



CPRA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CERTIFICATION

FIRST CPRA PDC GRADUATE SHARES HER EXPERIENCES

Lori Mambella is a Programs Supervisor with the City of St. Catharines Ontario, and the first individual to graduate from the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association Professional Development Certification (CPRA PDC).



CPRA PDC is the country's only national training program tailored to recreation and parks practitioners. The certification phase includes the completion of two online courses, and a knowledge presentation in front of a panel of judges.

Lori heard about the program as a member of Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO), and as a firm believer in professional development, registered for the training.

"Our profession is never static, so a well-balanced understanding of core competencies, along with the knowledge of the latest industry trends, is crucial," says Lori.

The PDC courses are hosted on an online learning platform, and the knowledge presentation may be done by webinar. Lori says she valued this opportunity to complete the work on her own schedule, and enjoyed the practical assignment of creating



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a professional development plan focused on the foundations of recreation.

"I actually kept this plan pinned to my cork board in my office so it was constantly in plain view. It ended up being a very valuable tool that I used well after the course was over," she explains.

Beyond the course assignments, Lori says the most valuable opportunity was discussing sector trends and issues with peers from across the country.

"A great example would be the national Framework for Recreation in Canada," says Lori. "It is a driving document that is well-respected in our industry, and to have the opportunity to

discuss it with participants in the program who are from all corners from the nation was really interesting."

With staff conference budgets being reduced or cut out across the country, Lori says this networking opportunity is invaluable.

"The online format is very affordable and very efficient. You still get all the benefits of the networking and the national perspective, without the high costs of having to fly 3000 miles to the other side of the country to be able to have that experience. So I think the rate of return on the investment dollar is very high when you put it into that perspective."