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City, School District Endorse Joint Recreation Platform

(Oak Creek, WI) - At their individual business meetings last month, the Oak Creek Common Council and Oak Creek-Franklin Joint School District Board of Education each approved a partnership for a new community education and recreation model. The collaboration features the City and school district coming together formally for the first time to provide joint education and recreation programs community-wide.

“This new platform is just one of those concepts that makes sense for our community,” remarked Mayor Dan Bukiewicz. “Both entities were in the recreation services business individually, planning and implementing, sometimes overlapping programs that catered to often the same program participants. We knew opportunities existed to continue with recreation programming, but in a more efficient way for our taxpayers.”

“We are proud to partner with the City of Oak Creek to ensure that our community has access to high-quality and engaging programs that support academic, social-emotional and physical health. By ensuring these programs are affordable, we’re making sure that everyone - from our youngest learners to our senior citizens - have the opportunity to continue to learn, grow and play,” said Dan Unertl, OCFSD Superintendent.

Oak Creek’s community partnership is a bit unique from other arrangements in the county. The City of Oak Creek will remain a stakeholder and contribute financially from its property tax levy

to the joint platform, as outlined in the recently-inked Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement among the parties.

“Our Mayor, Council and collective strategic discussions on a joint recreation platform were clear: the City wanted a true partnership, not just to get out of the recreation services business. The City and school district held a lot of the same values in the early discussion phase, so it was easy to craft this vision together,” stated Andrew J. Vickers, City Administrator.

This new education and recreation joint platform will feature access to all individuals in the community and District; all ages and stages will have recreation and program outlets, including those in private school or home-school arrangements. The platform blends in traditional physical activities and also features program outlets for educational, social and other well-being initiatives. The joint platform also exhibits a new brand called “Oak Creek Community Education & Recreation.” The community will transition to the new platform beginning September 2021.

“This partnership highlights the power of community. When two organizations come together for the benefit of all, everyone wins. We look forward to building collaborative, creative, and innovative programs for our community, together,” commented Board of Education President Frank Carini.

The new platform’s focus is on the actual recreation programs, both indoors and outdoors. The City will continue to own, maintain and grow its own network of parks, trails and physical recreation assets.

“There is no capital asset transfer here, said Mayor Dan Bukiewicz. “Our residents will simply have a one-stop solution for considering and signing up for recreation programs with the School District staff serving as the lead agent for creating and implementing the programming.”

City and school district staff will continue working on implementation details through the summer months leading up to the formal September 1 transition date. Residents can expect to see communications about how to navigate the transition and will see the new joint brand rolled out at community events throughout the summer. More information about how to register for activities for the fall and beyond will be made available in the coming months. Oak Creek Community Education & Recreation will continue sending out a seasonal activities guide to all constituents via a physical publication mailed directly to every household, which will have further instructions designed to make the transition as seamless as possible.

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