
WAUKEGAN PARK DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

Waukegan Park District Nominee, Vista Health System, Honored with Best Friend of Illinois Parks Award

Waukegan, Illinois (November 9, 2022) – Nominated by the Waukegan Park District, Vista Health System was honored by the Illinois Association of Park Districts with the Best Friend of Illinois Parks Award. The award recognizes a business or corporation that has demonstrated exemplary support of a local park district, forest preserve, conservation, recreation, or special recreation agency.

Vista Health System, a local healthcare provider with a network that includes Vista Medical Center East in Waukegan, has been a supporter of the Waukegan Park District for more than twenty years as a sponsor of various park district events, including the Fishing Derby, American Independence Parade, Touch a Truck, Halloween Trick or Treat Trail, and Turkey Trot. The generous financial support from Vista Health System has helped the Waukegan Park District expand offerings at these special events, while maintaining a free or low-cost registration fee.

As a longtime sponsor, Vista Health System was named the Grand Marshal of the Waukegan Park District's American Independence Parade in 2022. Unlike any other parade participant, Vista Health System has a facility located along the parade route. It is now tradition to expect employees of Vista Health System, from front desk receptionists to nurses, under a tent offering free water for parade participants to refresh halfway through the parade route.

Janet E. Kilkelly, President of the Waukegan Park District Board of Commissioners, stated, "Vista Health System is a valuable partner of the Waukegan Park District. The company's long-term investment has allowed the Waukegan Park District to expand programming in our parks."

Jay Lerner, Executive Director of the Waukegan Park District, stated, "The Waukegan Park District's positive relationship with Vista Health System is a prime example of a public-private partnership that benefits the community. The Waukegan Park District is grateful for their financial support and partnership throughout the years."

Jon Rozenfeld, Chief Executive Officer of Vista Health System, stated, "Vista Health System is honored to be nominated and chosen as the Best Friend of Illinois Parks Large Business Award recipient. We are proud to be actively involved in the communities we serve and support local organizations like the Waukegan Park District who share a similar mission of keeping our community healthy and connected through various programming and events."

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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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