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MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON ANNOUNCES THE RETURN OF FIVE CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT FACILITIES TO PROGRAMMING AND OPERATIONS

CHICAGO – Beginning March 30, 2024, the City of Chicago will decompress temporary shelters at five Chicago Park District facilities that are currently part of the New Arrivals Mission. After all shelter residents have been transitioned to another shelter, the Park District will begin the process of restoring the facilities and resuming park programming and other park operations at each of the five locations currently used as temporary emergency shelters.

Over the next several weeks, shelter residents from Gage Park, the Broadway Armory Park, Brands Park, Leone Park and Piotrowski Park will be transitioned to nearby shelters, minimizing disruptions with schooling and work. The Park District will then assess the facilities and undertake the work that may be needed to return them to their prior use, including any necessary repairs and maintenance, returning any equipment that was stored elsewhere, and updating IT and program registration systems.

As a result of the City's collaboration with the State and the County on a regional approach to the New Arrivals mission, the use of the remaining five park facilities is no longer necessary. It is anticipated that full summer programming will return to those locations previously hosting programs.

"I am proud of the efforts of my administration, our partners, and the many Chicagoans who stepped up to welcome new arrivals by providing shelter in our Park District field houses at a time when this was clearly needed," said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. "We are grateful to the alderpersons and communities who have embraced new neighbors with open arms, and we are pleased that these park facilities will be transitioned back to their intended purpose in time for summer programming."

The first Park District facility came online as a temporary emergency shelter in May of 2023. Others were added throughout the summer for a total of six park sites. The North



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Park Village site was decompressed as a temporary shelter in February of this year and utilized as an early voting site. Every six months, the City has assessed the use of each Park District site to determine if space was still needed as a part of the broader mission.

Utilizing Park District facilities to meet the moment would not have been possible without the support of alderpersons of each location. Their engagement was fundamental in standing up each site, ensuring safety and success, and ultimately, returning the sites to their intended use.

“Little Village has always been a supportive partner in the New Arrivals Mission,” said **22nd Ward Alderman Mike Rodriguez**. “We as a community have opened our doors and our hearts to our new neighbors, and this support has allowed new arrivals to successfully navigate resettlement across the city. Little Village residents are excited to return to Piotrowski Park and to be able to access all the programming it offers.”

“I am proud of the 48th Ward for stepping up when our support was needed,” said **48th Ward Alderwoman Leni Manaa-Hoppenworth**. “The Broadway Armory Park is the only park in our ward, and our young people are excited to have access to the park and park programming once again.”

“Gage Park is a proud immigrant community with hardworking families who immigrated to this country for a better life. Gage Park stepped up and opened the Gage Park Fieldhouse for new arrivals living on the floors of police stations because it was the right thing to do,” said **15th Ward Alderman Raymond Lopez**. “Today, I praise Mayor Brandon Johnson and his team for listening to community members and resuming programming at our Fieldhouse.”

The transition of shelter residents from Park District facilities to new shelter locations will be a coordinated effort between the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS), the Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC) and Chicago Public Schools (CPS). DFSS and OEMC will transport shelter residents from the five park sites to their new shelter locations, prioritizing relocation to the shelters closest to them. Children are expected to remain in the same school during and after the transition.

City departments will work to ensure a smooth transition with the least disruption to shelter residents and the community as possible. This process will be followed by the Chicago Park District working to make its facilities ready for community use soon thereafter.

Additional details on the transition will be provided as they become available.



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