Welcome to PPR: Keith Freeman

Safety is fun, and Keith Freeman is determined to convince you of it. As Philadelphia Parks & Recreation's new Director of Safety Operations, Keith is responsible for developing a culture of safety at the department to ensure employees have safe work practices and measures.

Although Keith only started at PPR on August 12, he has decades of experience in the field of safety and years of experience with our system. Keith was responsible for safety at refineries in Philadelphia, Marcus Hook and the Mississippi Gulf (Gulf Oil when he started; Sunoco by the time he left) for 33 years. After a 5-year stint owning a restaurant in West Oak Lane, he returned to safety in SEPTA's Paratransit unit before joining the City of Philadelphia's Risk Management department for six years. Keith worked with PPR for approximately four of his six years at Risk Management, so he is familiar with our areas of need.

Keith's first order of business at Parks & Recreation will be to get everyone on the same page, thinking about safety, through trainings. His knowledge base ranges from driver safety, to workplace violence, to reasonable suspicion, to recreation center inspections, and he is excited to share all of his learnings with us.

Because Keith can't be everywhere at the same time, he will be recruiting staff members to form a safety committee. Additionally, he hopes to work closely with the Advisory Councils and the Standards & Inspections Coherence Committee to achieve his goals. He will also reach staff through district and regional management and plenty of communication—in the form of emails, paycheck stuffers, informational posters and newsletter articles. Emergency plans will be drafted, fire drills will be scheduled, and floor captains will be selected.

And again, Keith promises that all of this will be enjoyable. "Safety is fun, it's not a hard thing to do," he says. "I have a lot of fun doing it… if you ever come to one of my training sessions, you'll see. I don't train like anybody else!"

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