



RECREATION YOUR WAY

A RESOURCE GUIDE DESIGNED TO HELP FACILITATE
INCLUSIVE RECREATION IN YOUR COMMUNITY

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INTRODUCTION

What is *Recreation Your Way*?

Recreation Your Way is a program that has been designed and delivered by the Inclusive Recreation Committee of Recreation New Brunswick/Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability NB. It is a one-day event for people with disabilities, their friends and families, to participate in various recreation, sports and leisure activities. During the event, activities on various inclusive recreation activities, some with specialized equipment, are offered. These sessions allow registrants with disabilities, and their friends and family, to try new activities and/or find new ways to participate in favourite activities from the past.

The purpose of the event is to display the many recreation opportunities available to people with disabilities in their own communities. It's also a way to show how adaptive equipment can allow people to continue to keep active with friends and family. From a community development perspective, it is a chance to create a learning opportunity for municipalities and community service providers, build leadership and enhance their recreation and leisure offerings in order to make them more accessible, inclusive, and available to the general population.

After successfully piloting this event in three different regions of New Brunswick, it was the desire of the Inclusive Recreation Committee of Recreation New Brunswick to develop an event resource guide, which would assist other communities to plan and host their very own *Recreation Your Way* event.

How to Use this Resource Guide

This resource guide is meant as an educational tool to help you successfully plan, promote and deliver a *Recreation Your Way* event in your community. The guide is broken down in to sections, from which you will learn:

- How to plan and promote the event
- How to locate resources to make your event a success
- How to manage on the day of the event, and
- How to evaluate the event

Using this guide as a handbook, your committee should be able to create a general outline of the work needed to host a successful *Recreation Your Way* event in your region or community. Keep in mind that no two events are exactly the same. Past *Recreation Your Way* events in New Brunswick have been held in the winter and summer and have featured a wider range of activities.

Your event should reflect resources available in your community, showcasing existing recreation, sport and leisure activities available to participants in your neighbourhood. Each event is unique and likely has its own keys to success. This resource is meant as a guide only and a way to begin planning for your event.

Inclusive Recreation

So what is inclusive recreation? Inclusive recreation is as simple as being able to participate in activities you love without being limited by illness, disability or age. It's finding new ways to participate in activities currently enjoyed in your community. It's participating as a member of your community - whether you choose to be involved in the activity or be a dedicated fan. It's about helping individuals with a disability be healthy, active members of the community as well as helping to build confidence in our youth with disabilities. In essence, inclusion is meaningful participation while learning new skills, with every participant accepted and supported by peers.



For a person with a disability, inclusion might mean:

- Bowling with friends on Friday night bowling night
- Taking in family swim with family/friends and using an adapted life jacket or being able to enter the pool by an accessible lift
- Golfing with lifelong friends during men's/ladies' night by using the onsite adapted golf cart
- Being able to join a new club because they are interested and because it is held in an accessible location

- Joining their classmates during the school skate hour at the local arena using a sledge that is available at the rink
- Playing cards with friends using a simple card holder and shuffling device
- Joining a local gym with adapted equipment or a certified trainer available onsite to assist
- Being able to attend a local sporting event or concert with friends and family

For more in-depth information regarding inclusive recreation, the Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability (ALACD) produces a tremendous resource entitled the All Abilities Welcome Tool Kit. This resource is very much a companion document to this resource and should be used in conjunction with this guide to help your team plan for your *Recreation Your Way* event. Among other useful information, the All Abilities Welcome Tool Kit contains tips to make your program more welcome, easy equipment modification ideas, and useful information about a broad range of abilities.

See the Resources/Links section on page 26 for ALACD contact information.



PLANNING YOUR EVENT

Your Volunteer Planning Committee

As with most things, the secret to having a successful event always begins in the planning phase. If you want your event to be truly special, organization and planning are an absolute must. Unfortunately, missteps during the planning stage from either not allocating enough resources, being disorganized, or not spending enough time on planning can have a disastrous effect on any event. Planning your event successfully from the start means gathering a great team together, deciding who should take the lead, assigning tasks, and checking-in frequently.

Perhaps the most important part of special event planning is the volunteer committee entrusted with planning, delivering, and evaluating the event. Behind every well run volunteer event is a volunteer committee who have worked hard for weeks and months before-hand planning every last detail of an event so that it runs as smoothly as possible. The event planning team that you put together will have a direct impact on the ultimate success of your event. It takes a lot of time and energy to plan a successful event. Make sure to recruit enthusiastic, dedicated volunteers with a variety of skills to share the tasks and help you organize your event. So, who should be on the committee?

Your committee should include people with some of these important skills and attributes:

- A background in sports, recreation, active living, and/or leisure services
- Experience with people with disabilities or individuals who work for agencies and businesses with an older adult or disability focus
- Individuals with disabilities who lead active lives
- Active volunteers who will help get things done - "Go-Getters"
- Can work as a team well and pull the event together
- Love to get out there and promote your event with enthusiasm
- Experience in event planning
- Volunteer management experience

As well, if you are working with a specific municipality, you should have one or two staff members who work for the municipality, as they will be key to helping scout locations, identify available community services, and ultimately create community engagement and ongoing sustainability for the event. Also, if your event is being sponsored or run by a specific organization or service group then they should naturally take the lead and have several staff or volunteers assigned to the planning committee.

Be sure to select a committee lead who has the time to commit to the effort, has the people skills to motivate others, and who is able to clearly understand and articulate the vision and objectives of the event. The committee leader should be comfortable assigning out work



and keeping the rest of the committee on track. Given enough volunteers and resources, and depending on the size of your event, subcommittees can be created from the main planning committee. These subcommittees can be rounded out with extra volunteers who can shoulder a lot of work in specific areas, such as volunteer management, services, registration, etc. Subcommittees, if they are well organized, can be a very effective way of running an efficient and well planned event.

The planning committee will need to meet regularly, with a structured meeting format to ensure that productive outcomes are achieved. Provided with enough lead-time before the event, the committee should plan to meet monthly to agree on the plan and keep it in motion. As the event draws nearer, bi-weekly and weekly meetings will become necessary to keep on track.

Using Your Community Resources

The purpose of the *Recreation Your Way* event is to display various recreation, leisure, active living and sport opportunities in a local community. It is a way of creating awareness about these activities for the community and specifically people with disabilities, who may require extra consideration or accommodation. The intention of the event should be to allow people to sample activities they may not have had the opportunity to try before and hopefully interest people enough that they may want to continue participating. For this reason, it is important to showcase as many unique opportunities as possible that will be interesting for participants. Some sample activities for your event, depending on your community, could be:

- Tennis
- Golf
- Track & Field
- Yoga
- Archery
- Softball
- Quilting
- Down hill skiing
- Biking
- Photography
- Sailing
- Basketball (wheelchair)
- Swimming
- Bowling
- Ringuette
- Bocce
- Sledge Hockey
- Curling
- Scrapbooking
- Horseback riding
- Rowing

Ideas for possible activities are virtually limitless and depend greatly on local community resources and the time of year. As the purpose of the event is to interest citizens in local existing activities, it may be best not to bring in one-time, unique opportunities that will not be available in the community after the event. For the most part, the event should be full of sessions for activities that can be sustained in your community on an ongoing basis and continued to be enjoyed.

Another way to add value to the event and create community engagement is to add an exposition or tradeshow component to the day. A tradeshow situated in a central location provides an opportunity for businesses, sport groups, recreation-based companies, and leisure / active living services to display their programs and services to participants; adding education and outreach. Trade show booths can be



set up to meet with participants and make them aware of other, inclusive opportunities in their neighbourhood such as local museums, sports leagues, clubs, recreation facilities, or golf courses. As well, manufacturers of specialized equipment can be invited to demonstrate how their adapted equipment works and how this equipment can be purchased or accessed in the local community. This is a great opportunity to display unique equipment, such as hockey sledges, hand cycles, and sport wheelchairs.

Choosing Your Activities

The main focus of the *Recreation Your Way* event, and the element that will inspire participants to register, are the activities chosen for sessions throughout the day. The activities chosen should be fun, engaging, and represent the community that is ultimately hosting the event. Here are some considerations you should make in choosing the activities:

- Is the activity truly inclusive? While it often takes little or no adaptation to make an activity inclusive, every activity needs to be carefully analyzed to be sure that the activity is accessible and that all people who would like to come will be able to participate in some way. The All Abilities Welcome Tool Kit, produced by the Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability, is a great resource for making inclusive decisions.
- Do you have a subject expert? Make sure that you have the right person(s) who will be able to lead a group through an activity. They should be someone who has experience as a coach, athlete, or instructor in their field and can easily lead a small group through an activity. They must understand the principles of inclusive recreation, or be trained prior so that they know how to make the activity engaging for people of all ability levels. Many communities boast great athletes who have competed provincially, nationally and internationally who might appreciate the chance to help get others involved in their sport.
- Is the activity sustainable in the community? After offering this activity the hope is that people with disabilities and their network of friends and family may become interested enough to partake in these activities on their own after the event. Don't be afraid to bring in an event however, that hasn't previously existed in the community but people might like to start-up. After all, community capacity building is one of the objectives of the event.
- Are the activities challenging and fun? Don't forget that in order to be engaging, activities need to fun to participate in. Not every participant will want to become a professional athlete; most will want to pursue recreational activities to enjoy the company of others while living a healthy, active lifestyle. The activities need to be social, interesting, and above all – FUN!

Choosing Your Location(s)

Something that will influence your choice of activities, and will ultimately shape your agenda for the day, is where you choose to host your event. Every community boasts its own facilities and services that need to be carefully considered in constructing what the event will look like. Here are some things to keep in mind when choosing locations:

- Consider trying to keep the activities as self-contained and in one general area as much as possible. This will allow for participants to move from activity to activity as easily as possible. If activities need to be held at several locations you will need to take into account time between sessions for travel and how people will get there (see Other Considerations, page 17). For this same purpose, try to find multi-purpose facilities that can handle several different kinds of activities, like a community school, field house, university or college recreation facilities, or local YMCA.
- Locate facilities that can host both indoor and outdoor activities. Depending on the time of year, the weather, and the type of activities chosen, you will want to keep a good mix of sport and recreation activities. Look for indoor gymnasiums, large meeting rooms / classrooms, swimming pools, rinks and bowling alleys near tennis courts, tracks, trails, and soccer / football fields. In most communities you will find that “one great place” that can be the location for the event.
- Consider where people go for their recreation and leisure time in your community now. If the point of the event is to demonstrate opportunities for people of all abilities levels in the hopes they will continue to participate, you will want to bring people together to where it all takes place now in your community.
- A primary consideration should always be your budget for the event (see Funding Your Event, page 11). Many municipal and city run buildings, as well as some community schools and private facilities, will be excited to collaborate and allow free access (under certain conditions) to their facilities. Look for partnerships at the same time as scouting for locations.

In the end, the location(s) you choose for your activities will go a long way toward creating a successful event and needs to be well thought-out and planned.



Promoting Your Event

While every community is different, the “build it and they will come” approach to event planning rarely works. You will need to create vital buzz about your event to ensure enough people will come out and enjoy the *Recreation Your Way* experience. Make sure your committee dedicates valuable time in the planning stages to not only putting on the event, but also promoting the event. Many seasoned event planners have experienced low turn-out by failing to adequately promote their event at one time or another. Avoid this common mistake by allowing sufficient time

to advertise and promote your event. Consider some of these options:

- Get the local paper to do an article about the event
- Produce low-cost flyers and posters, give them out to all of your partners and volunteers to distribute and be sure to display them in high-traffic areas in your community. Local stores, libraries, older adult centres, pharmacies, arenas etc.
- Create an e-mail to circulate. Create a list and divide it up among committee members to distribute as well as to their network of contacts.
- Make a dedicated event webpage, or consider creating an event on Facebook or another popular social networking site. This is another great way to recognize sponsors.
- Try to get an interview with a local radio station, or create a public service announcement they can air for free leading up to the event.
- Post information about the event on community website bulletin boards such as Kijiji, Rogers local cable station, etc.

This event is inclusive, therefore anyone should be able to come with any ability level, but it is specifically targeted at people with disabilities who may not yet have had the chance to try some of these activities. Keeping this in mind, you may want to refine some of your promotions to make sure you are reaching the right market. Don’t forget to get the word out via disability organizations, nursing homes, older adult clubs, hospital organizations, as well as social clubs and recreation groups that already exist in your community.

Given enough time, the best option is always to prepare early, notifying people about your event as soon as you have some of the major details sorted out (place, time, cost, draft agenda), and ramp up your promotions significantly 4-6 weeks before the event. Major advertisers spend millions of dollars to make these very same decisions and even they don't always get it right. Just be sure to allocate enough lead time for promotions and make sure you can reach the proposed audience with all of your efforts.

Funding Your Event

Don't forget the budget. Even though the main objective is to create community engagement and generate awareness, be sure not to break the bank. As a not-for-profit event you must make use of every available volunteer and community resource, as well as potential sponsorships and grants to help keep the event affordable for both the organizers and participants.



Unless you are using an existing special event budget, you should prepare for some expenses associated with hosting a *Recreation Your Way* event. As your planning committee works up an event budget, be sure to consider possible expenses in some of the following areas:

- Facilities (rental fees, insurance if necessary)
- Equipment (tables, chairs, tents, picnic tables, sporting or other equipment)
- Promotional materials (invitations, flyers, posters, signs, thank-you cards)
- Services (catering, transportation, portable toilets)
- Decorations (balloons, signs, banners, displays)
- Recognition (thank-you gifts, participation certificates, cards, plaques, pins)
- Volunteer badges, t-shirts
- Meetings (travel reimbursement, food, room rental, flip-charts)

Even if you already have a healthy budget for special events, you don't have to use it all. Try to get donations for as many components of the event as possible. You may even be able to attract corporate sponsorship from several local companies, or a single event "title" sponsor. Be sure to reward support and participation in the event with acknowledgments in your promotions of the event (flyers, posters, radio ads) and publicly at the event. You can also have a local service club/company buy a piece of equipment you will showcase during the event (golf cart, bowling ball ramps or pushers, etc). The equipment can remain in your community and proudly display the donors name for years to come.

Remember, keeping the event with low or no registration fees is another way to keep it accessible for everyone and keep interest high for the event.

Registration

While it's nice to allow people to join on the day of the event (and some room should be made for them) it is important to conduct a pre-registration for a number of reasons. The first is to confirm numbers with facilities or caterers ahead of the event. As well, each of the activity leaders will want to know how many people are coming to their activity so they can prepare with adequate room and equipment. You may be running simultaneous activities, in which case participants need to be able to register for each activity separately. In this case you may need to cap the number of participants for any given activity, such as swimming where you can only accommodate so many registrants.

Finally, because you are inviting people of varying abilities and ages you will need to know if there are special accommodations necessary before participants arrive. You will need to know, for instance, if they require accessible transportation to a remote site, if they have special dietary restrictions, or even if they need to bring an attendant / caregiver to assist them - which can also affect your numbers and needs to be accounted for.

HOSTING YOUR EVENT

Pulling It All Together

Now that the *Recreation Your Way* event has been planned, the day's schedule completed, the locations secured and the participants registered, the next step is to host a successful event in your community. With many activities going on simultaneously, there are many details to be checked and jobs to be assigned.



Remember, something usually does pop up and probably will not go entirely according to plan. Events do not always perfectly follow the plan and there is often something that you may have forgotten or not anticipated. However, also remember it is usually only the event organizers who notice these details. If you have done your work in the planning stage, you have the right volunteers and activity leaders in place who know their roles and assignments, and you have the right contingency plans in place, you will make this an enjoyable event for everyone.

Every event is different, therefore every event will be run differently, however this next section will give you an outline of things you may want to consider for your day.

Your Event Day Volunteers

Just as the planning stage begins with the group of volunteers who form the planning committee, the hosting stage is focused on getting the right group of volunteers to assist during the day of the event. Depending on your event size and scope, you will likely require dozens of volunteers each assigned to a specific role. It is important that most, if not all of the planning committee, are also involved in major areas of responsibility for the day of the event as well, because they are the experts on what needs to happen throughout the day.

Volunteers can sometimes fill multiple roles, or move from one role to another through the day; however they need to know their role before the day begins. For this reason, you should keep two different schedules and agenda's for the day. The "external" agenda will be the timelines for the day, including times for registration, activities, and meals and tradeshow if any. This document is given to participants when they register and helps them to recognize when events are happening and where. The second agenda is an "internal" schedule for event volunteers and activity leaders. This agenda will have more detailed information that shows each of the volunteers with their assigned responsibilities and more information concerning the flow and movement of participants and volunteers throughout the event.

Finally, it is strongly recommended that you meet with all event day volunteers before the event commences, whether it is a convenient time and location the week before the event, or some time before registration on the day of the event. At this meeting, you will introduce the various members of your team (especially the volunteer coordinator), make sure everyone understands their assigned roles, generate enthusiasm and go over the logistics of the event. This is also an opportunity to make volunteers aware of the principles of inclusive recreation and how to assist participants with varying ability levels.

While not an exhaustive list, here are some volunteer roles you may want to consider for your event:

Event Coordinator – While this role is sometimes combined with other roles (see volunteer coordinator or trouble-shooter/floater), this role should be separate. The Event Coordinator is clearly the person in charge of the overall event, its schedule, and to make sure the entire event runs smoothly. This person must have an in-depth knowledge of the whole day, who all the stakeholders are, and where everything is happening. They are the "go-to" person for the event who helps relay information and make instant decisions in consultation with the organizing group.

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Volunteer Coordinator – This is perhaps the most important role and is normally filled by a member of the planning committee. It is also someone who has been intimately involved in scheduling the volunteers and is ideally someone who knows most of the volunteers. Volunteers should be aware of whom this person is, and they are normally greeted at registration by this person. They ensure volunteers are all in their places at the right times, but are also responsible to make sure the volunteers understand the purpose of the day and how to respond to participant demands and questions throughout the event. As well, the Volunteer Coordinator should be the person ensuring that the volunteers are having a great time and that they are getting the services they need (meals, water, name tags etc.)

Registration – Registration should occur at a central location and several volunteers will be required depending on the anticipated number of participants. Some of the responsibilities

will include; greeting the participants, checking their names, passing out the registration packages, answering any questions and directing the participants to where they need to be.



Activity Leaders and Assistants – Activity leaders are the instructors for each session and they should come prepared to lead a session on their particular activity, including bringing the right equipment necessary. Each leader may require one or several volunteers who can help participants through the activity with whatever assistance they may require. The number of assistants necessary will vary greatly, depending on the activity, where it is being held, and the number of registrants. Some

activity leaders will want to provide their own volunteers. This should be confirmed prior to the day of the event.

Media Liaison – It is a good idea to invite media to your event for promotion in your community, give mention to key sponsors and volunteers, and create interest in future events. In the case where you have media coming to the event, you need to have someone with excellent communication skills and an in-depth knowledge of the event to meet the media and provide background information. This person can do interviews themselves and may setup interviews at the event for the media with participants, volunteers, activity leaders and/or other stakeholders depending on the angle of the story.

Emergency/First Aid – As you are hosting an event for the public, you need to be sure you can appropriately manage any medical needs that may emerge. Depending on the size of the event, you may have a central location for these volunteers, such as a first-aid tent, or you may need several volunteers present to be at each location. In any case, these can be people with medical or nursing backgrounds or trained first aiders who will act not only as the first responders, but also will be charged with assessing the situation and calling 911 and ambulance services if warranted.

Trouble-shooter/Floater – Another role you may find helpful, that should be assigned, is one for someone to help fill-in where needed and help make decisions if something arises. This role is best suited to someone who has been part of the organizing committee and can be responsible for making some decisions or tracking down the right person to help make a decision. This person(s) can also be tasked with checking-in with various stakeholders to see that things are running smoothly in their area, by touring the various activities as they are being conducted.

Personal Assistants – While some participants will come with their own assistants/attendants, you may need to have people available who can personally assist participants who have less physical ability and may need help with lifting, getting to the washroom, using an elevator, getting food, or simply opening a door or two.

Services Liaison - If you have special services associated with the event (see Other Considerations, page 17) you will likely want someone who can be responsible for overseeing these services, such as working with the people preparing food or responsible for transportation to and from events.



Tradeshow Liaison - Once again, depending on the size of your event and if you have a tradeshow component, this is a role you may want to specifically fill. This person would make sure to meet with all the tradeshow presenters, show them where to set-up and handle all their requests and needs.

Additional roles – Depending on the size of your event, you may also require additional volunteers such as food cooks, servers, runners, tradeshow set-up, drivers etc.

Preparing for the Weather

An often overlooked part of planning and hosting an event is having a solid plan that accounts for weather. Your event plan should have options for changing venues, or holding different activities, should poor weather not allow for outdoor activities. Here are some questions to ask the planning team in order to ready your event plan in case of poor weather:

- Can your activities be moved easily? For instance, if you are planning to hold a tennis clinic, you can use an area school or field house that has both an outdoor tennis court and indoor gym so the activity can easily be relocated in case of poor outdoor conditions.
- Do you have adequate shelter? Some activities can actually still be performed in poor weather, depending on the activity, size of the group, and availability of shelter. For instance, archery could still go ahead if the group can shoot from under a large gazebo or tent toward the targets.
- Do you have the right equipment? If rain is expected, and you plan to go ahead with an activity, make sure the leaders and participants know to bring appropriate wet weather apparel. As well, some sports equipment will hold up better when wet than others.
- Can you create an alternative schedule? If an activity cannot be moved indoors, such as swimming in an outdoor pool, make sure you have an alternate agenda that includes indoor activities that can be conducted as replacements.
- Is there a rain date? If your facilities and activities don't allow for easy relocation or alternative schedules, see if you can arrange a rain date the following week that activity leaders, volunteers, and participants agree to ahead of time so you can still hold your event.

As well as poor weather, you also need to prepare for wonderful, sunny weather. While this may seem uncomplicated and straightforward, you do need to plan for outdoor activities conducted in very hot and sunny conditions. Make sure activities aren't too long out in the heat of the sun, make participants and volunteers aware of how and where to get liquids, and make sure leaders have adequate rest out of the sun between activities.



Safety/Risk Management

As part of a team planning an event for the public, you need to make safety of all volunteers and participants your number one concern. Time at your committee level needs to be spent on creating and implementing a risk management plan that helps identify, assess, and manage all conceivable risks associated with holding your event. While every event is different, the risks associated will change from one event to another, here are some tips and strategies to consider when planning a *Recreation Your Way* event:

- Have a clearly designated emergency medical volunteer or first-aider who can respond to emergencies
- Have a first aid kit, either at each activity, or centrally located
- Make sure key volunteers are recognizable (team hats, or t-shirts) and have a means of communicating with one another if working over large distances or opposite ends of a large facility.
- Use participant waivers if deemed appropriate.
- Have a photo release form for participants to complete if taking photos of the event to relieve privacy concerns.
- Have a secure cash box for volunteers at the registration table if a fee is being charged and money or cheques transacted
- Investigate the need for and secure personal liability protection for leaders and insurance coverage for participants. When structured programming is offered to participants consider whether you require a) a request for relevant medical information, b) permission to participate from anyone under the age of consent, c) notification of any inherent risk to the participant.

Other Considerations

When you are planning an event like *Recreation Your Way* there are some additional services you may require. This will be contingent on where you hold your event and how long the event is in duration. In any case you will want to put some thought in to how to provide for some or all of the following:

Food - Any time that you are holding an event of significant duration (3 hours +), you are going to have to consider feeding your participants. Whether or not this involves a fee recovery and charging for the meal, the fact remains that you will need to research how to provide adequate meals and/or snacks. Seasoned event planners will tell you that this can be one of the most challenging parts of any event, as there are many details to cover.

Firstly, you will need to find an appropriate location near the event that can house and feed all of the people associated with the event. If you are renting space from a location that has catering, you are not normally allowed to bring in your own food; a detail you need to confirm. While putting on a BBQ or making sandwiches, using volunteers is a completely appropriate way to have a meal. You will want to investigate if any food service licences are necessary and examine the issue of insurance/liability and safe food handling in terms of feeding the public. Even if you involve volunteers or a volunteer group, you will want to ensure who is responsible for any licensing, if necessary, and who is ultimately responsible for the safe handling and preparing of the food.

If you are using a catering company, you will likely need to report the number of expected meals necessary at a specific point before the event. If you have a contract (and you should if you are paying, regardless of the amount), the terms of this notification will be spelled out in the contract. Don't forget to include in your numbers ALL the people you need to feed, which could include volunteers, activity leaders, tradeshow representatives, the media, potential day-of registrants etc.

Finally, if cost is an issue, you should consider trying to get donations for some of the food. You could even invite a local grocery store and/or a registered dietician to operate a healthy snack booth. A service club or local restaurant may even want to assist.

Washrooms – As you will have people with varying ability levels at your event, you must expect that some participants with mobility impairments will require the use of fully accessible washrooms. In addition, you will need to ensure that this access is handy to any activities that are being conducted, based on the number of participants expected. A great idea is to include available washroom information in the registration package to all participants and to make sure that all volunteers are also aware of this information.

Transportation – The planning committee will need to contemplate the issue of participant transportation on the day of the event from two angles: ensuring participants are able to get to and from the main event, and how they can move between activities throughout the event if they are conducted in different locations. To the first issue, the location of registration and the main event should be near public transportation stops if at all possible and available in your community. While participants are ultimately responsible for their own means of attending the event, making it as easy as possible for all potential attendees is important to make the event as successful as possible. This may include looking at the local bus schedule, if appropriate, to see if the start and ending times for the event will be convenient for public transportation riders. Organizers should also see if accessible transportation is available and can be used for the event. Municipalities sometimes have their own accessible buses, as do most school districts, and in some cases private businesses.

If activities are happening at several locations away from the main registration and event, such as at a local swimming pool or golf course, you should also consider the need for transportation to and from activities throughout the event. Several factors will need to be considered such as the event budget, timing of activities, and the availability of appropriate and accessible transportation.

An Event Day Checklist

While your event may not include all the elements suggested in this resource guide, here is a sample check-list that can be useful for your team on event day:

- ☐ Signage for event posted
- ☐ Centrally located registration table
- ☐ Have list of preregistered participants at registration table
- ☐ Name tags for activity leaders, volunteers, and participants
- ☐ Packages for participants (daily agenda, promotional items etc.)
- ☐ Have registration forms for “walk-in” participants
- ☐ Have all volunteers and participants sign photo release form or other required forms
- ☐ Packages for volunteers and leaders (volunteer schedule, emergency numbers, t-shirts, hats, nametags etc.)
- ☐ Greeters/liaisons in place for media, photographer, tradeshow representatives, special speakers.
- ☐ Numbers and timing of lunch/snacks confirmed
- ☐ All volunteers and leaders checked-in and accounted for
- ☐ Equipment for all activities gathered and distributed to each activity location
- ☐ Have fun!!

MEASURING YOUR SUCCESS

How To Evaluate Your Event

Before Your Event: Taking the time at the beginning to plan out your ideas, identify your goals and decide how you are going to evaluate is an essential part of any event when your focus is making a difference in your community.

How you are going to evaluate your event should drive your activities throughout your planning process so you can determine if you've achieved what you wanted to achieve and /or if you need to make adjustments to ensure better success with future events.

What is important about clearly defining your goals is that you identify the key changes that you expect to make with your event. Goals need to be SMART - *Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and realistic, Trackable*, and need to consider the budget and time frame of your event.

an example ... enhance recreation and leisure offerings in our community to make them more accessible, inclusive, and available to the general population.

That goal is specific in that it identifies exactly what we are going to try to do, it can be measured with evaluation forms and/or follow up calls), it is achievable depending on the partnerships we develop and how well we promote our event, it is very relevant as it will help overcome barriers for participation in recreation and leisure activities in our community and it is trackable with our event registration.

Keeping your SMART goals in mind, the simplest and most effective way to ensure good feedback from your event is to have a questionnaire available for all participants' right at your event. Forms can be made available after each activity, or at the end of the day as an evaluation. It's always best to get people to complete them right at the event rather than expecting them to be returned after the event. Evaluation forms can be structured in many different ways and a previously used sample can be found on the resource disk accompanying this manual. You may want to consider evaluation forms for volunteers as well, to see what they thought of the event.

After Your Event: Once your event is complete, you will want to make sure to do some follow-up. Here are some things you will want to consider after your event is complete:

- Post-event promotion – If you invited the media to your day, you will want to follow up with them to see if they require any more information. Even if the media did not attend, sending some pictures of the event to your local paper to honour your success is a great way to celebrate your community event. Ideally you should attach a short story to go along with the photo that the paper could print if they choose. It should outline the success of the day, attendance, outline the events etc.
- Thank-you's – You will want to be sure to get thank-you's out to all the appropriate people, to recognize them for their assistance as well as to make sure to create goodwill in case you need their assistance for future events. This includes all volunteers (and don't forget your committee!), activity leaders, facility providers, tradeshow participants, service providers, and all partners.
- If you have any sponsors or partner organizations it is important to recognize their support, even after the event. Make sure to send these people special thanks. A local business may want a framed thank-you or photo from the event to put on an office wall. Make sure to create special recognition for sponsors, as you may need them again!
- Final Meeting – Take time to evaluate right after the event while the details are fresh. Bring together your committee for one last meeting to perform an event review, as soon as possible after the event so that the occasion is still fresh in everyone's minds. Make sure to completely review what went well, what were the challenges, and what you would do differently to make things better another time. Be sure to type up the minutes with all ideas which can then be reviewed by future committees.

At your committee's final meeting, you will want to review the entire event as well as looking at the responses from the participant evaluations. A thorough review should go over some of the following:

- Did the event fulfill its goals and objectives? Why or why not?
- Identify what worked and what needs fine-tuning. Which activities should be used again?
- What items were missing on the checklist?
- Was the event well attended?
- Was informal and formal feedback about the event positive?
- Given all that went into planning, was it worth doing?
- Were all stakeholders happy with the event: participants, volunteers, activity leaders, sponsors etc.

Next Steps

Perhaps more important than the day itself, the question is how this event will influence future recreation programs in your community. If there was a hit event that community members were keen on, you should make sure it can continue through the year. You may want to follow up with your partners and volunteers and track the uptake in your community of activities that were offered to see if active participation has improved. If there are key pieces of equipment that would make a huge difference in participation at your community facilities (pool lift, an accessible washroom, a sledge, transportation to key venues, etc), see if you can begin fundraisers or get community grants to help purchase some of the equipment highlighted during your event. Remember, the ultimate measure of success for a *Recreation Your Way* event is seeing people more active and engaged in community recreation and sport activities.



RESOURCES/LINKS

This list of useful resources has been developed to help you find further information about issues discussed in this resource guide. Please note that this list is not exhaustive and you may be able to find more information!

Links and other Potential Resources:

Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability

720 Belfast Road, Suite 104
Ottawa, ON K1G 0Z5
Phone: 1-800-771-0663
or (613) 244-0052
TTY: 1-888-771-0663
or (613) 244-0008
Fax: (613) 244-4857
E-mail: info@ala.ca
Website: www.ala.ca

Canadian Paraplegic Association

Suite 102, 440 Wilsey Rd.,
Fredericton, N.B. E3B 7G5
Telephone: (506) 462-9555
Fax: (506) 458-9134
E-mail: cpanb@cpanb.ca
Website: www.cpanb.ca

Easter Seals New Brunswick

65 Brunswick Street
Fredericton, N.B. E3B 1G5
Phone: (506) 458-8739 (voice/TTY)
Fax: (506) 457-2863
E-mail: info@easterseals.nb.ca
Website: www.easterseals.nb.ca

The Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport

P.O. Box 6000
Fredericton, NB
E3B 5H1
Website: www.gnb.ca/0131/index-e.asp

New Brunswick Association for Community Living

420 Wilsey Road, suite 201
Fredericton, N.B. E3B 6E9
Phone: (506) 453-4400
Toll Free: 1-866-NBACL-4U
(1-866-622-2548)
Fax: (506) 453-4422
E-mail: nbacl@nbnet.nb.ca
Website: www.nbacl.nb.ca

Premiers Council on the Status of Disabled Persons

440 King Street, Suite 648
Fredericton, N.B. E3B 5H8
Phone: (506) 444-3000
Toll-free in NB: 1-800-442-4412
Fax: (506) 444-3001
E-mail: pcsd@gnb.ca
Website: <http://www.gnb.ca/0048/>

Recreation New Brunswick

55 Whiting Road, Unit 34
Fredericton, N.B. E3B 5Y5
Phone: (506) 459-1929
Fax: (506) 450-6066
Email: info@recreationnb.ca
Website: www.recreationnb.ca

SHARING PREVIOUS SUCCESS

A Great Day Had By All!!

By Justine Jarvis, NB Canada Games Girls Softball & Recreation Your Way Participant

The New Brunswick Canada Games Girls Softball Team had one mindset as they travelled to Truro, Nova Scotia for two exhibition games, play strong and put up a good fight. They did just so, splitting the games with one win and one loss.

Our focus changed to a different kind of performance for the following Saturday. Members of the team headed to Fredericton to take part in "Recreation Your Way" and assist in teaching a group of persons with a disability something about the game of softball. The girls put on their jerseys and tied their cleats like any other day but it was much more than any other day. Members of the team proceeded to have a catch and field balls hit off of the tee, introducing the basics of the sport.

It was not only softball skills that were learned that day, the girls learned the satisfaction of putting smiles on someone else's face and giving someone a reason to be excited about the game. It was an eye opening experience, one that only expanded the girls' appreciation for the sport. There were many smiles and laughs as the NB softball players encouraged and congratulated the participants after every solid hit.

Team NB greatly appreciates the opportunity to participate in such an event. Every player on the team is able to do something they love when they hit the field because of the time parents and coaches have put in over the years and the girls feel that it's only appropriate for them to provide the same opportunity to others.



RECREATION YOUR WAY

A RESOURCE GUIDE DESIGNED TO HELP FACILITATE
INCLUSIVE RECREATION IN YOUR COMMUNITY



www.recreationnb.ca

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