



# A PLACE TO BELONG

## Parks Foundation of Oak Park

### News Release

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### **Parks Foundation of Oak Park planning capital campaign to make Community Recreation Center a reality through philanthropy**

With a desire to create “A Place to Belong” for all Oak Park residents, the Parks Foundation of Oak Park announced today its plans for a capital campaign to raise private donations that will help build a Community Recreation Center.

“This project is going to be possible because people see the value of it to our community, and they are willing to donate their dollars to help create a public asset for our residents,” said Parks Foundation Board President Ben Ahring. “The campaign will help ensure the multi-use center will be built with no new taxes.”

Established in 2012, the Parks Foundation has raised private support for several projects that enhance the public park facilities and green space throughout Oak Park. This will be the Foundation’s most ambitious project yet with a goal to help raise the \$18 million for Phase 1 of the new center. The Community Recreation Center will provide space for indoor sports, including basketball, pickleball, volleyball; a walking track; a fitness center; and after-school programs and access for middle school and high school students. Phase 2 would include an Aquatics Center with indoor swimming pools for lap swim, zero-depth play, and warm water therapy.

“As people learn more about the Center, there is growing support for this facility since it addresses many unfulfilled needs in our community,” said Edward Kerros, board vice president. “We are talking with many people who are interested in supporting a capital campaign we are calling: ‘A Place to Belong – the Campaign for an Oak Park Community Recreation Center.’”

Numerous community surveys have validated that Oak Park lacks affordable recreational and fitness opportunities for all families in the community. As facts about the Community Recreation Center become more known, the Foundation is receiving positive responses to

requests for funding commitments - from private and corporate donors, to foundation and state grants - all to aid in creating a Community Recreation Center for all, built by the community, without raising tax dollars.

“With this early surge of support, I can envision the Center’s opening and our community’s vision for everyone to have ‘A Place to Belong’ becoming a reality – offering opportunities that benefit all children, seniors and families in Oak Park,” said Kerros.

The Parks Foundation is scheduling several community meetings in the coming weeks to share more details about the Center with interested community residents.

*The Parks Foundation promotes giving opportunities around Oak Park parks and to support extraordinary projects within the Park District of Oak Park. Its mission is to collaborate with Oak Park residents, community groups and partner organizations to support exceptional and extraordinary projects that enhance our parks and community life. Founded in 2012, the Foundation is chartered with the State of Illinois as a 501(c)3 charitable organization. While a separate and independent entity, the Foundation coordinates closely with the Park District of Oak Park to help address community health, recreation and wellness needs for all. For more information, visit the Parks Foundation website at: <https://parksfoundationop.org>*

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