
WAUKEGAN PARK DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

Waukegan Park District and City of Waukegan Partner to Host 24th Annual Waukegan Polar Bear Plunge

Waukegan, Illinois (December 1, 2022) – The Waukegan Park District and the City of Waukegan are partnering to host the 24th Annual Waukegan Polar Bear Plunge on Sunday, January 1, 2023 from 10am to 11am at the Waukegan Municipal Beach, located at 201 E. 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 Thursday, December 29, 2022 at 4pm. On-site registration for \$25 per plunger will be available from 9am to 10:45am the day of the event. The first 300 plungers will receive a commemorative event shirt.

Janet E. Kilkelly, President of the Waukegan Park District’s Board of Commissioners, stated, “The Waukegan Park District is proud to partner with the City of Waukegan again to host the 24th Annual Waukegan Polar Bear Plunge. From sports to summer camps, the annual fundraiser helps the Waukegan Park District and Special Recreation Services of Northern Lake County – Waukegan remove financial barriers to special recreation programming.”

Jay Lerner, Executive Director of the Waukegan Park District, stated, “With brave individuals taking a dip in the frigid waters of Lake Michigan, the Waukegan Polar Bear Plunge is truly a unique way to welcome the new year. It is rewarding to see the community come together to support life-changing programs for individuals with disabilities.”

Waukegan Mayor Ann Taylor stated, “The Annual Waukegan Polar Bear Plunge is one of my favorite annual events in the City. For many Waukeganites, the plunge is a tradition that helps us ring in the new year while supporting an important cause. I am looking forward to seeing our neighbors daring the cold water again this year in support of Special Recreation. And as always, I am so pleased that our beautiful lakefront can play host for this extraordinary event.”

Businesses and organizations can become sponsors with a minimum sponsorship of \$250. More information about the 24th Annual Waukegan Polar Bear Plunge, including participation and sponsorship options, is available at waukeganparks.org/plunge.

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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.

SS/09/06/2022

About Special Recreation Services of Northern Lake County

The Special Recreation Services of Northern Lake County (SRSNLC) is an association of the Waukegan Park District and the Zion Park District. As an extension of the park districts, SRSNLC provides individuals with disabilities the opportunity to be involved in recreational programs and assist the park districts with inclusion needs. Programs are available for individuals from six years to adults. These programs provide self-development, emotional well-being, health promotion, disease prevention, and improved quality of life.

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