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# WAUKEGAN PARK DISTRICT

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Waukegan Park District to Host 2022 American Independence Parade**

**Waukegan, Illinois (April 22, 2022)** – The Waukegan Park District’s American Independence Parade will return as an in-person experience on Sunday, July 3, 2022, starting at 1pm from Franklin Street and Sheridan Road, traveling north to Jack Benny Drive and Sheridan Road.

In honor of local first responders and frontline healthcare workers who have continued to serve the community during the pandemic, this year’s parade theme is “Hometown Heroes”. The Grand Marshal will be Vista Health System, a local healthcare provider with a network that includes Vista Medical Center East in Waukegan.

Local businesses and organizations are invited to participate in this community tradition with a parade entry. To participate in the parade, businesses and organizations must submit a completed application to Maria Owens at [mowens@waukeganparks.org](mailto:mowens@waukeganparks.org) by Friday, June 3, 2022. Businesses and non-political organizations can participate for free. However, political organizations must pay a \$100 fee to participate. Local businesses and organizations can also become sponsors of the parade. Additional information, including the parade application and sponsorship options, is available at [waukeganparks.org/parade](http://waukeganparks.org/parade).

Due to the pandemic, the Waukegan Park District hosted virtual parades in 2020 and 2021. The 2020 Virtual American Independence Parade: Shoebox Edition, which reached over 18,000 people on Facebook and YouTube, was recognized with the 2020 Overall Outstanding Program & Special Event Award by the Illinois Park and Recreation Association.

Jacqueline Herrera Giron, President of the Waukegan Park District Board of Commissioners, stated, “The Waukegan Park District’s American Independence Parade is a long-standing tradition in our community. The parade is one of those childhood memories that give us a nostalgic feeling of family, love, and country. Thousands of our neighbors come together along Sheridan Road to gather and celebrate the Fourth of July. I am excited for the return to the in-person experience and the memories that come with this American tradition.”

Jay Lerner, Executive Director of the Waukegan Park District, stated, “The Waukegan Park District is thrilled to host an in-person American Independence Parade again. This year’s parade will be bigger and better, with many creative entries from local businesses, organizations, and entertainment groups. We hope the community joins the celebration as we honor our hometown heroes.”

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## **About the Waukegan Park District**

Established on December 26, 1916, the Waukegan Park District (WPD) 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 WPD include the Field House Sports, Fitness and Aquatics Center, 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 need populations. Healthy lifestyles, wellness initiatives, and a connection with the outdoors and nature are integrated throughout programs, services, and special events. Arts and cultural activities are provided by the Jack Benny Center for the Arts, Waukegan Symphony Orchestra and Concert Chorus, and the Waukegan History Museum. We offer something for everyone!

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 WPD employs 64 full-time and about 235 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 WPD has received Government Finance Officer Association (GFOA) awards for Distinguished Budget Presentation and Certificate for Excellence in Financial Reporting for eleven consecutive years and received the coveted GFOA Triple Crown Award recognizing the WPD's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, Popular Annual Financial Reporting and Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for 2019. The WPD 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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### **Contact:**

Josue Pasillas, MPA  
Communications Supervisor  
Waukegan Park District  
(847) 360-4789  
jpasillas@waukeganparks.org  
waukeganparks.org