



# EXCEL

Experiential Community Education and Leisure

Science • Fine Arts • Mathematics  
Social Science • Foreign Language  
English Language Arts  
Physical Development & Health

2011-2012

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# What Is NEDSRA?

Northeast DuPage Special Recreation Association (NEDSRA) has been serving people with disabilities since 1977. NEDSRA is an extension of 11 park districts and villages including Addison, Bensenville, Butterfield, Glendale Heights, Itasca, Lombard, Medinah, Oakbrook Terrace, Schiller Park, Villa Park and Wood Dale. Individuals of all ages and abilities are included in NEDSRA's programs as well as special events. Each year over 700 activities are offered for individuals with disabilities. The agency is staffed with committed and dedicated Therapeutic Recreation professionals. We provide a variety of services including Special Olympics, inclusions, social clubs, wheelchair athletics, preschool programs and many more. We are also involved in the school setting and hope to expand the cooperative efforts between NEDSRA services and the formal education system. Together, we can make a difference!

As Therapeutic Recreation professionals, we place great emphasis on the benefits of recreation and leisure and view these components as vital in the healthy development of a child. This process is not accomplished by one person, one agency or one program. This has led to outreach efforts to work cooperatively with teachers and families, to achieve all of the goals that will enhance the quality of life for today's youths. Individuals with special needs have the right to EXCEL, just as anyone. Our objective is to provide opportunities to assist in the physical, intellectual, emotional and social development of children with special needs, which will in turn build a brighter future for today's children.



## **Our Mission:**

To serve as an integral partner with our member park districts and villages to positively impact individuals with disabilities through diverse recreation opportunities and community services.

## **Our Vision:**

An agency of excellence, demonstrated by member partners working cooperatively with Board, staff and the community to enhance the quality of life for each individual.

# Goals of the EXCEL Program

The overall goal of the EXCEL program is to assist in the development of your students by providing programs that reinforce concepts being taught in the classroom. The four areas of development outlined below are all connected to the “Applications of Learning” outlined by Illinois Learning Standards.

## 1. Intellectual Development

- a. To experience spontaneous and meaningful verbal and nonverbal ways of self-expression.
- b. To improve communication skills and language development.
- c. To improve attention span and concentration.
- d. To develop a sense of curiosity and exploration.
- e. To become more observant and aware of individual and community surroundings.
- f. To develop and improve auditory and visual discrimination.
- g. To reinforce concepts learned in the classroom through a fun and educational activity.

## 2. Social Development

- a. To develop socially appropriate behavior while interacting in the community.
- b. To offer social experiences that will promote social independence.
- c. To introduce activities that may lead to participation with family members.
- d. To be a contributing member of a team and work together as a group.
- e. To respect the rights and feelings of others.
- f. To become more cooperative; to accept and share responsibility; to learn to take turns and share.
- g. To develop new friendships and relationships with classmates and community members.

## 3. Emotional Development

- a. To improve self-image, self-respect and self-esteem.
- b. To develop greater self-discipline.
- c. To increase personal initiative and resourcefulness.
- d. To develop self-control and emotional stability.
- e. To release aggressions in a socially acceptable way.

## 4. Physical Development

- a. To improve general health and appearance.
- b. To develop and improve the basic motor skills and fundamental body movements.
- c. To increase physical stamina, motor ability and fitness.
- d. To improve posture, body mechanics, rhythm and control of movement.

# General Information and Guidelines

## Eligibility

Any classroom with more than 50% residency is eligible to take advantage of the EXCEL program. NEDSRA's residency policy includes anyone who resides in the following communities: **Addison • Bensenville • Butterfield • Glendale Heights • Itasca Lombard • Medinah • Oakbrook Terrace • Schiller Park • Villa Park • Wood Dale**

Classrooms including the following disabilities will receive a maximum of two programs per year: **Youth at Risk, Learning Disability, Behavior Disorder, Emotional Disturbance, Visual Impairment and Deaf/Hard of Hearing classrooms.**

Classrooms including the following disabilities will receive a maximum of three programs per year: **Youth with a Mental Disability, Autism, Early Childhood and Multi-needs.**

## Registration

Registration forms outlining the details of the program will be issued to each student. Teachers must distribute and collect the individual registration forms and program fees to be submitted to the NEDSRA Coordinator on the day of the program. The program cannot begin until the signed registration forms are completed in full and signed by the parent or guardian.

## Transportation

Schools are encouraged to arrange their own transportation to and from programs. NEDSRA may be able to arrange transportation for a minimal fee based upon van availability and schedules. NEDSRA will provide every child under the age of 8 or weighing 80 lbs. and under with a car seat or booster. If specific children need a safety harness, please discuss with your NEDSRA liaison.

## Financial Assistance

Limited scholarships are available to those residents in NEDSRA's 11 member districts/villages who would otherwise be excluded from participation due to financial limitations. Partial scholarships may be awarded and granted in "good faith," based upon expressed need from the classroom teacher. If a student needs financial assistance, please make sure your NEDSRA liaison is aware of the situation.

## Insurance

In the event of an accident, the school district's insurance policy is primary; however, NEDSRA also carries liability coverage. A Certificate of Insurance will be provided by NEDSRA upon request to any and all school districts participating in an EXCEL program.

## Payment/Refund Procedures

Payment may be made the day of the program or NEDSRA can invoice the school district. If a program must cancel, a full or prorated credit or refund will be granted accordingly.

# Meet the EXCEL Staff



**Ann Roytek-Rylko**  
Manager of Inclusion  
and Support Services  
630-576-4033  
aroytek@nedsra.org



**Paul Fasano**  
Recreation Specialist  
Social Clubs,  
Special Olympics  
630-576-4032  
pfasano@nedsra.org



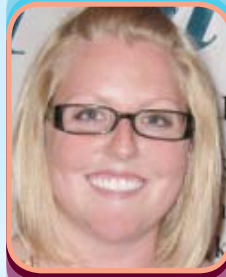
**Annie Machynia**  
Recreation Coordinator  
School Services, Aquatics,  
Early Childhood  
630-576-4038  
amachynia@nedsra.org



**Adam Kramer**  
Recreation Coordinator  
Adaptive Sports, General  
Programming for Youth  
with Visual Impairments/  
Physical Disabilities  
630-576-4037  
akramer@nedsra.org



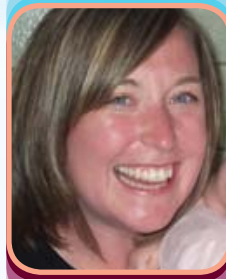
**Beth Corso**  
Senior Recreation Coordinator  
Special Olympics  
630-576-4030  
bcorso@nedsra.org



**Maggie Goode**  
Recreation Coordinator  
Adult Programming,  
Art Therapist,  
Transition Programming  
630-576-4036  
mgoode@nedsra.org



**Carrie Henry**  
Recreation Coordinator  
Adults with Physical Disabilities and  
Visual Impairments, Youth-at-Risk,  
Senior Programming  
630-576-4031  
chenry@nedsra.org



**Lisa Gates**  
Recreation Coordinator  
Youth Programming,  
Day Camps,  
Intern Supervisor  
630-576-4039  
lgates@nedsra.org

# English Language Arts

## Pen Pals

Give your students the opportunity to use their creative writing skills as they correspond with residents of a local nursing home or students of the same age and ability from another school district. After a series of letters are sent between the generations or classes, we'll plan a social gathering so the students can meet their Pen Pals.

## R.E.A.D. to Succeed

Reading is the basis for learning and school success. While reading is learned primarily in the classroom, many students need extra time and help. Let NEDSRA and trained Reading Education Assistance Dogs (R.E.A.D) relax your students and make reading fun!

## Story Time

NEDSRA staff visit your class in full costume and bring a story to life. This program also incorporates music, dance and crafts that all relate to a specific theme. You give us a topic and we'll give you an animated production! Popular themes are: Flower Power, A Bug's Life and Under the Sea.

# Mathematics

## Maps & Metra

Students learn how to read the Metra train schedule, map out a destination and jump on "Metra — The way to really fly." Your class will explore various destinations and local attractions before returning to school.

## Check Please

We will wet our appetites at some of the coolest restaurants in the surrounding communities. Students learn the fine art of dining out, from menu selection to paying for the meal within a predetermined budget. Time management skills are also reinforced during this fun learning opportunity.

## Show Me The Money

This community outing consists of a tour of a local bank and includes lessons about money management, how banks work, savings and interest and how to live off of a budget. Don't miss this great "green" adventure!

**Other Ideas:** Book Store Scavenger Hunt, Library Tour, Newspaper Facility Tour, Metra Station Tour

# Science

## Friends of the Forest

The wonders of nature are all around us! Join us on a fun and educational journey to local Forest Preserves and Nature Centers to learn about native flora and fauna. Professional Naturalists will be our tour guide as we use all of our senses to experience the world around us. Don't forget a picnic lunch!

## Weird Science

The world is full of things we don't understand. Take advantage of the learning opportunities at one of the local Chicagoland museums of your choice: Museum of Science and Industry, DuPage Children's Museum, Fermi Lab, SciTech Museum, Shedd Aquarium, Adler Planetarium, Waubonsie Valley Planetarium or Cernan Space Center.

## Pet Therapy

NEDSRA staff and an animal specialist come right to your classroom with exotic and domestic animals. This hands-on and interactive program is great for younger audiences and multi-needs classrooms and focuses on pet therapy and animal care.

## Zoo Troop

Take your students on a safari with awesome encounters with exotic and domestic wildlife from all over the world! Students will be amazed, entertained and educated by the sights, sounds and sensations of different ecosystems. The Zoo Troop visits Brookfield Zoo, Lincoln Park Zoo, Cosley Zoo or Willowbrook Wildlife Haven for their animal adventure.

## How Does Your Garden Grow?

As we grow, so does the world around us. The Children's Garden at Morton Arboretum is a hands-on, sensory experience like no other. Students interact with nature and learn in a beautiful outdoor playground, surrounded by the tallest of trees and the prettiest of flowers!

## Bird Is The Word

Soar with us as we explore facts and features of native and exotic birds. Students learn about eating habits, migration and various bird calls. The raptor collection at Spring Brook Nature Center in Itasca will be visually and intellectually stimulating to you and your students.

## Go Green!

Let NEDSRA teach your students the importance of recycling and how to do it. Students learn what items can and cannot be recycled and what they can do to help the earth and preserve energy at home. Afterwards, students will utilize their knowledge and create their own recycled craft.

**Other Ideas:** Water Treatment Plant, Stars/Solar System, Fire Station Tour, Heritage Arts, Science Experiments, Horseback Riding, Animal Shelter Tour

# Social Science

## Green Acres

Load up the wagon; we're going down to the farm! Local historical farms feature exciting displays and demonstrations of early farm life. This is a history and social lesson recognizing the early United States agricultural economy. Choices include: Fischer Farm, Kline Creek Farm, Blackberry Farm, Naper Settlement, Graue Mill and Wood Dale Historical Society.

## Shopping 101

Students develop an awareness of local retail, grocery and variety stores and gain a better understanding of how shopping affects our economic system. Tours and scavenger hunts help reinforce the importance of consumers, money management and the exchange of goods and services. This learning opportunity may take place at Jewel, Whole Foods, Meijer, Borders, PETCO or a local shopping mall.

## Law and Order

Do your students need a better understanding of the structure and function of political systems and the different levels of government? Let NEDSRA take your students on an educational journey through local village halls, police departments or the DuPage County government building. The tours are educational and interactive, and your students gain a better understanding of law and order.

# Physical Development and Health

## Dream Team

Challenging cooperative games allow your classroom to work together as a team, promoting positive communication, cooperation and good sportsmanship. This is an excellent icebreaker at the beginning of the school year to give your students an opportunity to interact and get to know each other in an uninhibited environment.

## Get Fit

As childhood obesity is on the rise, expose your students to some healthy alternatives to television or video games. We visit a local fitness center, health club or indoor pool and focus on cardio, strength, flexibility and nutrition. Drop the remote control and get fit!

## Yo-Yoga

Who says Yoga's not for kids? A certified Yoga instructor proves that Yoga is for kids and the benefits are endless. Yoga exercises increase concentration, attention span and overall body awareness. It is relaxing for the mind yet invigorating for the body. You and your students will be surprised at the results!

## **Tae Kwon Do/Karate**

A certified instructor assists your students in gaining the respect, coordination, strength and self-confidence to showcase these arts. Note: A few weeks' notice is needed to secure a specialty staff.

\*\* Also offered seasonally in our NEDSRA brochures!

## **Climb Your Way to the Top!**

Test your skills on this exciting adventure to Redmond Park in Bensenville. Enjoy climbing your way to the top of the wall or working cooperatively with your classmates to complete the challenging Teams course. Challenge yourself to the top of the wall, because you may see the Willis Tower!

## **Intro to Sports**

Your students will have fun developing the early basic skills of sports by running, throwing, catching and jumping with the assistance of specialty equipment. What better way to gain knowledge of different sports than while having fun!

\*\*NEDSRA offers many Special Olympics programs year-round, along with a Young Athletes program for youth ages 8 and under.

**Other Ideas:** Apple Farm, Field Day, Tumbling, Hotel Tour, Picnic/Paddleboats, Volunteer Opportunities

# **Fine Arts & Foreign Language**

## **Theater Troupe**

A trip to the theater to watch a live performance is an excellent cultural outing. We can give your students an entertaining and educational experience, while exposing them to fine arts, drama and comedy. Live performances may be enjoyed at College of DuPage, Chicago Kids Company, Metropolis Performing Arts Centre, Alphabet Soup Productions or Drury Lane.

\*\*Offered seasonally for youths and adults in the NEDSRA brochure!

## **Art Therapy**

NEDSRA's Art Therapist inspires students to create visual works of art using a variety of medium choices and creative styles. Creativity and self-expression lead to beautiful projects for the students to take home or display at school. Possible choices include ceramics, pottery, wood working, leather craft and more. For students with physical disabilities, try the "Arts for All" program, which allows your students to use their wheelchairs or walkers as their paintbrush! \*\*Offered seasonally in the NEDSRA brochure for youths and adults!

## **Keep The Beat**

This program focuses on rhythm and movement, as your students learn from certified instructors in a social environment. Whether we are playing drums from various cultures or dancing to popular music, students keep the beat as they learn about the culture of the musical instruments or dances we experience.

## **Culture Club**

In this program, students explore the cultures, customs and culinary specialties of the country of your choice. When the international lesson is finished, students make a craft and snack from the selected country. Possible countries to explore include Mexico, Italy, China, France, Greece, Finland, Croatia, Ireland or Germany.

**Other Ideas:** Legoland, Drum Circle, Class Theatre Performance, Sensory Activities, Dance Class

## **Just For Fun**

Sometimes you just need to take time for fun! Choose from the programs listed below or let us know what you would like to do and NEDSRA can make it happen!

**Swimming**

**Fishing**

**Ice Skating**

**Snowshoeing**

**Bowling**

**AND MORE....JUST ASK YOUR NEDSRA LIAISON!**



# **EXCEL**

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## **TEACHERS:**

**Do you desire your students to EXCEL?  
Do you want them to succeed by growing with opportunities?**

**Students of every age and ability deserve a recreational outlet and a place to spend time with friends and make new ones; a place that has been created just for them!**

**Many of the programs in this booklet are offered in NEDSRA's seasonal brochures.**

**Please share with your students' parents the endless opportunities  
your students can have in our programs.**

**We offer many recreational activities such as social clubs,  
Special Olympics sports, art and community outings.**

**If you know of any student that would benefit from NEDSRA programs,  
contact your NEDSRA liaison now!**

**Why not create beautiful memories for your students?**