



Press Release

February 14, 2012

CONTACT: Estella Espinosa
Work: (832) 395-7022
Cell: (832) 465-4782
Email: eiespin@mstvp.com

Houston Parks and Recreation Department Receives \$20,000 NRPA Grant *Grant Will Fund Adaptive Recreation Programs for Disabled Veterans*

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department is the recipient of a \$20,000 grant from the National Recreation and Park Association's 2012 *Parks: Return and Restore* program. H.P.A.R.D. was selected to receive the grant to support its sports and physical activity programs for disabled veterans and disabled members of the United States Armed Forces. Through this program, grants were provided to park and recreational therapeutic and adaptive recreation programs to increase the number and quality of recreational opportunities for veterans with mobility or sensory issues.

"We appreciate the N.R.P.A.'s participation in funding H.P.A.R.D.'s Adaptive Sports and Recreation Division," said Joe Turner, Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department. "Since 2006, the department's Adaptive Recreation division has been dedicated to serving a previously underserved population, and the support of N.R.P.A. will help us continue that tradition."

"Park and recreation agencies are essential partners in making sure our nation's injured service members and veterans are provided physical activity opportunities in their local community," said Barbara Tulipane, president and CEO of N.R.P.A. "We are honored to be able to support nine park and recreation agencies throughout the country with grant funding that makes it all possible."

Through the grant, H.P.A.R.D. will use most of the funds to purchase equipment. Slated for acquisition are hand cycles for use off site and on the Metropolitan Multi-Service Center's exercise trail and equipment for a judo program. In addition, the 2012 Metal & Muscle Expo will be funded. The Expo is a long-running event designed to introduce veterans returning from active duty with physical disabilities to their options for staying fit and active, and is open to everyone regardless of military service. It is scheduled to take place on March 3,

2012. All funds received through the grant will go toward improving the lives of Houstonians and will benefit the City's bottom line by paying for equipment and services that would otherwise be funded out of municipal coffers, if they were paid for, at all.

H.P.A.R.D.'s Adaptive Recreation division offers a wide range of activities at the Metropolitan Multi-Service Center. Its facilities include a fully accessible fitness center, an indoor heated pool with chair lifts and a zero-depth entry ramp where a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist oversees the Adaptive Aquatics program, and a full-court gym where activities include wheelchair basketball, power soccer, goal ball, quad rugby, quilting, and yoga. Outdoor facilities include tennis courts, a beep baseball field, a quarter-mile, 10-foot wide concrete trail, an urban garden, and the Vale-Asche Foundation Playground Without Limits, which exceeds A.D.A. limits so children of all abilities and their families can play together.

About The National Recreation and Park Association

The National Recreation and Park Association (N.R.P.A.) is a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing park, recreation, and conservation efforts that enhance quality of life for all people. Through its network of 20,000 recreation and park professionals and citizens, N.R.P.A. encourages the promotion of healthy lifestyles, recreation initiatives, and conservation of natural and cultural resources. For more information, visit www.NRPA.org.

About The Houston Parks and Recreation Department

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (H.P.A.R.D.) stewards and manages over 38,992 acres of parkland and greenspace for the City of Houston and develops and implements recreational programming for citizens of all abilities. For more information on the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, call (832) 395-7022 or visit www.houstonparks.org.