



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO



CARA
CHICAGO AREA RUNNERS ASSOCIATION

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**MAYOR EMANUEL, CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT AND CARA ANNOUNCE FREE COMMUNITY RUNS
IN NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS**

1 mile and 5K runs to begin May 21

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, the Chicago Park District and the Chicago Area Runners Association (CARA) today announced 'Go Run, a free series of organized and timed 1 mile and 5K community runs in neighborhood parks across the city. It is a community-based initiative that serves to activate neighborhood parks and to strengthen communities by encouraging an active lifestyle through running and volunteerism.

"These neighborhood runs are one of the best ways to enjoy summer in Chicago, stay active with friends and neighbors, and build a stronger social fabric in communities across the City of Chicago," said Mayor Emanuel. "Go Run is yet another example of the Park District's efforts to keep residents healthy and engaged at little or no cost, and an opportunity for Chicagoans to participate in a great activity right in their own backyard."

'Go Run kicks off Saturday, May 21 at three separate park locations: Humboldt Park, Warren Park and Washington Park; and they will continue to take place every Saturday at 9 a.m. for eight consecutive weeks, until July 9th. Participants will be able to choose to run or walk a 1 mile or 5K course, located entirely within their neighborhood park.

"At CARA we often talk about the 'power of the group', and getting people running and volunteering together in their neighborhood parks is a perfect way to foster a greater sense of community, which is at the core of our mission as a non-profit," said Ed Zylka, CARA's Executive Director.

'Go Runs are open to everyone, from long-time runners to newcomers, who are interested in coming out to their neighborhood park to race, run, jog, walk or volunteer. Families and children are encouraged to participate. The volunteers at each 'Go Run are as important to the mission of the program as are the runners and walkers. Volunteers are not only needed to help support each run, but also to encourage greater community engagement at each 'Go Run.

"We are excited to launch this initiative in partnership with the *Chicago Area Runners Association*," said Chicago Park District General Superintendent and CEO Michael Kelly. "Through this joint venture, we will create fun and activity-rich environments for avid runners to enjoy in their own neighborhood parks, and serve to inspire community members, young and old, to stay fit and healthy as they participate in new experiences close to home."

The goal is that 'Go Run will become a core part of neighborhood culture, encouraging community engagement at and long after each run. "Looking ahead we plan to expand the 'Go Run to more Chicago Park District locations and throughout our entire Chicago area membership," said Zylka.

Participants and volunteers can sign-up online at www.cararuns.org/en/GoRun/ or participants may register before the run each Saturday between 8:15 a.m. and 8:45 a.m. After sign-up participants will be registered for all eight weeks of the program and will be able to run at any of the three parks that are part of the summer series. Participants are not restricted to a single park. Volunteers should pre-register online and will be able to sign-up for the entire program in a single registration, but will be asked to identify which Saturdays they are available to volunteer. Participants may also volunteer for pre-run roles and then join the run.

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CARA, a non-profit organization has been dedicated to running advocacy in Chicago and suburbs since 1978. Starting as the local running club, CARA has grown into the organization that championed the running movement across Chicagoland. Now the nation's third largest running club, CARA helps runners run better, farther, faster and with more fun by clearing paths to a wealth of training, social, outreach and advocacy programs, while promoting friendships and personal fulfillment.

The Chicago Park District is one of the largest municipal park managers in the nation and oversees more than 8,100 acres of green space, more than 580 parks, 26 miles of lakefront, nine museums, two world-class conservatories, 16 historic lagoons, nearly 50 nature areas and thousands of special events, sports and entertainment programs. In addition to serving residents, a number of these parks and beaches are popular tourist destinations.