

# NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



## **Sports Illinois Huddle Celebrates Sports Industry Success Stories**

*Educational conference honors inaugural Host Impact Grant recipient and welcomes renowned speakers to the region*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 21, 2018**

**Rockford, IL** – Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) and 14 other CVBs from the state of Illinois welcomed guests from around the United States participating in the **Sports Illinois Huddle Conference** that kicked off on **Sunday, May 20** and continues through **Tuesday, May 22**.

The conference today honored the **Rockford Park District** as the **inaugural Host Impact Grant recipient for 2018** and welcomed **top sports industry champions** to educate and inspire attendees.

The Sports Illinois Executive Team was pleased to honor the **Rockford Park District**, a Rockford-area nonprofit, as the inaugural Host Impact Grant recipient for their **“Help me Play” fund** that will provide financial support so all youth can access and experience the lifelong benefits of play through the Rockford Park District. Their 2018 goal is to assist 3,500 youth and adults with disabilities with the opportunity to play. RACVB has agreed to a matching grant of \$1,000, elevating the available grant funding to **\$2,000** supporting their efforts this year.

The purpose of the Sports Illinois Huddle Host Impact Grant—launched in partnership with the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) in 2018—is to provide the host community’s area nonprofit(s) the opportunity to access grant funding from Sports Illinois that is earmarked for positively impacting sports programs locally.

“The Rockford Park District team does an exceptional job improving the Rockford community in a variety of ways. Their plan to support youth in our community by giving them more opportunities to play in a variety of sports activities is right in line with the purpose of this grant program,” said Lindsay Arellano, RACVB vice president of sales and service and Sports Illinois chair. “The Sports Illinois members hope that with this grant program we can impact sports programming on a local level in a variety of communities in Illinois for years to come.”

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The conference also showcased presentations by elite sports athletes sharing their personal stories, including the journey and successes of how they achieved renowned accolades and international recognition.

**The speaker lineup included:**

- **Kendall Coyne** - Gold medal Olympian as part of the USA women's hockey team in the 2018 Olympic Winter Games in PyeongChang, South Korea.
- **Lia Coryell** - Member of Team USA in the World Archery Para Championships and Parapan American Championships teams and United States Army veteran.
- **Dr. Kat Williams** - Professor of Women's Sport History, President of the International Women's Baseball Center, lifelong baseball fan, author and former shortstop.

Sports Illinois Huddle is an educational conference/tradeshow produced by the Illinois Council of Convention & Visitor Bureaus' **Sports Illinois** (a consortium of Illinois-based CVBs working in the sports tourism market). The tradeshow is attended by representatives of national governing bodies, event rights holders and tournament directors who take part in the two-day conference to connect with representatives from approximately 15 Illinois CVBs.

A complete schedule of events including an itinerary can be found at <https://www.sportsillinoishuddle.com>.

***Sports Illinois** is a niche committee of the Illinois Council of Convention & Visitors Bureaus and works closely with the Illinois Office of Tourism, focusing on promoting overnight sports events through direct marketing, education programs and networking activities, therefore creating a significant economic impact and enhancing opportunities for all in sports.*

*The mission of the **RACVB** is to drive quality of life and economic growth for our citizens through tourism marketing and destination development. [www.gorockford.com](http://www.gorockford.com)*

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