



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CHICAGO WILDERNESS MEMBERS HOST  
WAUKEGAN “PUENTE A LA NATURALEZA” WEEK**

WAUKEGAN, IL – From April 28 to May 4, 2013, **Chicago Wilderness** members will host the inaugural **Puente a la Naturaleza Week**, offering a series of outdoor events to connect children and youth with nature.

*Puente a la Naturaleza*, or Bridge to Nature, events will take place at schools, public parks, libraries, community gardens, and forest preserves. Facilitated by Latino youth and adults from the community with assistance from conservation organizations and cultural institutions, the events are focused on nature-based and stewardship activities such as gardening, hiking, park clean-ups, and interpretive walks.

These events are part of the Chicago Wilderness Leave No Child Inside initiative, which encourages families to unplug from computer screens, TVs and cell phones and go in their backyards, parks, or forests preserves to exercise, breathe fresh air, and spend quality time outside.

“Providing the places and programs that encourage children to get outside, for their health, and to help them form a connection with local nature, is a critical part of our work,” says Melinda Pruett-Jones, Executive Director, Chicago Wilderness. “Through *Puente a la Naturaleza*, children and families will engage in fun, healthy, and educational activities in Waukegan’s outdoor areas.”

These following *Puente a la Naturaleza* events are free and open to the public:

- **Live Green Family Festival**, April 28, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.  
Waukegan Park District, Bowen Park, 1800 N. Sheridan Road, Waukegan  
Participate in fun nature-based and volunteer activities such as nature walks, gardening, park clean-up, camping demonstrations, and more. For more information, visit [www.waukeganparks.org](http://www.waukeganparks.org).
- **Family Gardening: Leave No Child Inside**, April 30, 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.  
Waukegan Public Library, 128 N. County Street, Waukegan  
Learn how your children can take care of growing plants and how the entire family benefits from fresh food. For more information, visit [www.waukeganpl.org](http://www.waukeganpl.org).

- **Bilingual Nature Hike**, May 4, 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.  
Lyons Woods, W. Blanchard Road at Sheridan Road, Waukegan  
Take your family on a leisurely walk with a naturalist through the Lyons Woods Forest Preserve to learn about local plants and animals. For more information, visit [www.ryersonwoods.org](http://www.ryersonwoods.org).

Carmen Patlan, Community Engagement and Outreach Manager at the Waukegan Public Library and one of the *Puente a la Naturaleza* organizers, emphasizes the importance of LNCI in the Waukegan community. “Many Latino parents in our community face difficult challenges such as immigration issues, which has forced many of them to live in silos. By working together with Chicago Wilderness members and other partners, we can spread the word to many more families and help them feel comfortable participating in educational and nature-based activities within the community.”

Other *Puente a la Naturaleza* program organizers include Friends of Ryerson Woods, Lake County Forest Preserves, Waukegan Park District, Waukegan Public Library, Lake Forest Open Lands, First Baptist Church of Waukegan, Waukegan Harbor Citizens Advisory Group, University of Illinois Extension/4-H Program, and the Chicago Botanic Garden’s Green Youth Farm. Support for the programs is provided through a grant to Chicago Wilderness from REI, Inc.

### **About Chicago Wilderness**

Chicago Wilderness is a regional alliance that connects people and nature. More than 260 public, private and corporate organizations work together to restore local nature and improve the quality of life for all who live here, by protecting the lands and waters on which we all depend. The four key initiatives of Chicago Wilderness—to restore the health of local nature, protect green infrastructure, mitigate climate change, and leave no child inside—reflect our commitment to using science and emerging knowledge, as well as a collaborative approach to conservation, to benefit all the region’s residents. For more information, visit [www.chicagowilderness.org](http://www.chicagowilderness.org).

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