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# WAUKEGAN PARK DISTRICT

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Waukegan Park District Nominee Oscar Zepeda, *Puro Futbol News*' Editor-in-Chief, Honored with Illinois Parks' Top Journalist Award**

**Waukegan, Illinois (November 7, 2022)** – Nominated by the Waukegan Park District, Oscar Zepeda, the Editor-in-Chief of *Puro Futbol News*, was honored by the Illinois Association of Park Districts with the Illinois Parks' Top Journalist Award. The award recognizes a print, radio, and television medium or individual reporter/journalist that has provided responsible and comprehensive coverage of Illinois park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation, and special recreation agencies at the statewide and/or local level.

Oscar has been the Editor-in-Chief for *Puro Futbol News*, a local bilingual newspaper, since 2004, covering news in the Waukegan area. In his weekly reporting, Oscar uses his platform to highlight the importance of park districts in the Latinx community. Oscar has been an important part of the Waukegan Park District's efforts to connect with the community through traditional newspapers.

Oscar and the Waukegan Park District partnered to increase participation from Latinx-owned businesses in the American Independence Parade. Oscar donated weekly quarter-page ads in *Puro Futbol News*, which led to over fifteen new Latinx-owned businesses participating in the parade. Through the years, Oscar has also donated full-page ads to promote free special events.

Janet E. Kilkelly, President of the Waukegan Park District Board of Commissioners, stated, "Oscar Zepeda is a valuable partner of the Waukegan Park District. From special events to plant giveaways, his bilingual reporting in *Puro Futbol News* has been an important part of our efforts to effectively communicate with the Latinx community."

Jay Lerner, Executive Director of the Waukegan Park District, noted, "The creation and maintenance of a positive relationship between the Waukegan Park District and Oscar Zepeda has helped improve awareness of park events and news. Oscar's reporting in *Puro Futbol News* demonstrates the importance of the Waukegan Park District as an integral part of the community."

Oscar Zepeda, stated, "Thank you for giving me the opportunity to contribute my grain of sand by informing our Hispanic community about your beautiful programs and the easy access you provide to reach them. I strongly believe that *Puro Futbol News* will continue to collaborate and strengthen our working ties with the Waukegan Park District for the good of the community at large."

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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 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.

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### **Media Contact:**

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