



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Media Contact:

Cheryl Buhmann, Marketing & Communications Manager, Vernon Hills Park District  
(847) 996-6933  
cherylb@vhparkdistrict.org

### **Vernon Hills Park District Announced as Grand Plaque Recipient in the 2021 National Gold Medal Awards in Parks and Recreation**

*Vernon Hills Park District receives prestigious honor in the park and recreation industry*

Vernon Hills, IL September 27, 2021 – The [American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration](#) (AAPRA), in partnership with the [National Recreation and Park Association](#) (NRPA), is pleased to announce Vernon Hills Park District received the prestigious Grand Plaque in the National Gold Medal Awards for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management. [Musco Lighting, LLC](#) continues their 20+ years of sponsoring the National Gold Medal Awards program.

Founded in 1965, the Gold Medal Awards program honors local park and recreation agencies, military recreation programs, and state park systems in the United States who demonstrate excellence in parks and recreation through long-range planning, resource management, volunteerism, environmental stewardship, program development, professional development and agency recognition. Applications are separated into six classes, with five classes based on population, one class for armed forces, and one for state park systems. To receive the Grand Plaque, the agency first had to be designated as a Finalist in their class. There are four (4) Finalists in each class.

Vernon Hills Park District received the Grand Plaque in the Class V category, Park and Recreation Agency with a population of 30,000 or less. For nearly 50 years, the Vernon Hills Park District continues to bring memorable experiences and enjoyment to all ages through diverse programming promoting healthy lifestyles. Today the District encompasses five facilities, ten miles of recreational paths, and twenty-five parks situated on 460 acres of land. Through the collaborative efforts of the Park Board, professional staff, generous sponsors and dedicated volunteers, the District is also an award recipient of the 2019-2024 Illinois Distinguished Accredited Agency Award.

“We are so happy to win this award for the Vernon Hills’ community, Park Board, and staff” stated Jeff Fougrousse, Executive Director, Vernon Hills Park District.

Jane H. Adams, Executive Director and Gold Medal Program Administrator for the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, shared “Each of our 2021 Grand Plaque recipients show a remarkable resilience as well concern for their constituents and staff in continuing to provide critical

services during this COVID pandemic. The pandemic has shed light on the essential services be provided by park and recreation agencies, military installations, and state park systems.”

A panel of five park and recreation professionals judged all applications to select the Finalists who then submitted a 5-minute video and their current strategic plan. Judges are chosen for their considerable experience and knowledge in parks and recreation on both the local and national levels.

This year’s Grand Plaque recipients were announced at the 2021 National Recreation and Park Association Conference, held in person and virtually in Nashville, Tennessee, September 21st.

###

**Vernon Hills Park District’s mission is to address the lifelong leisure needs of all Vernon Hills residents.**

**The American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration** is a nonprofit organization founded to advance knowledge related to the administration of recreation and parks; to encourage scholarly efforts by both practitioners and educators that would enhance the practice of park and recreation administration; to promote broader public understanding of the importance of parks and recreation to the public good; and, to conduct research, publish scholarly papers and sponsor seminars related to the advancement of park and recreation administration. For more information, visit [www.aapra.org](http://www.aapra.org).

**The National Recreation and Park Association**

The National Recreation and Park Association is a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to ensuring that all people have access to parks and recreation for health, conservation and social equity. Through its network of 60,000 recreation and park professionals and advocates, NRPA encourages the promotion of healthy and active lifestyles, conservation initiatives and equitable access to parks and public space. For more information, visit [www.nrpa.org](http://www.nrpa.org). For digital access to NRPA’s flagship publication, *Parks & Recreation*, visit [www.parksandrecreation.org](http://www.parksandrecreation.org).

**Musco Lighting, LLC** is a company that has specialized in lighting systems for sports and large areas for more than 30 years. Musco has pioneered dramatic improvements in energy efficiency and affordable ways to control wasted spill light and glare. Permanent and temporary lighting services range from neighborhood fields to NASCAR super speedways. For more information, visit [www.musco.com](http://www.musco.com).