

NEWS RELEASE

Centennial Park Aquatic Center Begins Season with Five-Star Safety Audit

Surprise Safety Testing Conducted June 9

ORLAND PARK, IL – The Village of Orland Park Centennial Park Aquatic Center (CPAC) has begun its 2010 season earning a five-star risk management audit.

The Starfish Aquatics Institute (SAI) awarded Orland Park's village water park a Five Star Award following a risk management audit on Wednesday, June 9. "Very few aquatic facilities qualify to receive this honor," said Leslie Donovan, president of SAI. "It represents a tremendous commitment to safety and training and exceptional performance by the lifeguard staff on duty at that time," she noted.

The Starfish Aquatics Institute's StarGuard Lifeguard Certification Program provides pool, water park and restricted waterfront lifeguards skills exceeding nationally recognized standards. Using an integrated curriculum of emergency skills, StarGuard lifeguards are trained to protect life or prevent further injury until emergency medical personnel arrive.

"Safety is everyone's number one objective at the Centennial Park Aquatic Center," said Village Trustee Patricia Gira who chairs the village's Parks, Recreation and Environmental Initiatives Committee. "Having a national safety organization test and then honor our guards shows the hard work these kids do every summer," Gira said.

SAI is one of the largest lifeguard, swim instructor and pool operator certifying agencies in the United States. The institute offers state of the art training courses and provides risk management services for the aquatic industry.

"CPAC staff work hard every day to ensure that the village's patrons enjoy a safe environment," said Director of Recreation Nancy Flores. "It was very impressive to spend time with Starguard and to see firsthand how very detailed they are with their audit," Flores said. "They were very impressed with our management team and we're very proud of all of them," she added.

Swimming facilities are tested on a surprise basis with the auditor hiding outside of the facility, secretly video taping the lifeguards. While the guards supervise the pool from their chairs, the auditor evaluates and grades the guards' performances. The auditor studies how often the guards' heads turn, scanning the pool from left, center and right, observes rotation changes and confirms that guards have hydration and shade. Once the hidden audit is completed, the auditor's presence is announced. The auditor then selects guards, team leaders and squad leaders to respond to mock emergency scenarios.

Recreation Department Facility Administrator Ray Piattoni is the full-time staffer who supervises the village's aquatic center. "This is a great way to start our nineteenth season. Our guards train very hard and take their responsibilities very seriously," he said, adding, "This first audit of the season reflects the comprehensive nature of the in-service training that the village's lifeguards complete every day."

CPAC Manager Kendra Will was the manager on duty at the time of the surprise audit with Steven Hurn the squad leader. Tracy Graal, Kaitlin Curran and Gwen Mallon were the team leaders.

Will has worked at the pool for the last eight years, serving as facility manager for the last five. "The guards received five stars in every part of the audit, which is a great honor," Will said. "They performed a deep water spinal scenario, an unconscious drowning scenario and a heat stroke first aid scenario. The auditors were impressed with the guards' performances, both in the guard chairs and in the scenarios," she added.

"We practice like we perform so the guards are prepared for a real situation if one was to occur. I'm very proud of our staff. We take pride in our jobs and make the village's Centennial Park Aquatic Center a safe facility so people can enjoy themselves when they visit," Will said.

Operated by the Village of Orland Park Recreation Department, the Centennial Park Aquatic Center debuted in 1992, during Orland Park's Centennial Celebration. The facility is located at 15600 West Avenue in Orland Park and includes a zero depth pool with two water sides and a children's play structure; a lazy river that surrounds a 328 foot tube slide and a 200 foot body slide; a t-pool that includes a jump cliff, a 28 foot drop slide, 42 foot body slide and lap lanes. The facility also offers family changing rooms, sand volleyball and a concession stand. The facility is open from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Further information is available by calling the Village of Orland Park Recreation Department at 708/403-7275 or by visiting the recreation area of the village's website at www.orland-park.il.us.

Some of the Centennial Park Aquatic Center guards who earned a five-star audit during the facility's first surprise safety test of the season included (sitting, front row) Gina Fencil, Lauren Somogye, Stephanie Collins and Tabitha Negrete. Standing in the back row are Kevin O'Malley, Theresa Curran, Casey Henneberry, Matt Weimer, Liz Meyers, Katie Gallimore, Kristen Katner and Tim Chow.