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PHS Top Spots Names 20 of the best places for families with special needs

No matter the level of ability or disability these Minnesota organizations bring everyone together

St. Paul, Minn. – If you’ve ever cared for a child with special needs, there is a list of unique considerations regarding wheelchair, medical equipment accessibility, safety concerns and more that is factored into travel outside your home. A new annual resource is making it easier for families of children with special needs to find the best spots in Minnesota that are set up to accommodate their needs.

By surveying special needs families across the state, [Pediatric Home Service](#), an independent health care agency providing comprehensive home care services to help children with medical complexities live as fully as possible at home, found the most family friendly and all-inclusive spots for an active lifestyle, enjoying pastimes, shopping, dining, and getaways.

“At PHS we care that all children with special needs thrive, but found it hard to identify a resource that gives suggestions on where it’s convenient to visit as a family with unique considerations,” said Mark Hamman, president of PHS. “We asked our patient families and families across the state to share their favorites for better access or adaptive spaces with kiddos in-mind. Their insights have helped us build this go-to list for all Minnesotans to get out and about year round.”

Hamman went on to say that he hopes this list encourages more families to get out and have fun together, no matter their abilities or disabilities.

The 2017 PHS Top Spots list was compiled through an online survey answered by families of children with special needs. The community voted on nominated businesses and organizations in 20 categories, ranging from play spaces to entertainment and dining across Minnesota. The 2017 winners include:

Active Lifestyle Winners:

- **Top adaptive playground:** [Fun for All Playground](#) – Shakopee, MN
- **Top adaptive/accessible sport organization:** [Minnesota Special Olympics](#)
- **Top family support group/organization:** [HopeKids](#)
- **Top indoor play space:** [Edinborough Indoor Park](#) – Edina, MN
- **Top outdoor trail:** [Gooseberry Falls](#)

Pastimes Winners:

- **Top parent blog/online group/podcast:** [Twin Cities Mom Blog](#)
- **Top Movie Theater:** [AMC - Eden Prairie, MN](#)

- **Top museum:** [Science Museum of MN](#)
- **Top public library:** [Shakopee Library](#)
- **Top entertainment venue:** [Target Field](#)
- **Top place to recharge:** Home

Shopping and Dining Winners:

- **Top store layout for wheelchairs:** [Target](#)
- **Top casual restaurant:** [Applebee's](#)
- **Top business who is considerate to special needs:** [Target](#)/[Hy-Vee](#) (tie)
- **Top special-occasion restaurant:** [Olive Garden](#)
- **Top toy store:** [Creative Kid Stuff](#)

Getaways Winners:

- **Top downtown for accessibility:** [Shakopee](#)/[Bemidji](#)/[Maple Grove](#) (tie)
- **Top family overnight getaway:** [Edgewater Hotel & Water Park – Duluth, MN](#)
- **Top Minnesota State Park:** [Gooseberry Falls State Park](#)
- **Top summer camp:** [Camp Odayin](#)

“For families with special needs, deciding which playground to go to, may not always have a simple answer,” said Jamie Polley, City of Shakopee Director of Parks and Recreation. “Shakopee is a close knit city that values opportunities for all people to be active and engaged in our community, and this is the true meaning of play. The Fun for All adaptive playground would not have been possible without the hard work of the task force and tremendous support of the community.”

In Minnesota, PHS supports over 5,000 children with medical complexities, their families and the community around these children making a meaningful impact on how they live and what they experience. The Minnesota Health Department estimates children with special needs range from 160,000 – 200,000.

This Top Spots resource was compiled by PHS with the goal to be an annual, statewide guide. “Each year, we will create a fresh list so families always have an up to date resource,” said Hamman. “As technology continues to advance more children with special needs are able to live at home and we need to be thinking about the unique considerations to let children with special needs thrive across all stages of their lifespan.”

PHS will be looking to Minnesotans to again help us expand our search and select next year’s winners in May 2018.

Families can find the PHS Top Spot list as a digital download at [PHSTopSpots.com](#).

About Pediatric Home Service

Based in St. Paul, Minn., Pediatric Home Service is an independent pediatric home care company that helps children with medical complexities and technology dependencies live safely and successfully where they're most comfortable, at home with their families, rather than in a hospital. Pediatric Home Service has been partnering with health care professionals and family caregivers for more than two decades to deliver compassionate, specialized, high-quality care to children with special medical needs.

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PHOTO CAPTION: Minnesota-based Pediatric Home Service names 20 of the best places for families with special needs to inaugural Top Spots list.