

# WAUKEGAN PARK DISTRICT

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Waukegan Park District Partners with Faith in Place to Sponsor an Eco-Ambassador**

**Waukegan, Illinois (July 20, 2020)** – The Waukegan Park District is excited to announce a partnership with Faith in Place to sponsor an Eco-Ambassador through their Youth Eco-Ambassadors Summer Program. Waukegan Park District staff will work directly with the sponsored Eco-Ambassador to educate the community on a range of environmental topics, including pollinators, monarch butterflies, and more.

The Eco-Ambassador will engage the community through videos in English and Spanish and information guides and create educational activities for the youth in the Summer Fun Club. The Eco-Ambassador will be Kathy Colin, a Waukegan High School graduate from the class of 2020 and an incoming student at the University of Richmond in Richmond, Virginia.

Faith in Place will provide training that includes education, connection, and advocacy in four program areas: energy and climate change, sustainable food and land use, water preservation, and advocacy. Eco-Ambassadors are empowered to lead on environmental solutions through individual research projects, presentations, guest speakers, and more. This unique program enhances leadership, communication, and professional development skills.

Waukegan Park District President Jeremiah Johnson stated, “We’re excited to partner with Faith in Place and raise awareness about environmental topics while supporting a youth program that is building leaders in our community.”

Waukegan Park District Executive Director Jay Lerner stated, “Empowering young leaders and forming strong relationships with our partners is a key step to improve our community. We’re proud to partner with Faith in Place and their Youth Eco-Ambassadors Summer Program to provide bilingual environmental education to our community.”

Faith in Place Lake County Outreach Director Celeste Flores stated, “Faith in Place’s mission is to empower people of all faiths to be leaders in caring for the Earth, providing resources to educate, connect, and advocate for healthier communities. We certainly look forward to growing our partnership with the Waukegan Park District to not only continue our mission to educate the community, but also empower our youth in becoming the leaders of tomorrow.”

## **About the Waukegan Park District**

Established on December 26, 1916, the district has 50 properties and more than 737 acres of land, including the 18-hole Bonnie Brook and 9-hole Greenshire Golf Courses. Properties are managed to the highest environmental and conservation standards. Facilities operated by the district include the Field House Sports, Fitness and Aquatics Center, the Jack Benny Center for the Arts, the Waukegan's Greg Petry SportsPark, the Waukegan Skate Park, the Waukegan BMX Track, recreational centers, disc golf course, dog exercise area and agility course, outdoor sports fields, picnic areas, playgrounds, splash pads, and sports courts including basketball, tennis and pickleball. A full range of programs and services are offered year-round for all ages, from infants to seniors as well as special needs populations. Healthy lifestyles, wellness initiatives, and a connection with the outdoors and nature are integrated throughout programs, services, and special events. Cultural events are provided by the Waukegan Symphony Orchestra and Concert Chorus, and the Waukegan History Museum. There is something for everyone! The award-winning District employs 63 full-time and over 230 part-time, 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), Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD) Distinguished Agency accreditation and Park District Risk Management Agency (PDRMA) accreditation and maintains a Level A Loss Control Program. The District has received Government Finance Officer Association awards for Distinguished Budget Presentation and Certificate for Excellence in Financial Reporting for eight consecutive years. The district was awarded the NRPA National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management in 2013 and named a NRPA Gold Medal Finalist in 2012, 2013, and 2019.

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## **About Faith in Place**

Faith in Place is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that empowers Illinois people of all faiths to be leaders in caring for the Earth, providing resources to educate, connect, and advocate for healthier communities.

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