation Majors Club faculty advisor.

Moorman was honored with the UNK College of Education Outstanding Teaching Award in 2014 and the NeRPA Fellow Award in 2012.

Moorman earned her associate degree in physical education from Northern Oklahoma College in 1977, her bachelor’s degree in physical education from the University of Oklahoma in 1980, her master’s degree in recreation management from State University College at Cortland in 1988, and her doctorate degree in recreation management from the University of Arkansas in 1997. She has been a professor and assistant professor at the University of Nebraska at Kearney since 1996.

Moorman has contributed articles in two recent publications: “Showcase Your Community: Host an Adventure Race” and “Agents of Change: Grass Roots Volunteerism.” Additionally, she has presented at numerous local, state and national conferences.

Moorman’s accomplishments are many, but none more important than what she has shared with her students and fellow professionals. Her former and current students would all credit Moorman not only for thoroughly preparing them for the profession of parks and recreation but also for being a great role model. She exemplifies patience, compassion, energy and sincerity. Her knowledge about the park and recreation profession is unsurpassed. Combine those traits with her passion, and you have a very special person.

A current student had this to say about Moorman:
Dr. Moorman was my first professor in my very first college class. I was immediately inspired by her, which motivated me to want to learn more. She is easily approachable, not only to students but to everyone on campus. She is a professor who students know they can go to if they have any problems or just to share a funny story.

Most of the time, when I go to her office to discuss homework or projects, it turns into an hour chat just about life. Dr. Moorman promotes the importance of leadership by providing opportunities for each one of us to assume leadership roles in order to help us be successful in the future. I have been at UNK for two years now, and Dr. Moorman has become not only one of my favorite professors on campus but a friend and mentor as well.

A former student had this to say about Moorman:
Dr. Moorman has been more than just a professor to me, as well as many others. She has taught me numerous things in the classroom that have helped me get to the professional level that I’m at. However, more important than that, she has been a guide, a mentor and a friend. She genuinely cares for each of her students, and that is so apparent to everyone who meets her. She will take the time to get to know her students. All of her students know that, if they need anything, she is always there to talk to or give advice. Although she was always someone you could go to, that definitely did not mean she would go easy on you in class. She always challenged us to strive to be our best and expected more from us than the average professor because she knew we could do it. Even to this day, Dr. Moorman is still supporting me in so many aspects. As I walked across the stage in May, Marta was the first person there just waiting to give me a hug, and you can see it in her face that she was so proud. She truly gives 100 percent to every single student she has. And since graduation, Marta has kept in touch and even came to show her support on my wedding day. Dr. Moorman is the type of person who truly wants to see her students succeed in life, and she will help in any way that she can. In fact, as I am writing this, I am about to go backpacking and camping in the Rockies, and Dr. Moorman has generously let me borrow an external frame backpack and a backpacking sleeping bag, and given me advice about avoiding bears 😃. Dr. Moorman encompasses everything that every professor should try to be for his or her students and everything that I hope to be as far her passion for recreation goes. She also happens to be going camping the same weekend as I am. You couldn’t find a more caring professor who truly lives to see her students succeed.
NeRPA State Conference Recap
October 4-6, 2015 • Grand Island, Nebraska

Awards

Keynote speaker Bill Cordes

Parks session

Therapeutic recreation session

Recreation session

Anna Unruh City of Papillion’s award accepted by Tami Phillips, Lori Hansen, Tim Moran and Jennifer Manzo

Jade Meades

City of Lincoln’s award accepted by Dorthy Skorupa, Paula Hite-Garcia and Jody Beach

Cheree Folts

Nicole Zimmerman

Josh Heitkamp and Jenny Durfey

Amanda English

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**Municipality:** City of Papillion  
**Population:** 19,143

The city of Papillion was recently voted number two in Best Places to Live 2015, a review of American towns conducted by MONEY magazine and CNN.com.

Papillion has the advantages of small-town living with the convenience of a major metropolitan area only minutes away. The median household income for Papillion is $78,547 per year, the median home price is $156,237, and there are nine colleges or universities within a 20-minute drive.

Papillion is part of an excellent 7,400-student school district with a low student-to-teacher ratio (13:1). School assignments are based on neighborhoods, and the district recently built a new high school. We are proud that Papillion students consistently rank among the top in the state in SAT and ACT scores.

The Papillion Police Department is one of few nationally that requires officers to have a college education. The department places a strong emphasis on community policing, and our officers maintain a vigilant presence in our schools and on our streets.

Complementing our police department is the Papillion Fire Department, the only full-time, career fire department in the county with seven-day-per-week, 24-hour-per-day advanced life support and paramedic services. It’s just another of the many amenities Papillion offers its residents. The city also owns and operates a 23,000-square-foot library; an aquatic center with a zero-depth pool and two water slides; and two 18-hole, par-70 golf courses.

In addition, the city boasts first-class parks and a multitude of programs and activities for the area youth, adults and seniors. Plans are also in place to expand the park system tenfold over the next 20 years. Visit our Parks Department and Recreation Department Web pages for more information.

**Recreation Department Director:** Lori Hansen  
**Oversees:** Recreation programs, farmers market, Sumtur Amphitheater, Papillion Race Series, Papio Bay Aquatic Park, year-round community events, two 18-hole golf courses, Papillion Senior Center, Specialized Transportation Service

**Sumtur Amphitheater**  
Owned and operated by the city of Papillion, Sumtur Amphitheater is considered the premier outdoor performance venue in the Omaha metropolitan area. Hosting over 100 events during its May-through-October season, this 2,500-person-capacity outdoor amphitheater provides endless opportunities for live family entertainment, and private, nonprofit and corporate rentals, as well as being a popular space for concerts, weddings, church services and business events.

Open since 2007, this seven-acre multi-use facility is nestled on the western edge of Walnut Creek Lake Recreation Area. It is home to the largest outdoor covered stage in Nebraska, featuring 350 stadium seats; hillside seating for 2,150; concessions; and an industry-standard audio, lighting and projection system. Sumtur hosts many free events including concerts, movies and family activities. During the season, Sumtur Amphitheater is host to theater groups, live concerts, and public and private fundraising events, as well as private hay rack ride/bonfire packages in the fall.
Papillion Race Series
Promoting healthy living, personal wellness and competitive fun, the Papillion Race Series hosts six races each season. The Papillion Half Marathon, 10K & 5K Fun Run is hosted in May and averages about 1,000 participants per year. Additional races in the series include a duathlon, triathlon, Twilight Criterium and Twilight 10K and 5K.

New this year, the Papillion Race Series collaborated with the Papillion Triathlon Club to host its first annual Kids Triathlon.

Papillion Farmers Market
Along with fresh produce and baked goods, the Papillion Farmers Market also includes a variety of artists and home-based businesses to present an array of local art and a variety of products for the general public to purchase and enjoy. With over 50 vendors per season, the Papillion Farmers Market takes place on Wednesday evenings from 5-8 p.m. in Papillion City Park with the season running June to early September.

Papio Bay Aquatic Park
Visit one of America’s best pools! Papillion’s Papio Bay Aquatic Park has previously been given the Excellence in Aquatics Award by the NeRPA. Take in five incredible acres of swimming and outdoor recreation. Papio Bay amenities include heated water throughout the park, certified lifeguards on staff, zero-depth swimming pool, children’s butterfly slide, two sand volleyball courts, two waterslides, and high dive and low dive, as well as many other amenities.

Papio Bay is one of the top-ranked programs in the area for swimming lessons. Each summer Papio Bay offers over five sessions of swimming lessons for children ages 6 months and older.

Eagle Hills and Tara Hills
Eagle Hills and Tara Hills golf courses are both 18-hole courses that offer great locations to host a special event. Both championship golf courses come complete with catering services, indoor and outdoor seating for up to 400 guests, a fully lit driving range and certified golf professionals on staff.

Papillion Senior Center
Papillion Senior Center offers a variety of opportunities and classes for our seasoned citizens. The Papillion Senior Center offers day trips, exercise classes, art classes, games and more. In collaboration with Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging, the Papillion Senior Center offers hot and deli lunches three times per week.

The Papillion Recreation Department also has a special transportation bus service that runs five days per week to assist seniors and persons with disabilities to medical or other appoints on a weekly basis for a small fee.
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