

# Forum Update

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## Legislation Supports The Partnership for Play Every Day



In a voluntary and collaborative initiative of unprecedented scope, the YMCA of the USA, the National Recreation and Park Association and the National Association for Sport and Physical Education are working together as conveners of **The Partnership for Play Every Day** to increase the spaces and quality of play for our country's children and youth.

The Partnership's focus is to bring together the public, private and nonprofit sectors to advance policies, programs and practices that ensure all children and youth engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day.

Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), has joined forces with the Partnership and is sponsoring the Promoting Lifelong Active Communities Every Day or "PLAY Every Day" bill that would require federal agencies to support the development of a measurement tool to assist communities in identifying strengths and gaps in policies and programs for physical activity for children and youth. The bill would also authorize federal agencies to fund model communities of play to develop action plans that promote increased opportunities for quality play, spaces for play and voices for play.

## Foundation Addresses Childhood Obesity

Since the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's inception 35 years ago, our founding charge remains our mission today: to improve the health and health care of everyone in America, especially the most vulnerable. Our successes have inspired us, and our disappointments have instructed us. We've learned how to question assumptions, take risks, make decisions, act on evidence, measure progress and deliver on that mission.

Working with many partners, we also have learned the difference between simply doing good for its own sake and delivering value to society far beyond the sum total of the dollars we invest. Most important, we realized the transforming power and passion of the people, organizations and institutions that have committed their own energy and talent to help us trigger and sustain needed and lasting change.

It is from this platform of experience, partnership and confidence that we announce that the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation will commit at least \$500 million over the next five years to reverse the epidemic of childhood obesity in America by 2015. This is the largest commitment we're aware of to address childhood obesity—a significant investment that is urgently needed to catalyze efforts throughout the nation to create healthier environments for children and families.

To learn more about the factors that contribute to childhood obesity, its potential cost to society and the Foundation's approach to reversing the epidemic, I encourage you to read their annual report by visiting [rwjf.org](http://rwjf.org).

We are acting now because the evidence of need is irrefutable. In barely half a lifetime, childhood obesity has erupted into a full-scale epidemic that's threatening the lives and futures of our children in ways we've never seen before. This is an all-American crisis. It affects all Americans, and it will require all of America working together to turn it around.

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That means families, schools, government, industry, health care and philanthropy. RWJF will educate, motivate, mobilize and lead that response.

In many respects, we've been here before. There are many striking similarities to the early days of the stop-smoking movement. Behavior is driven by individual choices made in an economic and cultural environment that strongly influences those choices. We cannot separate one from the other. While the danger to the health of the public is well established, a meaningful public response is missing. To change behavior, we have to change society itself.

Current efforts to fight childhood obesity, while showing promise, are uncoordinated, under-funded and fragmented. We intend to change that. We will place special emphasis on reaching children at greatest risk, and focus primarily on improving access to affordable healthy foods and physical activity in schools and communities.

Our priorities will be to:

- Drive a coherent, concerted effort.
- Bring to bear resources on a scale substantial enough to meet the problem head on.
- Make the case for change with solid research and objective evidence.
- Test, measure, improve and replicate the most promising models.
- Attract substantial public and private resources.
- Promote grassroots advocacy and leadership for change.

In the coming months, we'll be inviting proposals for our expanded efforts in childhood obesity.

I recently discovered a thousand-year-old proverb from the Swahili peoples of eastern Africa. It says: ***"Those who walk together strengthen each other."***

For this philanthropy and for all who contribute to our mutual successes, this wisdom has never meant more than it does right now. We are grateful for all those who, like you, walk with us and strengthen us.

*Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, M.D., M.B.A.  
President and CEO*

## Grant Opportunity

The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation's priority is to provide the means to educate the public about the needs of children across the nation. The two funding objectives are: to contribute to the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual welfare of children through the dissemination of knowledge of new and innovative programs for youth and to disseminate knowledge already possessed so that the information can be better utilized. Grants must have the potential of helping American children in a large geographic area. Additional information is available on the website. Grants range from \$1,500 to \$70,000. This grant cycle ends in July. Contact AMERICAN LEGION CHILD WELFARE FOUNDATION, Executive Secretary, PO Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN,

46206, Ph: 317-630-1202, Fax: 317-630-1369 or visit their website at [www.cwf-inc.org](http://www.cwf-inc.org).

## Football Inventory Survey

GreenPlay, LLC and ETC Institute/Leisure Vision is conducting a national inventory survey on behalf of the National Recreation and Park Association and the USA Football. Park and recreation agencies are being asked to complete an online inventory survey of all youth football facilities and programs available to the public in their community. This is part of an effort in response to a grant awarded to NRPA by the National Football League Youth Football Fund.

The national inventory survey will help identify how parks and recreation agencies provide critical support for both in-house and independent youth football programs at the community level. This information will provide valuable information to the NFL Youth Football Fund as they determine how to allocate over \$100 million in funding over the next few years to improve the access and opportunity for youth to benefit from the sport of football.

NRPA will utilize the survey information as a prototype for future research that can advance strategic partnerships that provide program and/or facility grants.

To participate, visit [www.nrpafootballsurvey.com](http://www.nrpafootballsurvey.com) and complete the survey as soon as possible.

## Lightening Safety

Each year approximately 70 people are killed by lightening and another 400 are injured. Since ball fields and open areas are the second most likely places for a person to be struck by lightning (golf courses pose the most risk) coaches and league administrators must keep an eye on changing weather conditions to protect the youngsters on the field, as well as the spectators in the stands.

Most experts recommend that outdoor athletic events should be postponed when thunderstorms are less than six miles away. When you can hear thunder you usually are no longer safe and should take cover.

The best way to determine the distance of a thunderstorm is to measure the elapsed time from the flash to the bang. Every five-second count equals a distance of a mile. So, for example, a count to 15 seconds equals a distance of three miles.

The following are some important facts to keep in mind regarding lightning:

- Lightning can strike from as far away as 10 miles.
- The average thunderstorm is six to 10 miles wide.
- The average rate of travel of a thunderstorm is 25 mph.
- Bolts of lightning reach temperatures as high as 50,000 degrees.
- Heat lightning is not harmless.
- A person who has been struck by lightning does not carry an electrical charge and must receive immediate first aid.

Outdoor athletic activities can resume once 30 minutes has elapsed since the last flash or thunder. Waiting at least 30 minutes is recommended since lightning bolts can strike out of the back side of a thunderstorm.

The best source of protection from lightning is a sturdy building, staying away from open doors, windows, electrical appliances, plumbing fixtures and landline phones. The next safest option is a vehicle, though occupants are still at risk of being injured if lightning strikes the vehicle.

Refuge should never be taken under or near trees, tall objects, bleachers or fences.

This information was provided by John Sadler. For more details, or to check out additional risk management reports, visit <http://www.sadlersports.com/nysca>

## NPS Centennial Initiative

The Department of the Interior has launched a ten-year initiative to plan for the 100th Anniversary of the National Park Service in 2016. Kicking off the "Centennial Challenge," or as it is formally called, the "Centennial Initiative" is a series of listening sessions conducted by senior Department of Interior and National Park Service leaders. The Centennial Initiative is a far-reaching effort to not only plan for the 100th birthday, but also to look comprehensively at the needs of the National Park System for the next century and plan for the future needs and challenges that face the National Park Service. The Centennial Initiative has many components including the initial budget proposal for fiscal 2008, planned legislation to allow raising of up to \$1 billion in private donations to be matched by federal funds, and other operational, philanthropic, and planning elements.

NRPA encourages all members and advocates for parks and recreation to learn about the Centennial Initiative. NRPA has been a strong advocate for the National Park System.

Visit the NRPA website to learn more about the Centennial Initiative on the NPS website at [www.nps.gov/](http://www.nps.gov/) 2016 Try to attend one of the Listening Sessions of the Department of the Interior during the next two weeks (see <http://www.nps.gov/2016/> for locations and dates), or make comments online at this webpage.

## Conference on Recreation Inclusion: June 21-22

The Fifth Annual Tri-State Conference on Recreation Inclusion is scheduled for Hattiesburg, Mississippi on June 21 and 22, 2007. Professional registration is \$75 and students can register for \$35. Parents and family members may also register for \$35. To receive a registration form contact the University of Southern Mississippi by calling (601) 266-5576 or by mail contact Dr. Rick Green, The University of Southern Mississippi, School of Human Performance and Recreation, 118 College Drive #5142, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001. You need to be registered before June 15.

This year's conference theme is "The Games People Play." In addition to an excellent offering of educational sessions, conference participants will have an opportunity to join in the fun as games and activities will be offered, and techniques for modifying the games in order to facilitate inclusion will be demonstrated.

This conference is a continuing attempt to coordinate the theories, practices, and outcomes related to the inclusion of people with disabilities into community recreation programs. If you are involved in community recreation, therapeutic recreation, special education or if you are a coach of a community sport, you should consider attending. The conference is supported by the Alabama Recreation and Park Association, the Louisiana Recreation and Park Association and the Mississippi Recreation and Park Association.

## Climate Change & Your Budget

Those polluting engine-powered mowers that are a staple of suburban lawn care and park and recreation maintenance programs would have to become much cleaner under emission limits proposed in late April by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Walk-behind and riding mowers and other garden equipment account for up to 10% of summertime smog-forming emissions from mobile sources in some parts of the country.

The EPA's proposal applies to engines under 25 horsepower, which run nearly all walk-behind and riding lawnmowers as well as small generators and other devices. The rule would cut smog-forming emissions from the engines by 35%. The reductions would probably be accomplished by adding catalytic converters that reduce pollution from exhaust. The rule would take effect in 2011 for riding mowers and 2012 for push mowers and would apply only to new engines.

Of course adding catalytic converters will make mowers more expensive. Some from the manufacturing industry have estimated that walk-behind mowers will cost 18% more under the new regulation, while the price of commercial turf care mowers will go up about 3 percent.

## Condolences Offered

The MRPA family was saddened to learn of the death of longtime MRPA supporter, **Howard Sommer**, owner of Howard Sommer Company. Howard, 85, resident of the Collierville, TN, community, died January 6, 2007. Howard missed the 2006 MRPA conference, the first that anyone could remember him missing, due to poor health. Many thanks to Howard's family for sharing him with us for so many years. Also, many thanks to the MRPA members who continue to support the Howard Sommer/C.W. Kirkland Professional Development Scholarship. Howard leaves his wife, Janie Sommer and a host of nieces and nephews.