
WAUKEGAN PARK DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

Waukegan Park District Reopens Victory Park

Waukegan, Illinois (August 24, 2022) – The Waukegan Park District has completed renovations on and completely reopened Victory Park. Located at 1325 North Avenue, Victory Park was improved with a new playground, fitness area, restroom, healing garden, bark park for dogs, walking path, and restoration of the baseball fields, including the Fred Reckling Field.

The renovation was one of 83 projects funded by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grants in 2020. OSLAD grants are funded by the State of Illinois' Real Estate Transfer Tax and awarded to local governments to develop land for public outdoor recreation. Additional project funds were secured from the City of Waukegan through its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and ComEd and Openlands through their ComEd Green Region Grant program.

The Waukegan Parks Foundation raised funds to support construction of the healing garden, which is just steps away from Vista Medical Center East and honors local first responders and frontline healthcare workers who continued to serve the community during the pandemic. With benches, a fountain, and flowers, the healing garden is a serene space that the community and employees and families of patients at Vista Medical Center East can enjoy. North Shore Gas, a long-time supporter of the Waukegan Park District, contributed funds for the purchase and installation of the fountain in the healing garden.

The Reckling Family made a financial contribution dedicated to improvement of the baseball fields. One of the fields is named after Fred Reckling, the former owner of Grand Appliance & TV. To celebrate the improvements and to honor Fred Reckling, the family hosted an inaugural softball game at Fred Reckling Field.

Janet E. Kilkelly, President of the Waukegan Park District Board of Commissioners, stated, “with a healing garden and fitness area, the renovated park offers new amenities for the community to enjoy. We are extremely proud of the partnerships that made this project a reality and are excited to see the park bustling with activity throughout the year.

Jay Lerner, Executive Director of the Waukegan Park District, stated, “from the Reckling Family and North Shore Gas to Vista Health System and the Waukegan Parks Foundation, many partners helped the Waukegan Park District transform Victory Park. We are excited to see the neighbors enjoying outdoor activities with the new park features.”

###

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 66 full-time and 290 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 the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Triple Crown Award for receiving the GFOA's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, Popular Annual Financial Reporting Award, and the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award. The WPD was awarded the NRPA National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management in 2013, and was named a Gold Medal Finalist in 2012, 2013, 2019, 2021 and 2022.

SS/07/07/2022

Contact:

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