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**MAYOR EMANUEL CONGRATULATES CITY'S NEWEST LIFEGUARDS AT CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT GRADUATION CEREMONY**

*Candidates are recruited through City's One Summer Chicago youth employment program*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Chicago Park District General Superintendent Michael P. Kelly today congratulated 353 new recruits that will guard the city's beaches and pools at a graduation ceremony held at Curie High School. The lifeguard program is part of the City's One Summer Chicago program, which recently expanded to provide 30,000 youth jobs this summer.

"Chicago's lifeguards not only keep our swimmers safe, but also keep our communities strong," Mayor Emanuel said. "Their work watching over our beaches and pools allow both residents and visitors to create memories that will last a lifetime."

The Chicago Park District lifeguard service is recognized by the American Red Cross as one of the leading providers of Aquatic Safety Programming in the country.

"Beaches and pools offer year round recreation and exercise opportunities, such as water polo, aqua fitness classes and swim lessons for the entire family," said Chicago Park District Superintendent Michael P. Kelly. "Lifeguards help ensure that all aquatic facilities and programs are safe and enjoyable."

Members of the Parks District's latest graduating class are the most successful recruits of a series of 17 trainings sessions, which began early this year. The 10-day course encompasses 35 hours of films, lectures and hands on practical work in beach and pool procedures, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, first aid and physical conditioning. The curriculum also includes extensive rescue and emergency procedures instruction. Trainees learn various types of lifesaving techniques using boards and other equipment with a particular emphasis on spinal injury management.

To be admitted into the training program, applicants must pass an initial qualifying test that includes successful execution of: a 200 yard swim against time; a 25 yard underwater swim to retrieve an object at the bottom of a 14 ft. pool, front and rear strangle holds and 20 yard chest carry.

To participate in the qualifying test for admission into the Academy, applicants must meet the following criteria: be a Chicago resident; be 16 years or older by July 1; have proper I-9 Form to verify identity and employment eligibility and demonstrate satisfactory visual, hearing and verbal skills. In addition, each candidate must hold a current American Red Cross and Chicago Park

District certification for lifeguarding and first aid. Certification for these credentials is available through the Chicago Park District Lifeguard training class.

This summer, the Chicago Park District will employ over 1,000 lifeguards to promote water safety at Chicago's 26 beaches and 75 park pools.

Outdoor park pools open June 17 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily. Chicago beaches, which opened on Memorial Day, have hours of 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. daily.

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