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## **John Seibert Announces Retirement as Valpo Parks Director**

After more than 34 years of service to the City of Valparaiso, Valpo Parks Director John Seibert has announced his retirement, effective July 1, 2023. "Serving as Director of Valparaiso Parks has been the professional privilege of my life and I am so thankful for the relationships and the opportunities we have been given to serve our exceptional community," said Seibert in his letter of retirement.

"We are extraordinarily grateful for John Seibert and his leadership. Under his guidance, our parks and programming have been recognized nationally and become an integral part of what makes Valparaiso the amazing place it is today. John's contribution to our community is unmatched and we wish him all the best in his next chapter," said Mayor Matt Murphy.

Under Seibert's leadership, Valpo Parks have flourished, adding signature spaces, such as ValPlayso (and its Next Generation), Fairgrounds Park, Central Park Plaza, Creekside, Samardzija Field, and the upcoming Flounder & Friends Skatepark, Adult Center for Enrichment (ACE) and Valpo Sports & Recreation Campus. Seibert has been instrumental in building public-private partnerships that unite the community and empower projects to their full potential.

In over 30 years with Seibert as Director, the Valpo Parks team, along with City and Community partners, have been consistently recognized locally, regionally, and nationally for innovation and quality. Valpo Parks facilities and services have received awards from organizations including the Valpo Chamber of Commerce, Porter County Tourism, Indiana Association of Cities and Towns, the Indiana Parks and Recreation Association, the American Society of Landscape Architects, the Indiana Greenways Foundation, and the Shirley Heinze Land Trust.

Last year Valpo Parks was named Outstanding Agency by the Indiana Park & Recreation Association (IPRA) for their significant contributions to the parks and recreation field and their role in improving quality of life in Valparaiso and throughout Indiana. In 2016, the American Planning Association recognized Valparaiso's Central Park Plaza as one of "America's Great Public Spaces."

Seibert himself is the recipient of the W.W. Patty Distinguished Alumni Award, the oldest and most prestigious alumni recognition bestowed by the Indiana University School of Public Health, presented to a graduate who has demonstrated outstanding personal and professional achievement in his or her career. He is a former president of the Indiana Parks and Recreation Association (IPRA) and has received IPRA's Outstanding Professional Award and its Distinguished Life Member Award. He is a past member of the National Advisory Board of the Epley Institute for Parks and Public Lands.

Locally, Seibert has served on many boards and commissions, including Housing Opportunities, the Valpo Chamber of Commerce, Valparaiso Kiwanis and the Mayor's Human Rights Advisory Commission. He was named as a United Way Executive of the Year and was the 2016 Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce Community Leader of the Year.

Seibert and his wife, Kaye Frataccia-Seibert intend to continue serving the community during their retirement, working with compassionate and outreach ministries at Calvary Church, serving local non-profit organizations and continuing to volunteer with the Parks and throughout Valparaiso, as well as spend more time with family, friends and each other. "I could not be more pleased and excited about the next chapter for Valpo Parks with our current exceptional Park staff and Board. They are prepared and have the 'right stuff' to take Valpo Parks and our community to the next level," said Seibert.