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# WAUKEGAN PARK DISTRICT

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Waukegan Park District and City of Waukegan Partnering to Host 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Waukegan Polar Bear Plunge**

**Waukegan, Illinois (December 1, 2021)** – The Waukegan Park District and the City of Waukegan are partnering to host the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Waukegan Polar Bear Plunge on Saturday, January 1, 2022, from 10am to 11am at the Waukegan Municipal Beach, 201 Sea Horse Drive. All proceeds from the fundraiser will benefit Special Recreation Services of Northern Lake County – Waukegan, helping individuals with disabilities participate in camps, athletics, health and fitness programs, and much more.

Individuals can preregister for \$20 per plunger online or at the Field House Sports, Fitness & Aquatics Center. Preregistration will be open until Wednesday, December 29 at 5pm. On-site registration for \$25 per plunger will be available from 9am to 10:45am the day of the event. Plungers will receive a commemorative event shirt.

Jacqueline Herrera Giron, Waukegan Park District Board President, stated, “The Waukegan Park District is excited to partner again with the City of Waukegan to make this in-person experience and fundraiser a success. Funds raised through the Waukegan Polar Bear Plunge remove financial barriers from recreation and leisure programs for many local individuals with disabilities.”

Jay Lerner, Waukegan Park District Executive Director, stated, “There is no better way to start the new year than to take a refreshing dip in Lake Michigan for a good cause. In its 23<sup>rd</sup> year, the Waukegan Polar Bear Plunge raises thousands of dollars for Special Recreation Services of Northern Lake County – Waukegan to support life-changing programs for individuals with disabilities.”

City of Waukegan Mayor Ann Taylor stated, “The Waukegan Polar Bear Plunge is a great way to ring in the new year in support of our community’s special needs students and athletes. We are thankful for the continued support of the participants, sponsors and event partners, the Waukegan Park District and Special Recreation Services of Northern Lake County – Waukegan. This a wonderful, community building event at one of our most amazing locations, the Waukegan Municipal Beach.”

Businesses and organizations can become sponsors with a minimum sponsorship of \$250. More details about the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Waukegan Polar Bear Plunge, including participation and sponsorship options, are available at [waukeganparks.org/plunge](http://waukeganparks.org/plunge).

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## **About the Waukegan Park District**

Established on December 26, 1916, the District has 53 properties and more than 742 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, Jack Benny Center for the Arts, Waukegan's Greg Petry SportsPark, Waukegan Skate Park, BMX Track, SplashZone, Percussion Playground, 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. We offer something for everyone!

The District is a member of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD), Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA) and the Park District Risk Management Agency (PDRMA). The District employs 64 full-time and nearly 200 part-time, seasonal, and temporary employees and is recognized by the IPRA as an Exceptional Workplace.

Nationally accredited by the NRPA Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) and State accredited through the IAPD Distinguished Agency Accreditation. The District has received Government Finance Officer Association (GFOA) awards for Distinguished Budget Presentation and Certificate for Excellence in Financial Reporting for ten consecutive years and received the coveted GFOA Triple Crown Award recognizing the District's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, Popular Annual Financial Reporting and Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for 2019. The Waukegan Park District was awarded the NRPA National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management in 2013 and named a Gold Medal Finalist in 2012, 2013, 2019, and 2021.

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