

# **MEDIA RELEASE**



## **AWARDS GIVEN TO BC'S TOP FITNESS PROFESSIONALS** *Fitness professionals from Delta & North Vancouver win BCRPA awards.*

**Vancouver, BC (Saturday September 15, 2018)** – Two of BC's top fitness professionals (Fitness Leaders) have been honoured for their outstanding efforts to motivate and inspire British Columbians to create and maintain a physically active and healthy lifestyle. This year, BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) presents its Fitness Leadership Awards in the following categories: Fitness Leader of the Year, Manager/Director of the Year.

The 2018 award recipients are:

### **Fitness Leader of the Year – Karen Harmon of North Vancouver**

*Karen Harmon is being honoured with this award for her transformative work with marginalized, homeless and hard-to-reach populations as a special needs training assistant in her community of North Vancouver. In addition to teaching a wide variety of group fitness classes, Karen is the creator and instructor of North Vancouver's Inclusion Works and Active Living programs. Over her 20 year career, her commitment to the health and wellness of vulnerable populations, and her unique ability to teach a wide variety of skills and abilities through support, encouragement and enthusiasm has caused her classes to be in great demand. In 2012, Karen was honoured with the "Healthy Community Hero" award from the City of North Vancouver and the North Shore Keep Well Society. From 2015-2017, Karen travelled annually as a volunteer to Indonesia and Singapore as a guest speaker focused on youth health. Karen has presented at the BCFit 2017 Fitness Conference on the Inclusion Works program and is a published author in FitLife BC Magazine on the Active Living Program.*

### **Program Manager/Director of the Year – Rhonda Jackson of Delta**

*Rhonda Jackson is being honoured with this award for her ability to empower others, create innovative programming and promote fitness and health within her community. For over 25 years, Rhonda has been an integral member of the City of Burnaby's Fitness Specialty Services team. She has brought these skills to two of the busiest facilities in Burnaby: Bonsor Recreation Centre and Edmonds Community Centre, each welcoming over one million visitors per year, many of whom come specifically for services in Rhonda's operational area. Rhonda is known to be a deeply engaged and respected supervisor, supporting her employees to create new and cutting-edge programs, exciting community events and training opportunities for Fitness Leaders that regularly sell-out. She has developed and taught classes at City Hall in Burnaby, and gives regular talks regarding physical activity to Mom's and Babies groups and at Sun Run clinics. Rhonda has served on the City of Burnaby's Health and Wellness Committee, Healthy City Committee, and multiple panels and committees with BCRPA, helping to bring positive change to current programs.*

The BCRPA Fitness Awards recognize professional commitment through community and industry involvement. BCRPA Chief Executive Officer Rebecca Tunnacliffe says the work of these professionals is inspiring. "Leadership within the fitness and recreation sector provides so much value to BC's communities. Such leaders not only exude excellence through the quality of their program, training and class instruction, but also as trailblazers, mentors, and inspirational human beings in their communities.

BCRPA's Fitness Leadership Awards are just one way we can show our gratitude to those who have gone the extra mile."

The awards were presented during the BCRPA's annual fitness conference, BCFit®, on Saturday, Sept. 15, 2018 at the Delbrook Community Recreation Centre in North Vancouver. The conference brings together hundreds of Fitness Leaders from across BC to provide them with valuable professional development, training, and the opportunity to learn and discuss fitness and health-related issues and trends.

There are currently over 4,000 BCRPA registered Fitness Leaders throughout BC. BCRPA registered leaders have met the highest fitness training standards in BC and Canada. They work in public and private fitness settings, including community recreation centres, gyms, pools, health clubs and spas, and outdoor settings. They assist individuals and groups in reaching their health and fitness goals, promote active healthy living and act as mentors within their community.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

The British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA), a not for profit organization, plays a central role in leading the enrichment and improvement of the quality of life of British Columbians and their communities. We do this by championing the power of recreation and parks. Ours is a story of creating community connectedness and individual well-being based on the knowledge and recognition that recreation and active living, as well as access to parks and the natural environment, have significant impacts on our physical and mental health.

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Images available.

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