

Board of Directors
and Recreational Sports Commission
Nominee Information Form



Nominee's Name: Michelle Okada

Current Employer/Organization: City of Woodbury

Current Title/Position: Parks & Recreation Director

Nominated For: MRPA Board President-Elect

1. MRPA Positions Held (Sections, Committees, Offices, etc.):

Over the past 26 years, I have held several positions, from section chair (when it was programming section) to the inaugural ERLI Committee, Annual Conference Committee, and Awards Committee, while leading and hosting various networking and educational sessions.

2. Professional Work Experience in Park and Recreation Profession

For the past 26 years, I have worked for the City of Woodbury in a variety of capacities
1996-2012 Recreation Program Specialist
2012-2018 Public Information Officer/Support Services Manager-Public Safety
2018-Current Parks and Recreation Director
Before that, I worked in a part-time/seasonal capacity for the communities of Brooklyn Park and Fridley Parks and Recreation

3. Other Volunteer Professional Association/Community Involvement

Over the past several years, I have had the pleasure of serving my community through Bailey Elementary/Woodbury High School Site Council, many parent volunteer committees, various sports booster club fundraiser efforts, Union Gospel Mission, Open Cupboard Food Shelf, and Church ministry service

4. Education and Training

- Undergraduate degree from Concordia University, St. Paul-Organizational Management & Communications
- Master's degree from Hamline University-Public Administration
- Government Alliance for Racial Equity (GARE)
- Public Information Officer Executive Institute-Center for American and International Law
- Various local, state, and national training/conferences through Minnesota Recreation and Park Association, National Recreation and Parks Association, League of MN Cities
- FEMA Incident Command System Certificates 100-700 and PIO
- NRPA-Marketing and Revenue Management School
- National League of Cities-Leadership Institute

5. What do you believe are the strategic plan priorities, and how would you help to implement those priorities?

- Continued work to *advance racial equity* within our profession and the communities we serve
- Continued evaluation of membership needs to determine how the Association can best *support the needs of individual members/member agencies* now and into the future *and moving from evaluation into action*.
- *Financial stability and sustainability* of the Association
- *Legislation Advocacy*

Work cooperatively with the other board members, staff, and various member groups to continue the excellent work in progress related to evaluation, consultant selection, and process improvement. I would also work to increase member involvement in the areas of review and evaluation. The current board, staff, and member groups made strides to connect with members and seek feedback. We have an opportunity to continue building on that work progressively and without preconceived or prescribed outcomes, as well as, to ensure opportunity for involvement.

6. What are the opportunities and challenges to be addressed by the Board of Directors and the MRPA membership during your term of office, if elected, and in the long term? How do these areas relate to the Association's core values?

An opportunity I want the board and members to evaluate is a review of our partnerships and how we can leverage those in the members' best interest, maximizing the size and strength of the larger organization for the benefit of the individual members/member organizations.

Certainly, the growing pressure on our profession to do more with less is a challenge. We are all being asked to do more to serve our changing communities with far fewer resources. What are the areas members are desiring more support from the Association? How can the Association provide support in areas?

These opportunities and challenges, paired with the potential strategic priorities, align well with the longstanding core values of the Minnesota Recreation and Park Association.

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Nominee's Name: John W. Stutzman, CPRP

Current Employer/Organization: City of Golden Valley

Current Title/Position: Recreation Supervisor

Nominated For: President-Elect

1. MRPA Positions Held (Sections, Committees, Offices, etc.):

2021 Annual Conference Co-Chair
2020-22 Mentorship Program Co-Chair
2018-22 Editorial Board
2018 -19 Sections, Committees, and Networks Review Committee
2016-18 Recreational Sports Commission Representative At-Large
2016-17 Young Professional and Student Network Chair
2015-16 Young Professional and Student Network Development Committee Chair
2014-15 Board of Directors
2011 & 2013 Annual Conference Program Co-Chair
2013 Programming Section Chair
2012 Adventure Race Committee
2012 Summer Leadership Workshop Committee Chair

2. Professional Work Experience in Park and Recreation Profession

City of Golden Valley, Recreation Supervisor, May 2016 to Present
City of Bloomington, Recreation Supervisor, December 2011 to May 2016
City of Chanhassen, Recreation Supervisor, June 2007 to December 2011

2022 NRPA Conference Speaker—Must have Leadership Skills for Up and Coming Leaders

2021 NRPA Conference Speaker—We Need an Intern! Creating a Quality Internship Program, Part 2

2021 MRPA Conference Speaker—The Must Have Leadership Skills for Parks and Recreation Professionals

2020 NRPA Conference Speaker—We Need an Intern! Creating a Quality Internship Program

2019 NRPA Conference Speaker—Internships: Creating Triple Win for Students, Agencies, & Universities

2019 CPRA Conference Speaker—Out & About: Creating Fun Opportunities for Programs, Parks, & Trails

2019 MRPA Conference Speaker—Standing Out as a Department in your Community

2018 May *Parks & Recreation* magazine article—Mentoring: Invaluable to Success

2018 WPRPA Conference Speaker—Keys to Developing a Successful Internship

2013, 2015, & 2018 MRPA Conference Speaker—Having an Intern: The Professional's Angle

3. Other Volunteer Professional Association/Community Involvement

National Recreation and Park Association

- 2020 Awards & Scholarship Committee Chair
- 2018-19 Awards & Scholarship Committee
- 2017-18 Young Professional Network Representative
- 2016-17 Young Professional Network Student Outreach Co-Chair

Minnesota Recreation and Park Foundation

- 2018-20 President
- 2012-20 Board of Trustees
- 2015-19 National Professional Development Grant Committee
- 2014-17 Raffle & Silent Auction Events Chair
- 2012-18 Student Scholarship Committee

Tonka Babe Ruth Baseball

- 2011–12 Major League Chair on Board of Directors
- 2011–12 Board of Directors Nomination Committee
- 2005–09 Head Coach
- 2002–04, 2010–12, 2014–15 Assistant Coach
- 2002, 2005 & 2010 All-Star Team Assistant Coach

Eden Prairie High School Alpine Ski Team Assistant Varsity Coach: 2010–2018

United States Ski & Snowboard Association Midwest Masters Race/Maintenance Crew: 2007–2017

4. Education and Training

University of Wisconsin – La Crosse

Master of Science: Recreation Management–Professional Development

University of Minnesota-Duluth

Bachelor of Applied Science: Recreational Sports Programming

Certified Park and Recreation Professional: Coursework through National Recreation and Park Association

Certified Festival and Event Manager: Coursework through University of Minnesota

Emerging Recreation Leaders Institute: Coursework through Minnesota Recreation and Park Association

Concussion Management Training: Coursework through Minnesota State High School League

5. What do you believe are the strategic plan priorities and how would you help to implement those priorities?

Strategic Plan Action Item Optimize #3 – Embrace and actively seek diversification of the membership base across professions.

Prioritizing the diversification of the association's membership, both culturally and serving a wide range professionals, will help guide staff and board members to establish a more dedicated membership service strategy. As president, my goal would be to lead the implementation of a deliberate and personalized recruitment plan for new and existing members, sponsors, and partners. This action would provide a guide for membership service staff to diversity the association and recreation profession, increase professional involvement, and strive to exceed our membership's expectations.

Strategic Plan Action Item Educate #6 – Develop programs that address succession planning & Strategic Plan Action Item Innovate #2 – Explore existing, alternative and new models of recreation and parks governance.

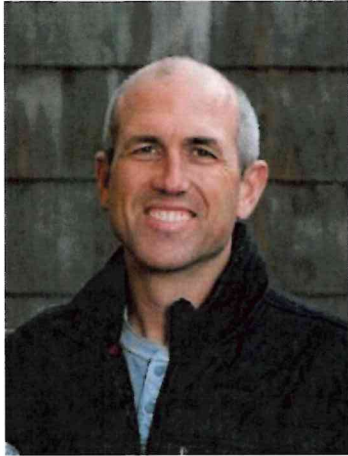
Change is inevitable, and as a result in order to succeed, growth must occur. The past few years have accelerated this thought and required changes to happen at a faster pace than ever before. With limited staff, resources, and financial considerations, forethought to work towards successful next practices instead of best practices will help the association prepare for what's next and avoid simply adapting to what's happening. As president, I would seek to utilize the association's diverse member volunteers to ensure MRPA can successfully provide membership programs that are relevant to current and future organizational needs. Thus, ensuring that Minnesota parks and recreation remain an effective and essential service in all communities throughout the state.

6. What are the opportunities and challenges to be addressed by the Board of Directors and the MRPA membership during your term of office, if elected, as well as in the long-term? How do these areas relate to the Association's core values?

Recent years have thrust Parks and Recreation into the spotlight once again as an essential service. Thousands of people have rediscovered our memberships' amenities and services throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. As professionals across the state seek to lead the implementation of next practices, not best practices. MPRA is being challenged to advocate, educate, and provide resources for membership which allow them to provide innovative recreation and leisure opportunities for their constituents, that not only meet their needs but exceed their expectations.

Through membership engagement, the board and staff have an opportunity to proactively create and provide resources to assist members as they advocate for the value of recreation and leisure services, while providing Minnesotans opportunities to lead healthy, active, and inclusive lifestyles. By building strong relationships and seeking new collaborative partnerships with community members and organizations, the association now has the opportunity, and challenge, of continuing to reestablish trust across the entire organization's membership. In doing so, it would reinforce the association's integrity and ensure MRPA remains a champion for the industry into the future.

Board of Directors
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Nominee Information Form



Nominee's Name: Ben Boldt

Current Employer/Organization: City of Rochester Parks & Recreation

Current Title/Position: Recreation Supervisor

Nominated For: Treasurer

1. MRPA Positions Held (Sections, Committees, Offices, etc.):

MRPA Board Treasurer – 2021-2022

MRPA Conference Committee (Logistics) - 2018

2. Professional Work Experience in Park and Recreation Profession

City of Rochester Parks & Recreation – Recreation Supervisor (2014 – Present). I coordinate adult sports leagues for the City of Rochester, manage the summer outdoor aquatics and work closely with community partner organizations that run events in city parks.

Rochester Amateur Sports Commission – Event Operations Manager (2003-2014)

3. Other Volunteer Professional Association/Community Involvement

Southern MN Recreation & Parks Association – Member (2014 – present); President 2017

Rochester Softball Association – Board of Directors (2006 – Present); Treasurer (2010 – present)

National Recreation & Parks Association – member (2014 – present)
Rochester Community & Technical College Sports Management Advisory Board – Chair (2017-Present)

4. Education and Training

Bachelor of Science in Physical Education with Coaching Minor – Pillsbury Baptist Bible College (2001)

CSEE (Certified Sports Event Executive) graduate through National Association of Sports Commission

Leadership Journey – City of Rochester Program (2018-2019)

5. What do you believe are the strategic plan priorities and how would you help to implement those priorities?

I believe advocacy and education are 2 key priorities for MRPA at this time. Our industry is changing and it's critical to be creating outreach and training opportunities for students and young professionals. I believe programs like ERLI and the MRPA conference are great programs to offer to try and meet this need. Continuing to evaluate programs and new opportunities will be important for MRPA and the Parks & Recreation industry sustainability.

6. What are the opportunities and challenges to be addressed by the Board of Directors and the MRPA membership during your term of office, if elected, as well as in the long-term? How do these areas relate to the Association's core values?

We have an opportunity to seek outside consulting services to evaluate the current MRPA operations for efficiency and effectiveness. We're attempting to answer the question, "Are we offering the most impactful services and opportunities for the membership and our industry in MN?" This is a great opportunity to invest in ourselves and position ourselves well for the future and our members. The members are at the core of the MRPA and the MRPA's ability to create the opportunities in the areas of advocacy, education, etc. This consultant review will be helpful to strengthen that core.

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Nominee Information Form



Nominee's Name: Sonya Rippe

Current Employer/Organization: Plymouth Parks & Recreation

Current Title/Position: Project Coordinator

Nominated For: Treasurer

1. MRPA Positions Held (Sections, Committees, Offices, etc.):

- Annual Conference Co-Chair: 2023
- MRPA Board West Metro Representative: Two terms – 2016-2019
- Recreational Sports Commission Secretary: Seven 1 year terms – 2002-2008
- Recreational Sports Commission At Large Member
 - 3rd Term: 2006 – 2008
 - 2nd Term: 2003 – 2005
 - 1st Term: 2000 – 2002
 - Appointed to Commission Vacancy: May – December 1999
- Awards Committee Co-Chair: 2005, 2011 & 2017
- Emerging Recreation Leaders Institute Planning Committee: 2010

2. Professional Work Experience in Park and Recreation Profession

- Project Coordinator, Plymouth Parks & Recreation, February 2015 – present
- Administrative Analyst, Eagan Parks & Recreation, November 2013 – February 2015
- Recreation Facility Manager, Eagan Parks & Recreation, June 2006 – November 2013
- Sports Program Supervisor, Eagan Parks & Recreation, July 1998 – June 2006

**3. Other Volunteer Professional Association/Community Involvement
MRPA**

- **Listening Sessions Subgroup 1 – Optimize, 2022**
 - Assisted on the Financial and Survey sub-groups to formulate historical data to present an analysis to the MRPA Board of Directors
 - Assisted with preparing an RFP to hire a consultant to do a needs assessment for MRPA
- **Park Maintenance Network, 2021-present**
- **Section, Committee & Network Review, 2018-2019** - Assisted in developing a new plan to redevelop the section/committee and new network structure to effectively meet the needs of the members and the profession
- **Softball Task Force, 2017-2019** - Work to formulate a new working model to deliver the softball program
- **MRPA Membership Dues Structure Committee, 2017** – On committee that evaluated and recommended changes to membership dues structure to be more relevant.
- **MRPA Finance Committee, 2017-19**
- **Annual Conference, Programming Committee, 2016**
- **Recreation Software Symposium, 2014** - Planning Symposium for MRPA members
- **President’s Task Force, 2012** - Chosen to be a select MRPA member to provide insight on where the association should move in regards to sports programming, recording Secretary
- **Professional Development Committee, 2012** - Participated in fulfilling the mission and vision of the MRPA strategic plan by redeveloping the section/committee structure to effectively meet, anticipate and exceed the needs of members and the profession
- **Emerging Recreation Leaders Institute Planning Committee, 2010** - Assisted in creating, developing and executing the institute for 22 young professionals
- **Awards Committee**
 - Co-Chair: 2005, 2011 & 2017
 - Awards Committee Member: 1999-present
 - MRPA Annual General Meeting Volunteer: January 2006-2007
 - Created program for MRPA Annual Awards Program: January 2006-2012, 2014, 2016
 - Assisted in development of Awards of Excellence and Professional Awards promotional pamphlets
- **Membership Committee**
 - Membership Committee Member: 2006-2008
 - 3, 2, 1...Network, MRPA Annual Conference, November 2008
 - What to Do/What not to Do: Tools for Getting the Job Done, MRPA Annual Conference, November 2007
 - Life After College presentation, MRPA Annual Conference, November 2006
 - Assisted with Membership Committee booth at Exhibit Hall at MRPA Annual Conference, November 2006 & 2007
 - MRPA Job Shadow Day Host: February 2004
- **Recreational Sports Commission**
 - MRPA Touch Football State Tournament Host: October 2008 & 2010
 - Simple Ways to Improve Your Leagues, MRPA Annual Conference, September 2008
 - MRPA Touch Football State Tournament Director & Host: October 2000-2006
 - MRPA/USSSA Women’s C & D Softball Tournament Worker & Host: August 2005, '07, '09, '11

- Minnesota USSSA Hall of Fame Benefit Golf Tournament Volunteer: June 2000-2008
- MRPA/USSSA Umpire Rules Clinic Host: April 1998-2010
- MRPA/USSSA Men's D Region IV Softball Tournament Host: August 2001-2004, '06 & '10
- MRPA/USSSA Women's Open Softball Tournament Host: August 2006
- USSSA Hall of Fame Induction Banquet Volunteer: January 2006, 2008, 2019 & 2022
- MRPA/USSSA Men's D Region IV Softball Tournament Director & Host: August 1998-2000 & 2005
- MRPA/USSSA Women's Open Softball Tournament Director & Host: August 2005
- Administered the Touch Football State Tournament from registration, bracketing, directing and hosting in the absence of Recreational Sports Manager: October 2003
- MRPA/USSSA Mixed D State Softball Tournament Director & Host: August 2000
- MRPA Men's Boot Hockey State Tournament Host: January 2000
- MRPA Office Move Volunteer: September 2004
- Served as the volunteer Recreational Sports Manager for the MRPA during September – December 1999
- **NRPA**
 - NRPA Local Host Committee, Logistics Committee, Communications Sub-Committee Co-Chair, 2010
 - NRPA Conference Volunteer, Room Host, October 2010

Community Involvement

- City of St. Louis Park, Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission Member, June 2022 – present
- NCAA Final Four Women's Basketball Championship Volunteer, April 2022
- NCAA Final Four Men's Basketball Championship Volunteer, April 2019
- Crew 52 Volunteer for Super Bowl LII, 2018
- Plymouth/Wayzata Meals on Wheels Volunteer – 2015-19
- Twin Cities Walk MS Committee, 2016-17 – Planning committee for the 2017 Twin Cities Walk MS at US Bank Stadium
- The Bridge an Evangelical Free Church, Treasurer – 2005-2010
- National Multiple Sclerosis Society Participant & Fundraiser, raised over \$47,000 since 2004
 - MS Twin Cities Ride, over 15 years
 - MS 150 Ride, over 15 years
 - MS Mud Run/MuckFest, 2010-2013
 - Walk MS, 2012 & 2017
 - Run to Stop MS, Twin Cities Marathon, October 2013
- Employee Giving Campaign Committee Member for United Way, City of Eagan, 2005 – 2014
- Jackrabbit Investment Partnership
 - Financial Partner, April 2002 – September 2005
 - Presiding Partner, April 1999 – April 2001
- Xi Theta Chapter of Chi Omega House Corporation Member, SDSU, April 2004 – 2006
- NBA Draft Volunteer, June 2000

4. Education and Training

- Bachelor of Science Degree in Public Recreation with Economics minor from South Dakota State University, 1996
- Enrolled in classes to obtain Project Management Certificate, University of Minnesota, July 2022 – May 2023
- FAA Part 107 Certified UAS Pilot
- Emergency Management Institute, FEMA
 - ICS-400 Advanced Command and General Staff – Complex Incidents, 2016
 - ICS-300 Intermediate for Expanding Incidents, 2016
 - IS-00800.b National Response Framework, 2015
 - IS-00700.a National Incident Management System (NIMS), 2015
 - ICS-200 Initial Action Incident, 2015
 - ICS-100 Introduction to Incident Command System, 2015
- Cartegraph National Conference, 2019, 2021
- Greater & Greener National Conference: Parks Connecting Cities, Cultures and Generations, 2017
- Leadership Exchange, 2009-2010
- MRPA Annual Conference, attended over 20 years
- Management Academy, Inver Hills Community College, 1999

5. What do you believe are the strategic plan priorities and how would you help to implement those priorities?

With the Strategic Vision divided into Lead, Innovate, Education and Optimize, the most important priority right now is to get a consultant on board to review the health of the association. The consultant would conduct a member survey, needs assessment, propose a staffing model to serve members' needs, establish a funding sustainability plan, create performance and success indicators and develop a model to know when to re-evaluate association needs.

As a Board member, we need to put the health of the association first both financially and meeting members' needs while supporting this initiative throughout the process.

6. What are the opportunities and challenges to be addressed by the Board of Directors and the MRPA membership during your term of office, if elected, as well as in the long-term? How do these areas relate to the Association's core values?

Hiring a consultant is an opportunity to take a fresh look at the association and how it serves the members while also reviewing challenges as the needs of members have changed over the last 10+ years. Not only have needs changed, so has the financial health of the association. Some challenges to address include the cash flow for the association to avoid the need to take out a line of credit, review low profit margin programs, is there capacity for growth and development in educational offerings and more. Addressing these areas will MRPA to continue to meet the mission of the association to improve the quality of life in Minnesota by enhancing the profession of parks, open space, recreation and leisure services.