

Press Release

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H.P.A.R.D. Awarded the Take Me Fishing™ Grant by the National Recreation & Park Association

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (H.P.A.R.D.) has been awarded a \$4,500 grant by the National Recreation and Park Association's (N.R.P.A.'s) *Take Me Fishing™* program, made possible through a grant from the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (R.B.F.F.). The department is one of 19 agencies to receive this grant in 2013.

The N.R.P.A. - Take Me Fishing grant introduces young people to nature and provides opportunities to learn boating safety, fishing practices and water stewardship. Youth can take part in hands-on training and classroom education through the four-week Parks Adventure Angler Program's Passport to Fishing and Boating curriculum. With its environmental education, boating and fishing partnerships, H.P.A.R.D. offers outdoor experiences for 4,500 children enrolled in the After School and Summer Enrichment Programs. The grant funds will be used from December 1, 2013, through June 30, 2014.

"We are grateful to the N.R.P.A. and the R.B.F.F. for this grant," said Joe Turner, Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department. "Many urban children don't get the chance to enjoy the Great Outdoors and learn skills like fishing. The benefits they will take away from this experience will last them a lifetime. Children in H.P.A.R.D. recreation programs have benefited from a partnership between the department and N.R.P.A. for seven years."

H.P.A.R.D. and the N.R.P.A. actively promote outdoor recreation as important to childhood health. The Take Me Fishing initiative will reconnect them with nature through recreational boating and fishing.

"Community park and recreation agencies nationwide are ensuring kids today get active and connect with nature in meaningful ways," says Barbara Tulipane, president and C.E.O. of N.R.P.A. "One of the ways they do this is through the Take Me Fishing program, which for the last seven years has reached more than 900,000 children and families with opportunities to connect with nature through recreational boating and fishing activities."

Since 2007, 3.3 million youth have been introduced to boating and fishing through R.B.F.F.'s education programs.

"N.R.P.A. has been an important part of our youth participation efforts for years, and we're pleased to continue working with them this year to offer boating and fishing programs at parks and recreation facilities across the nation," said R.B.F.F. President and C.E.O. Frank Peterson. "Early introduction is key to continued participation in boating and fishing. It also teaches kids to respect and protect their aquatic natural resources."

***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 40,000 recreation and park professionals and citizens, N.R.P.A. encourages the promotion of healthy and active lifestyles, conservation initiatives and equitable access to parks and public space. For more information, visit www.NRPA.org. For digital access to N.R.P.A.'s flagship publication, *Parks & Recreation*, visit www.parksandrecreation.org.*

The Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (R.B.F.F.) is a nonprofit organization, celebrating 15 years in 2013, whose mission is to increase participation in recreational angling and boating, thereby protecting and restoring the nation's aquatic natural resources. R.B.F.F. developed the award-winning Take Me Fishing™ campaign to create awareness around boating, fishing and conservation, and educate people about the benefits of participation. Take Me Fishing helps boaters and anglers of all ages and experience levels learn, plan and equip for a day on the water. The campaign website, TakeMeFishing.org, features tips and how-to's that can be used all over the country, tools to compare different styles of boats, information on how to get a fishing license and boat registration, and an interactive state-by-state map that allows visitors to find local boating and fishing spots.

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (H.P.A.R.D.) stewards and manages over 37,832 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.