



October 4, 2016 marked a significant milestone for Independence Township Parks, Recreation & Seniors (ITPRS) as they received CAPRA Accreditation at the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Congress in St. Louis, Missouri.

The Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) was created to recognize park and recreation agencies for excellence in operation and service. CAPRA acts as an independent auditor tasked with assessing how well an agency documents, follows, and continually improves their processes and procedures, and in doing so, also provides assurance to the public that the agency meets national standards of best practice.

There are 12,000+ publicly funded parks and recreation agencies in the United States. As of the October 2016 NRPA Congress, ITPRS became one of 4 parks and recreation agencies in the State of Michigan, and one of 155 parks and recreation agencies in the United States to be accredited by CAPRA. CAPRA accreditation is the only national accreditation for parks and recreation agencies.

Working towards this accreditation was a multi-year effort for the ITPRS team, who began meeting to review, document and improve their agency's practices in June 2013. The assessment documentation submitted to CAPRA had to provide details regarding how ITPRS meets certain quality standards and practices among ten major categories including Planning, Human Resources, Financial Management, Program and Services Management, Public Safety and Security, and Risk Management. And now that ITPRS has received the CAPRA accreditation, a renewal cycle has begun where reports must be submitted to CAPRA annually and a new assessment and on-site visit must be done every 5 years.

The accreditation process requires much time and effort from the ITPRS Staff, but it really helps to demonstrate to both our Township Board and the community that

we serve that ITPRS is committed to being a responsible manager of public resources and funds. It also shows that we work hard to provide programming that responds to the needs of the community, to maintain safe and clean facilities, and to employ competent, qualified staff.

"Agency Accreditation is our commitment to our citizens to strive for continuous improvement," said Derek Smith, Independence Township Parks, Recreation and Seniors Director. "The Agency Accreditation process and results will help to ensure a high level of accountability throughout the department and facilitate efficient and effective delivery of parks and recreation services to our citizens."

