

SUMMER/FALL 2016

# The Voice

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**INSIDE:**  
2016-2017  
PARKS & REC  
BUYER'S  
GUIDE

2016 Annual  
Conference  
Highlights  
& Award  
Winners

Strength  
Training:  
The New  
Prescription  
for Health  
and Recovery

A Voice  
for Parks  
in Albany

Youth -  
The Future  
of Inclusion

Citizen  
Commitment is  
Indispensable

# Our Prized Possessions



# YOUTH – The Future of Inclusion



By Dr. Lynn Anderson, CTRS, CPRP, Director, Inclusive Recreation Resource Center at SUNY Cortland

The Inclusive Recreation Resource Center is partnering once again with the NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, the New York State Recreation and Park Society, and other groups to increase the capacity of community and recreation providers that serve youth in their inclusion practices. Over the next two years, we will be focusing on the following activities:

- Developing and piloting a youth version of Inclusion U Online
- Developing and piloting a Mentored Inclusion Coaching Protocol to be used with 30 selected agencies to enhance programmatic and administrative inclusion at those agencies
- Working collaboratively with NYSRPS and other professional associations to recognize and celebrate inclusion champions at selected youth-serving agencies
- Studying effective programmatic and administrative inclusion practices through an in-depth evaluation study and developing a field-tested “Inclusion Toolkit”

## Inclusion U Online for Youth

Inclusion U Online, our field-tested and effective online training, has been available now for about a year. The online training has been approved for 1.0 CEUs by NYSRPS and pre-approved by NCTRC as meeting content requirements for CTRS recertification. The training can be readily accessed on the Inclusive Recreation Resource Center website (see sidebar for more information). Using the award-winning Inclusion U Online as a foundation, we will be developing and piloting an online version of the training geared toward young people.

We hope to make the Inclusion U Online for Youth an exciting way for youth to earn certificates and badges as they learn how to promote inclusion, whether as a part of a Scout activity, a summer recreation staff activity, a junior camp counselor activity, a 4-H project or other avenues.

We will have youth on our newly formed advisory committee as we develop the short, fun and interactive online training geared toward 12-18 year olds. Our dream is that youth-serving agencies will incorporate the online training for youth into aspects of their operations, like summer staff training, camp counselor training, Scout badges, and more.



Developmental Disabilities  
Planning Council

NYSRPS  
New York State  
Recreation & Park Society



## Inclusion U Online

Inclusion U Online is a 10-hour training that teaches you how to be a Certified Inclusivity Assessor. In Inclusion U Online, you will learn the foundations of inclusion and how to use the Inclusivity Assessment Tool.

Inclusion U Online has nine modules. For each module, you take a quiz to advance to the next module. At the end of the nine modules, you take the Inclusion U Final Exam to show that you have gained the knowledge and competency to be a Certified Inclusivity Assessor (CIA). You are then able to complete inclusivity assessments, using the Inclusivity Assessment Tool. You will be able to add your inclusivity assessments to the IRRC online recreation database.



Upon successful completion of the Inclusion U Online training, you will be able to print out your CIA Card and a Certificate of Completion. In order to receive 1.0 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for Inclusion U Online, you mail a copy of your Certificate of Completion, along with the CEU fee to NYSRPS. NYSRPS provides CEUs according to the guidelines of the IACET (International Association for Continuing Education). Inclusion U Online is also CE Pre-Approved by NCTRC.

You can access and register for Inclusion U Online on the IRRC website at [inclusiverec.org](http://inclusiverec.org).

## Mentored Inclusion Coaching

Another important activity of our youth inclusion project will be developing and piloting a Mentored Inclusion Coaching Protocol to be used with 30 agencies to enhance inclusion. In essence, we will be developing and testing an inclusion tool kit that can be readily used by staff to enhance inclusion practices. We will be working closely with carefully chosen youth-serving agencies, providing support, education, and technical assistance. In particular, we are interested in working with agencies that serve underserved populations in their communities including racially, culturally, geographically, and linguistically under-served. We plan to work with parks and recreation departments, youth bureaus, YMCAs, camps, Scout troops, 4-H groups, youth centers, and other youth-serving organizations. Two staff members from the IRRC, Geoff Peppel, CTRS and Ian Haines, CTRS, will spend time on-site at selected agencies assisting in inclusion efforts (see page 30 to learn more about Geoff and Ian).

Chosen staff from each of the selected youth-serving agencies will complete Inclusion U Online (adult version) and choose youth staff to pilot the Inclusion U Online for Youth. Staff will also participate in a mentored inclusivity assessment with the IRRC staff, help develop a plan for enhancement of inclusion, and then receive onsite mentored inclusion coaching as well as follow-up support throughout the two years of the project.

To recognize their efforts, a staff member from each of the selected agencies will be supported to attend the annual NYSRPS professional conference (or other major event) to be recognized by IRRC and NYSRPS as an Inclusion Champion based on their work with this project. IRRC will also feature the Inclusion Champions on the IRRC website, [inclusiverec.org](http://inclusiverec.org).

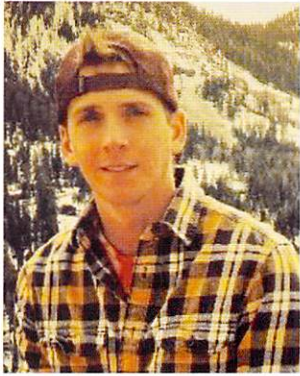
## Program Evaluation

Throughout our two-year project, we will carefully track individual and systems outcomes in relation to inclusive recreation and youth. We will be conducting pre- and post-assessments, doing observations of programs, and conducting in-depth interviews. What we learn in the evaluation will help us validate and field-test an "Inclusion Toolkit" that we hope to make widely available to youth-serving agencies. We envision the toolkit being something that staff can access during programs to help them come up with successful strategies for inclusion on the fly, hopefully in the form of an app or other easy to access format.

*If you or your agency is interested in becoming involved in the youth inclusion project, please send an email to [inclusiverec@cortland.edu](mailto:inclusiverec@cortland.edu). We are excited to once again partner with NYSRPS to ensure that ALL people can play wherever they choose!*



# YOUTH – The Future of Inclusion



## Meet Geoff Peppel, CTRS Inclusive Recreation Resource Center

Geoff Peppel is a full-time staff member with the Inclusive Recreation Resource Center for the new youth inclusion project.

During Geoff's undergraduate work at the SUNY College at Brockport, he spent his first few semesters struggling to find his place in the professional world. However, Geoff knew he had

a future in helping others overcome struggles in their lives, he just wasn't sure exactly how. His parents, David and Erin, knew of Geoff's dream to help others and opened his eyes to the unique field of therapeutic recreation.

From then on, Geoff studied therapeutic recreation closely, volunteering much of his time at programs for kids with autism and culminating his undergraduate work in 2012 with an internship at a treatment facility for youth with traumatic psychological disorders. Geoff received his bachelor's degree from SUNY Brockport and his certification as a therapeutic recreation specialist (CTRS) from NCTRC.

He spent his first summer after graduation at the Double H Ranch, a camp for children with life threatening and/or chronic illness, in Lake Luzerne, New York. He would spend his next three summers at Double H as both an aquatics director and counselor.

In 2014, Geoff packed his bags and moved to Lake Tahoe, California where he taught adaptive skiing and other snow sports to people with functional differences at Achieve Tahoe, formerly known as Disabled Sports USA Far West. His work in Tahoe simultaneously revitalized his love for working with people with differing abilities and the outdoors. While living in California, he applied for the graduate program at SUNY Cortland in outdoor and environmental education. Geoff had heard nothing but praise of this program for years and knew it would open many doors towards practicing therapeutic recreation in the out-of-doors.

In the fall of 2014, Geoff was approached by Dr. Lynn Anderson about enrolling in an Inclusive Recreation practicum to help fulfill a grant funded by the NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council. That summer, he and his colleague Ian Haines (see below) traveled New York assessing 250 state parks and DEC outdoor recreation sites for accessibility and writing reports and recommendations to improve physical and social inclusion at these sites.

Geoff recently graduated with his M.S. in Recreation: Outdoor and Environmental Education. He now works full time for the Inclusive Recreation Resource Center and will be traveling New York once again this summer providing in-depth inclusion program training to several youth serving agencies.



## Meet Ian Haines, CTRS Inclusive Recreation Resource Center

Ian Haines grew up in Binghamton, New York where he established his love for two things that ended up shaping his life. First was a love for nature and the outdoors and second was his love for helping people. Ian combined these two loves at Paul Smith's College where he completed his undergraduate work.

During his time at Paul Smith's, Ian spent his time studying Parks and Recreation with a desire to introduce all people to the benefits of nature. During his freshman year of school, Ian's father had both of his legs amputated. This life changing moment led Ian to discover new ways to include his father in his passion for the outdoors.

Ian found John Dillon Park, a park in the Adirondacks that is designed to be accessible to all. Ian ended up working for two summers at this park, where he was driven to help all people no matter what their life circumstance may be, enjoy nature.

After graduating from Paul Smith's in 2014 with his Bachelors in Parks and Recreation, Ian spent some time working as a Park Ranger in Vermont, but desired something more, where he could directly help people. Ian decided to pursue his Masters in Therapeutic Recreation at SUNY Cortland where he met Dr. Lynn Anderson. Dr. Anderson asked Ian to be a part of the Inclusive Recreation Resource Center and complete a grant that assessed over 250 state parks for physical and social accessibility.

After completing this grant with colleague Geoff Peppel (see above), Ian completed his therapeutic recreation internship at an acute-rehabilitation psychiatric center where he worked with people with severe mental illnesses. These experiences culminated in Ian graduating from SUNY Cortland in May of 2016 with his M.S. in Recreation with a concentration in Therapeutic Recreation.

Ian now works for the Inclusive Recreation Resource Center on a project designed to develop inclusive programming at youth-serving recreation agencies all over New York State.