# 2012 Annual Awards Program

## Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form

## Deadline for Nominations: March 16, 2012

Complete this form (sections 1 and 2) and submit with your descriptive narrative.

### SECTION 1: Information About the Nominated Program

Program Excellence Award Category *(select only one)*:

Community Health and Safety

Community Partnership

Community Sustainability

Strategic Leadership and Governance

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name of program being nominated: | Parkland Buddy Sports | | |
| Jurisdiction(s) where program originated: | City of Parkland | | |
| Jurisdiction population(s): | 23,962 | | |
| Please indicate the month and year in which the program you are nominating was fully implemented. (Note: All Program Excellence Award nominations must have been fully implemented by or before January 31, 2011, to be eligible. The start date should not include the initial planning phase.) | | | |
| Month: | November | Year: | 2002 |
| Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in Phoenix, Arizona, October 2012. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.): | | | |
| Name: | Caryn Gardner-Young | | |
| Title: | City Manager | Jurisdiction: | City of Parkland |
| Name: |  | | |
| Title: |  | Jurisdiction: |  |
| Name: |  | | |
| Title: |  | Jurisdiction: |  |

### SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name of contact: | Scott Davidoff | | |
| Title: | Community Services Director | Jurisdiction: | City of Parkland |
| Street address: | 6600 University Dr. | | |
| City: | Parkland | State/Province: | FL |
| Zip/Postal Code: | 33067 | Country: | USA |
| Telephone: | 954-757-4126 | Fax: | 954-345-1534 |
| E-mail: | sdavidoff@cityofparkland.org | | |

In 2002 the Soccer Buddies program was created with four goals in mind: First, to provide inclusive opportunities for children with special needs to play the game of soccer. Second, to educate student volunteers so that ignorance and stereotypes are overcome; provide student volunteers with the opportunity to serve their community; and to create an environment where student volunteers learn patience, understanding, tolerance and that they have the power to make a difference in the lives of those living with challenges that they are not faced with. Third, to give the parents of children with special needs the respite and emotional support that they need and the opportunity to cheer for their children just like any parent of a typical child. Fourth, to create friendships between children with special needs and typical students as well as creating friendships between the parents of children with special needs and the parents of typical children. The program pairs children with special needs with their own “Buddy” who is a student volunteer, for an entire season. The program started with twenty players and thirty student volunteers and ten years later the success of that program has resulted in the enrollment of hundreds of children with special needs from all over South Florida and the enrollment of hundreds of elementary, middle, high school and college students and adult volunteers. The overwhelming success of the Soccer Buddies program has also resulted in the creation of Parkland Buddy Sports, Inc. a not for profit organization run by a volunteer board that has added year round Buddy programs which in addition to Soccer now includes Flag Football, Basketball, Tennis, Running and Kickball. In addition, these programs have been the subject of local, regional and national media stories, including being named the 2010 Sports Illustrated For Kids Team Of The Year and being placed on the cover.

The programs service all children with special needs regardless of their diagnosis. Through the shared encouragement of all student Buddies, the players, who range in age from three to young adult, and their families are able to experience the joys of their athletic endeavors. Through positive reinforcement and a message of never quitting, always trying your best and always having fun doing so, the players achieve new levels of success each time they come out for game days. The number of players that the program is able to enroll is dependent on the number of volunteers who sign up for the program. As a result, this is not a casual commitment by our student volunteers who are required to attend a minimum of 80% of the game days. This is critical because it is important to the player that his or her Buddy will be there for them. To date, student volunteers participating in Parkland Buddy Sports programs have earned in excess of twenty thousand community service hours. In the Parkland Buddy Sports programs, winning occurs when a player steps on the field or court, overcomes his or her own perceived limitations through their hard work and efforts and does so with smiles, laughter and friendship. The motto of Parkland Buddy Sports is “No Limits”.

The City of Parkland has been proud to partner with Parkland Buddy Sports, Inc., offering its facilities in bringing children with special needs from all over South Florida to the City to participate in these extraordinary programs. Without the City of Parkland’s facilities, guidance and partnership the Parkland Buddy program would not be able to occur. In furthering its partnership with Parkland Buddy Sports, the City of Parkland built a playground facility to accommodate children with special needs and typical children and adopted the motto of Parkland Buddy Sports in naming the facility the “No Limits Playground”.