



BENEFITS GO GLOBAL

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In October, 1998 representatives of the National Benefits Network had the opportunity to showcase the exciting **BENEFITS** work that we have been doing in Canada at the 18th International Federation of Parks and Recreation Administration Congress and the 1st National Conference of Parks & Leisure Australia in Melbourne, Australia.

The IFPRA Congress Theme was "Changing Societies" The Challenge for Parks and Recreation". Representative from 22 countries attended and much of the discussion confirmed that the work we have been doing in Canada in terms of using a Benefits-Driven approach is right on the mark and it also made it very clear that this approach is the future of our field.

Leslie June, Kate Sparrow and Jennifer Wilson presented a post-congress workshop entitled "**The Benefits of Parks & Recreation Based on the Benefits Catalogue**" *Developed by the Canadian Parks & Recreation Association*. They also had an opportunity to present the same workshop in Sydney the following week! In total, over 80 people attended the 2 workshops.

Participants were challenged to discover how the catalogue is a powerful tool for taking the benefits approach to the next step of not only embracing a benefits philosophy but also discovering mechanisms for integrating benefits language into all organizational practices. As well, grounding staff in the benefits desired by communities and residents alike, shifting the focus on why things are done not how things are done and integrating ways of measuring the value of the services delivered is absolutely essential for the survival of the field. The workshops reaffirmed that truly being benefits driven means integrating the approach into all critical processes including business planning, marketing and benchmarking.

Through the 2 workshops delivered in Australia, the National Benefits Network has been able to develop a market for the catalogue in Australia and New Zealand and has agreed to partner with Parks and Leisure Australia for distribution in their country. With the new on-line version of The Benefits Catalogue, it will also make it much easier to develop markets in other countries.

One of the exciting outcomes of this opportunity was to see the birth of the Benefits Movement in Australia. A number of individuals were very excited and committed to moving the benefits forward there. We will continue to work with them and communicate so that we can all benefit from the energy being generated around the Benefits.

Anybody who thinks that the Benefits Movement is not important to our field, to our communities, or to individuals in Canada need only look at how this information is being embraced in other countries to know that we are leading the way in this important area! Keep up the good work everyone!



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