
WAUKEGAN PARK DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

Waukegan Park District Receives 2020 Exceptional Workplace Award from the Illinois Park and Recreation Association

Waukegan, Illinois (January 28, 2021) – The Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA) honored the Waukegan Park District with the 2020 Exceptional Workplace Award at the 2021 IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference. The Exceptional Workplace Award is administered by IPRA and recognizes park and recreation agencies that have gone above and beyond to identify and achieve a high level of health and wellness for their employees.

Agencies participate in a voluntary evaluation process to demonstrate that they have met guidelines that provide employees with the opportunity for a well-balanced life encompassing multiple dimensions of wellness including physical activity, social, emotional, intellectual, spiritual and environmental. The Exceptional Workplace Award is awarded for a five-year term.

At the Waukegan Park District, the Wellness Committee, which consists of health, fitness and recreation subcommittees, offers employees the opportunity to participate in seminars, programs, and services that improve their health and wellness. The District also offers employee benefits to encourage overall well-being. The District has previously been recognized with the Award in 2013 and 2015.

Jeremiah Johnson, President of the Board of Commissioners, stated, “The Exceptional Workplace Award is a reflection of one of our most important assets: our employees. We value the health and wellness of our employees immensely and will continue to support their well-being as we work together to make our community a great place to live, work, and play.”

Jay Lerner, Executive Director, stated, “We are extremely proud to receive the Exceptional Workplace Award from the Illinois Park and Recreation Association again. We strive to be a desirable workplace by sustaining a positive work environment and prioritizing the health and wellness of employees through outstanding benefits and wellness opportunities. The overall support for employees has built a healthier, happier and more energetic workforce.”

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 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 employs 63 full-time and over 230 part-time, seasonal, and temporary employees and is recognized by the IPRA as an Exceptional Workplace. Accreditation is maintained 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). 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/01/27/2021

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