



Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING MISERICORDIA, CLEARBROOK, AND THE FOREST PRESERVES OF COOK COUNTY FOR RECEIVING AWARDS FROM THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION OFFICIALS: THE REMOVING BARRIERS AWARD FOR ALL THREE ORGANIZATIONS AND THE SOCIAL JUSTICE AWARD FOR THE FOREST PRESERVES

WHEREAS, in May 2021 the Forest Preserves of Cook County (“Forest Preserves”) received two awards from the National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials’ annual awards program which recognizes and honors excellence in county, regional and special district level parks and recreation throughout the nation; and

WHEREAS, the Forest Preserves’ Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (“REDI”) Committee received the Social Justice Award, which honors a regional system that has served as a change agent and made a tangible impact by prioritizing a culture of equity and inclusion; and

WHEREAS, the work of the REDI Committee was recognized as a workplace initiative that has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to social justice through leadership and collaboration; and

WHEREAS, since its formation in 2018, the REDI Committee has been guided by Professor Kathleen Yang Clayton and Adam Slade at the University of Illinois at Chicago; and

WHEREAS, the REDI Committee focuses on analyzing and understanding internal agency challenges and barriers in order to implement solutions based on racial equity, and works to educate employees on how to practice racial equity in the workplace and restructure internal processes to reflect the Forest Preserves’ values of equity and inclusion; and

WHEREAS, the Forest Preserves’ Wildlife Connections Ambassadors program received the Removing Barriers Award which recognizes a unique program or facility that enables and encourages greater participation in parks and recreation by persons with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, launched in 2019, Wildlife Connections Ambassadors is a partner-based work experience program with Misericordia, Heart of Mercy, Clearbrook and the Forest Preserves’ River Trail Nature Center; and

WHEREAS, the program was created with help from the Chicago Zoological Society to develop opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities to deliver nature programming to school groups and visitors, bridging the gap between science and social-emotional learning standards, with participants taught how to engage with visitors and school groups; and

WHEREAS, the program has created an inclusive, supportive and nurturing community, placing persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities in positions of leadership; encourages independence and confidence for those participants; and allows for positive interactions with visitors.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Toni Preckwinkle, President, and the Forest Preserves of Cook County Board of Commissioners thank and congratulate the Forest Preserves’ staff and program partners for their work on both the REDI Committee and Wildlife Connections Ambassadors, and for being recognized by the National Association of

County Park and Recreation Officials.