

Special Events

Polar Bear Plunge

Polar Bear Plunge is held annually on New Year's Day, from 10 – 11am at the Waukegan Municipal Beach. Proceeds from this event help to provide scholarships for participants in Special Recreation Services of Northern Lake County-Waukegan programs and athletic competitions. Past plunges have been captured by Channel 7 and Fox News along with newspapers articles running in the News Sun, Chicago Sun Times, Bargaineer, and radio coverage by WXLC and WIIL.



- Event Month: January
- Projected Attendance: 550 “plungers” and over 1000 spectators
- Projected Event Costs: \$17,100

Fitness Expo

Come enjoy a day devoted to health and wellness where participants can participate in group exercise demonstrations, health screenings, free give a ways, fitness assessments, fitness competitions with prizes, and healthy vendors on site providing information and more. The first 100 people receive a free t-shirt.



- Event Month: March
- Projected Attendance: 500 participants
- Projected Costs: \$3,000

Eggstravaganza Trail

Held on the Saturday before Easter, nearly 2000 people are in attendance. This is not your traditional egg hunt! Families can enjoy an afternoon together as they walk along a festive trail meeting Mama, Papa, Brother, and Sister Bunny collecting candy and toys filled eggs, ending with a special Easter Bunny Meet and Greet where kids can get a quick hug and families can have a picture taking opportunity.



- Event Month: March/April – Sunday before Easter
- Projected Attendance: 2,000 participants
- Projected Costs: \$8,000

Live Green Family Festival

This family friendly event is inviting for the whole family. Children and adults will be provided the opportunity to engage in and enjoy many exciting nature activities, learn about recycling, and best practices for living a “Green” life. Through discovery, exploration and educational experiences everyone is sure to leave the event with a sense of knowledge, love of the natural world, and ways to live a more “Green” life.

- Event Month: April
- Projected Attendance: 1,500 participants
- Projected Costs: \$6,000



Recreation Rally

Recreation Rally is a free event for Lake County individuals with special needs and disabilities. The Waukegan School District #60 and other local districts transport special needs students to the festival. Residents from the Kiley Developmental Center, and private group homes and workshops also attend. Held annually at the Field House Sports and Fitness Center, this event provides exposure to the arts including visual, dance, music, expressive, crafts, and movement.

- Event Month: May
- Projected Attendance: 80-125 participants, 25 leaders/teachers
- Projected Costs: \$2,000



Dandelion Wine Fine Arts Festival

Waukegan's Annual Ray Bradbury's *Dandelion Wine* Fine Arts Festival is held in Bowen Park from 10am - 4pm on the first Saturday in June. Artists, Family activities are scheduled throughout the day and theatre, storytelling, music, dance, and a drum circle entertain the afternoon away. Applications are available for artists and crafts vendors by calling 847-360-4740. Activities are free to the public.

- Event Month: June (First Saturday)
- Projected Attendance: 1,500 participants
- Projected Costs: \$8,000



Fishing Derby

The Fishing Derby takes place annually in June on the Saturday during the Illinois DNR Free Fishing Weekend. Bevier pond is stocked with over seven hundred pounds of catfish during the week preceding the event. Fishing takes place from 8am-10:30am with participants trying to catch the longest fish in their age category. The top three fish in each age category receive prizes and certificates. The event is concluded with an awards presentation.

- Event Month: June
- Projected Attendance: 350 anglers and 100 spectators
- Projected Costs: \$5,000



American Independence Festivities:

American Independence Parade: Each year, this themed parade has nearly one hundred entries including, special units such as bands and drill teams. Step off is at 1pm in downtown Waukegan and the parade continues down historical Sheridan Road ending at Bowen Park. Local and out of town organizations and groups are welcome to march the 1.2 miles long route. Parade applications are available in late spring. Please call (847) 360-4700 for more information.



American Independence Festival: The Festival is located in beautiful Bowen Park and takes place from 3:30pm to 5pm. This event offers food vendors; family friendly activities such as a petting zoo, pony rides, a giant obstacle maze, and simple craft projects children can take home. In addition, a skate expo takes place at Bowen Skate Park. Music fills the air courtesy of local musicians. Activities are free to the public.



- Event Month: June/July – Sunday before Fourth of July
- Projected Attendance: 4,000
- Projected Costs: \$18,000



World Wide Day of Play and Fitness Expo is an annual celebration promoting active play for kids that encourages families “get out and play. This event is FREE to anyone who wishes to participate. Parents are encouraged to play and have fun with their kids, and help set an example of the importance of physical activity as a whole family. Organized games and contests such as dodge ball, volleyball, tennis, and basketball are set up in the gym, as well as several activities planned outside at Hinkston Park. There will also be a Jump Rope Contest, Cup Stacking, and Free Throw Competition, along with supervised open Climbing Wall during the entire event!

Come enjoy a day devoted to health and wellness where participants can participate in group exercise demonstrations, health screenings, free give a ways, fitness assessments, fitness competitions with prizes, and healthy vendors on site providing information and more. The first 100 people receive a free t-shirt.

- Event Month: September
- Projected Attendance: 300 participants
- Projected Costs: \$2,000



George Bridges 5K Run – Bridging the gap between mental and physical fitness is an annual run/walk that in support of providing scholarship funding to for Special Recreation. Racers receive a t-shirt and placement medals.

- Event Month: October
- Projected Attendance: 300 participants
- Projected Costs: \$4,500



Oakwood Cemetery Walk

Step back in time and learn about historical Waukegan residents. Costumed actors profile the lives and times of the featured residents. Transportation to and from Bowen Park is provided with ticket purchase. This is a great family and individual experience.

- Event Month: September
- Projected Attendance: 500 participants
- Projected Costs: \$3,000



Halloweenfest

Halloweenfest is held in Bowen Park from 3-7pm and is sure to entertain and spook children and adults. This festival includes food vendors, family activities such the Greet A Ghoul, haunted house, enchanted walk, magic shows, storytelling by the bonfire, games and prizes for children, train rides in the park, the adrenaline maze and bounce house. Activities are free to the public.

- Event Month: October – Saturday before Halloween
- Projected Attendance: 4,000 participants
- Projected Costs: \$15,000



Turkey Trot

This event invites children and adults to run, trot, or gobble their way to winning a turkey. Turkey Trot is held in Belvidere Park and consists of six different races; which vary in length from 5 yards to one mile, depending on age. A can of food is the price of entering a race; food donations are forwarded to a local food bank. Registration begins at 9:30am with the first race beginning at 10am. Tony the Turkey leads a warm-up session prior to the races. Only Waukegan residents may race to win a turkey. All participants may take part in the turkey drawing at the end of the event.

- Event Month: November
- Projected Attendance: 500 runners and spectators
- Projected Costs: \$2,500

