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For Immediate Release

Glencoe Park District Employee Recognized at IAPD/IPRA Annual Conference

Hinsdale, IL– On January 30, 2026, the Illinois Park & Recreation Association (IPRA) honored Bobby Collins from the Glencoe Park District with the IPRA Community Impact Award, for his commitment and excellent service to parks and recreation in Illinois. Mr. Collins was recognized during the IPRA Awards Program at the IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference held at the Hyatt Regency Chicago.

The IPRA Community Impact Award is presented to a current Illinois park and recreation professional who has made a significant impact in the community they serve through their involvement with local, community, non-profit, and business organizations or government agencies. This award celebrates those professionals who are not currently executive directors, recognizing their important impact to our field.

Bobby Collins has had a profound impact on the Glencoe community during his 12 years with the Glencoe Park District, driving innovation, inclusion, and collaboration that benefit not only the Glencoe community, but communities across Illinois.

In 2018, recognizing growing concerns about beach safety, Bobby developed Beach Safe, a groundbreaking program that invited children from underserved communities to Glencoe Beach to learn essential water safety and survival skills. Mornings focused on lifesaving techniques, while afternoons were filled with fun water sports. Many participants, though living just miles from Lake Michigan, had limited exposure to open water.

Bobby connected aquatic campers with these participants, creating meaningful friendships between children who otherwise would not have met. Through his leadership, the Beach Safe program has served thousands and become a model replicated by other lakeshore park districts.

A respected industry leader, Bobby regularly unites area districts to collaborate on beach safety, sustainability, and customer service, sharing best practices statewide. His financial expertise has also benefited the Glencoe Park District significantly, helping secure over \$100,000 in private donations during the renovation of the Weinberg Family Recreation Center.

“Congratulations to Bobby for being recognized by his peers with this award for his service and commitment to the community and profession, which clearly has a major impact,” Suzi Wirtz, IOM, IPRA

Executive Director. “It is so inspiring to see the difference one person can make, through thoughtful and inclusive initiatives, and IPRA is proud to have Bobby as an exemplary member, leading by example.”

Established in 1944, the Illinois Park & Recreation Association (IPRA) serves over 3,000 park, recreation, and conservation professionals throughout the state, and is a national leader in providing premier education, networking, and resources. For more information about IPRA, its board and mission, please visit the IPRA website: www.Ilipra.org.

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