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# WAUKEGAN PARK DISTRICT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**To:** All Media  
**Contact:** Greg Petry  
Executive Director  
Waukegan Park District  
(847) 360-4721  
gregp@waukeganparks.org

## **Waukegan Park District Announces Retirement of Alicia Mentell, Superintendent of Recreation**

**Waukegan, IL** (June 21, 2013) . . . Alicia A. Mentell has been the Superintendent of Recreation at the Waukegan Park District since 1993. Retiring in July after 20 years of outstanding leadership to the Recreation Department, she leaves a remarkable legacy.

Alicia professionalized the department, developed, and implemented comprehensive recreation programs and services, and provided leadership and oversight for management staff, programs, special events, facilities, and citizen committees. Several events under her leadership have received awards from the Illinois Parks and Recreation Association (IPRA) including: Halloweenfest, American Independence Parade and Festival, and Polar Bear Plunge. The Live Green Family Festival, introduced this past April, was her most recent vision and the event was very successful.

She oversaw the successful openings of two premier, state of the art facilities, the Field House Sports and Fitness Center and the Waukegan Sports Park. Both facilities have received local and state recognition. The Field House marketing plan won the 2009 award from Learning Resource Network (LERN), an international professional organization. This past year, tournaments at the two facilities contributed more than \$15 million to the area economy.

Alicia, a true parks and recreation professional, played an important part in the Waukegan Park District acquiring accreditation from the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) and becoming a National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Gold Medal Finalist. Both are pinnacles of national recognition in the parks and recreation professions. She serves as a CAPRA Visitor, evaluating other District's operations and outcomes. She takes pride in the growth and development of young professionals as they mature in their careers and personal lives.

Her most recent efforts have led to the expansion of the Park District's dog programs and facilities, including the Dog Agility Playground, which is scheduled to open September 7th at Callahan Franklin Dog Exercise Area, 1720 Western Avenue. She personally sponsored four pieces of agility equipment at the park.

The Waukegan Park District board and staff extend their heartfelt thanks and wish her well.



## **About the Waukegan Park District**

Established on December 26, 1916, the district has 47 properties and 720 acres of land, which includes 18-hole Bonnie Brook and 9-hole Greenshire Golf Courses. The District operates the Field House Sports and Fitness Center, the Jack Benny Center for the Arts, the Waukegan SportsPark, the Waukegan Skate Park, the Waukegan BMX Track, recreational centers, an outdoor swimming pool, outdoor sports fields, picnic areas, playgrounds, and sports courts including basketball and tennis. A full range of programs and services are offered year round for all ages from infants to seniors and special populations are included. Many special events are offered throughout the year, many are complimentary. Cultural events are provided by the Waukegan Symphony Orchestra and Concert Chorus, the Bowen Park Theatre Company, and the Waukegan History Museum. The award-winning District employs 57 full-time staff and over 250 part-time, year round, seasonal, and temporary employees. The District is a member of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD), and Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA). The district maintains national accreditation from the NRPA Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA), the Illinois Association of Park Districts' (IAPD) Distinguished Agency accreditation and the Park District Risk Management Agency (PDRMA) accreditation and sustains a Level A Loss Control Program. The district was named a NRPA Gold Medal Finalist in 2012 and 2013.