
WAUKEGAN PARK DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

Waukegan Park District Employees Honored

Waukegan, Illinois (January 15, 2020) – The Waukegan Park District honored three employees this week for their outstanding service.

Rafael Ayala received the 2020 Commissioners' Award for his exceptional management, superior results, and relationship with employees. He is the Manager of Parks, responsible for hiring, daily operations and safety. During his 21 years at the District, he has overseen the maintenance, planting, mowing, snow removal and playground safety inspections for all District properties. This year was particularly challenging given the impact of the pandemic on services and staff.

Jeremiah Johnson, President of the Board of Commissioners, thanked Rafael and said, "Our parks and facilities are clean, safe, and welcoming for Waukegan residents to enjoy throughout the year due to your leadership, quest for excellence and passion! Thank you on behalf of the Board of Commissioners, your colleagues and the community."

Efrain Rodriguez was named the 2020 Employee of the Year. He works as the Information Technology Specialist for the District and was recognized for his outstanding customer service to staff, as well as planning, implementing, and supporting the technology, equipment and tools that enabled district staff and the board to work remotely beginning March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Jon Beckmann, Superintendent of Finance and Administration, stated as he thanked and congratulated Efrain, "Efrain has been our primary troubleshooter, solving technology issues for District staff working remotely and at District offices. His fellow employees appreciate his excellent problem solving ability and knowledge along with his personal style and manner. He has gone above and beyond expectations to ensure efficient operations at the District and I am especially pleased he was selected to receive this honor."

Anais Anguiano was selected as the 2020 Part-Time Employee of the Year. She works the front desk at the Field House, Sports, Fitness & Aquatics Center. Anais is recognized for great communication skills and her initiative. She communicates and updates Field House staff on daily matters and serves the public as they enter the facility by greeting, assisting with registration, and answering questions.

Erick Beverly, Superintendent of Recreation, stated, "This year Anais has gone above and beyond to ensure that Field House guests and staff remain healthy and safe. She has been on the front line making sure our COVID-19 safety guidelines are followed as guests enter the Field House. One of her initiatives was an online reservation system that replaced the in-person system booking."

The following employees were recognized and congratulated for their years of service at the Waukegan Park District:

- Tracy Walls (20 years)
- April Yarza (20 years)
- Kari Robinson (15 years)
- Errick Beverly (10 years)
- Noel Brusius (10 years)
- Stacey Jozefiak (10 years)
- Shelby McDonald (5 years)
- Kalina Mendez (5 years)

Jay Lerner, Executive Director, congratulated the employees and stated, “Thank you for your commitment to the community, your passion for excellence, your perseverance and your dedication in service to the residents of Waukegan. I am proud to work with each of you and all of the Waukegan Park District staff as we provide exceptional customer service and outstanding parks, facilities and programs.”

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.

TJA/10/26/20

Josue Pasillas
Communications Supervisor
Waukegan Park District
(847) 360-4789

jpasillas@waukeganparks.org
waukeganparks.org