

Reaching People with Disabilities through Healthy Communities

June 2019

Sioux City Parks and Recreation	
<p>This project has impacted my life because:</p>	<p>Our profession is in quality of life, specifically parks and recreation, which involves offering quality recreational programs and parks for residents. Parks and recreation is for everyone, regardless of ability, and now because of this project inclusivity is at the forefront of our work.</p>
<p>The most influential policy, system, or environmental change of this project to me was:</p>	<p>The most influential change for our department was the environment at our winter park. Before this project began, we were not thinking critically about how to include all individuals regardless of ability because we perceived it would take extra time and effort. Now through an increase in knowledge, better training for staff, and equipment upgrades, our winter park is open to anyone that wants to use it and that feels good.</p>
<p>As a result of this, I/we: <i>(List how you have been impacted, influenced, affected – e.g. tell us something you can do now that you couldn't before, or what the change has helped to improve)</i></p>	<p>Cone Park is now an all-inclusive facility and more residents have the opportunity to go sledding, ice skating, or even use the splash pad during the summer months. These environmental changes are just the start. The larger result is keeping inclusivity at the forefront of our thoughts as we move forward. We are constantly adding parks and recreational programs and our entire department is now more suited to create an environment that is conducive to leisure for everyone, regardless of ability.</p>
<p>What was the emotional connection, self-efficacy, or “ah-ha” moment for this project?</p>	<p>The biggest “ah-ha” moment for our department was when we had a group of people with varying abilities come use Cone Park. It became very clear that without the equipment upgrades or taking extra care to do little things like snow removal, in a way that allows people who may use adaptive equipment to more easily navigate the park, that some individuals would not have been able to use the park and participate in the activities with family and friends. This project literally opened up a new world of opportunity for a significant portion of our city’s population and created opportunities for people with disabilities to be physically active alongside family and friends.</p>

Please note that testimonials may be edited for clarity by the NACDD Communications Department.