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THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE FOR HEALTH, PHYSICAL
EDUCATION, RECREATION AND DANCE (AAHPERD)

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the role of AAHPERD in the leisure industry.

THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE FOR HEALTH, PHYSICAL
EDUCATION, RECREATION AND DANCE (AAHPERD)

The American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance is a non-profit education organization representing professionals and others involved in health, fitness, sports, recreation and related areas.

Founded in 1885, the purpose of the American Alliance is the same today as it was almost one hundred years ago; to improve the quality of life by improving our country's programs in physical education, sports and athletics, health and safety education, recreation and leisure, outdoor education and dance. In 1974, reorganization established seven associations under the umbrella of the American Alliance of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD). These seven associations include: American Association for Leisure and Recreation (AALR), American School and Community Safety Association (ASCSA), Association for the Advancement of Health Education (AAHE), Association for Research, Administration and Professional Council in Societies (ARAPCS), National Association for Girls and Women in Sport (NAGWS), National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), and National Dance Association (NDA).

It is within this overall alliance structure that AALA/AAHPERD finds its place and function. While the diversity of interest among the association continues to broaden, the "synergism" of being part of the largest organization in the United States concerned with health, physical education, and dance, has provided significant strengths. The uniting spirit is a concern for the health, physical well-being and professional development of the individual participants.

As AALA/AAHPERD has grown and developed, purposes and reasons for being unique to its recreation mission can be identified:

1. Promotion of school, community and national leisure and recreation programs.
2. Communicate to society the importance of intelligent use of leisure time.
3. Providing those working or interested in recreation and leisure the opportunity to join together for mutual strength and benefit.
4. Develop national awareness for a group of professionals dedicated to the education and promotion of programs for the worthy use of leisure.

As AAHPERD interprets these reasons for being for its members interested in recreation, additional purposes become evident:

1. Membership Services-The reason most often mentioned by members of AAHERD for belonging are the communications, conferences, and publications provided by the association.
2. Professional Development-Reasons ranked high by members for belonging to AAHPERD are professional development opportunities of education, mutual discussion of problems and issues.
3. Interest Areas-As the interest among the various AAHPERD associations expand, individual groups within the field seek the opportunity to concentrate on specific interests such as play, school, recreation, community education, recreation research, etc.

American Alliance members are people with an interest and concern in making the life style of Americans healthier and more active. Most American Alliance members are professionally active in the educational areas of health, physical education, recreation, sport and related fields. Some members are associate or contributing members who believe in the goals and objectives of the American Alliance. Also, many members are students who become involved as they are being educated for future leadership roles.

AAHPERD works closely with various other national organizations. AALR/AAHPERD cooperated with NRPA on the joint NRPA/AALR Council on Accreditation, which accredits degree programs granting baccalaureate degrees in recreation and park studies. The accreditation process serves to insure high educational standards and to stimulate institutional self-improvement in colleges and universities offering professional preparation programs.

The American Alliance sponsors the AAHPERD Youth Fitness Test and cooperates with the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports in administering the Presidential Physical Fitness Awards Program, and the AAHPERD health related physical fitness test.

The American Alliance is also a member of the International Council of Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ICHPER).

From the particular area of recreation, AALR/AAHPERD works with numerous organizations including the American Recreation Coalition, the World Leisure and Recreation Association, the National Bicycle Education Consortium, the International Playground Association, the Motel/Hotel Association, and the National Community Education Association.

The American Alliance produces a variety of publications, including Update, the official newsletter of the Alliance. The Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (JOPERD) provides articles on current issues, philosophical and administrative trends, teaching methods, and curriculum development, emphasizing the why and how of improved instruction. Health Education is geared to the special needs of health educators in schools, colleges and community agencies. The content covers current health education principles, problems and practices. The Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport contains articles for the research oriented professional. It reports on new and original research, reviews new literature and offers descriptions of new technology and methods. "Leisure Today," produced as an insert in JOPERD, is a special feature magazine intended for professionals in a variety of recreation related fields.

Historically, the American Alliance's purpose has been to improve the quality of life by improving the country's programs in health education in sports and athletics, health and safety education, recreation and leisure, outdoor education and dance.

Purposes specific to AALR have been the intelligent use of leisure time and the acknowledgement of its importance to the citizenry as one of society's greatest challenges. AALR hopes to meet this challenge through improving communication between theoretician and practitioner; professional and lay public; school and community members. AALR disseminates information on key issues, events and ideas that affect the profession, as well as creating opportunity for professional growth so that members are fully prepared to face challenges in the profession.