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# WAUKEGAN PARK DISTRICT

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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Waukegan Park District and Waukegan Police Department Partner to Offer Free Toy Ride-Along Program for Local Children**

**Waukegan, Illinois (April 26, 2021)** – The Waukegan Park District and the Waukegan Police Department have partnered to offer local children the opportunity to send their favorite toy on a ride-along with a police officer through the Toy Ride-Along Program. This free and creative program will engage police officers with the community to encourage ongoing relationships.

After being registered, the toys must be dropped off at the Belvidere Recreation Center weekdays beginning on Wednesday, May 5 until Thursday, May 13 from 4pm to 6pm. The toys will be returned to children by Wednesday, June 2, with photos from the ride-along, a certificate, and gift bags from the Waukegan Park District and Waukegan Police Department.

Jeremiah Johnson, President of the Waukegan Park District Board of Commissioners, stated, “Intergovernmental partnerships, like the Toy Ride-Along Program, are an effective way to build community. Engaging police officers with the local children they serve and protect will help form bonds that can last a lifetime.”

Chief Wayne Walles of the Waukegan Police Department stated, “The partnership with the Waukegan Park District to offer the Toy Ride-Along Program will help our police officers establish relationships with the children of the diverse community we serve. We can’t wait to see what kind of toys report for duty!”

Registration is now open and space is limited. More details, including registration and toy requirements, are available at [waukeganparks.org/toy](http://waukeganparks.org/toy). For more information, contact Javi Martinez at [jmartinez@waukeganparks.org](mailto:jmartinez@waukeganparks.org) or (847) 360-4706.

#### **About the Waukegan Park District**

Established on December 26, 1916, the district has 50 properties and more than 740 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/01/27/21

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