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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**The Metro East Park and Recreation District and the Illinois Center for Autism  
Celebrate Autism Awareness**

**Fairview Heights, Illinois, April 11, 2011** – April is “Autism Awareness Month” and the Metro East Park and Recreation District (MEPRD) on behalf of The Illinois Center for Autism (ICA) celebrates this special month by lighting the world’s second largest fountain blue. “We are excited about doing something to help foster awareness of such a worthy cause and to create additional interest in Malcolm W. Martin Memorial Park,” said Mike Buehlhorn, Executive Director of MEPRD.

“This was Mike’s idea and we are thrilled that MEPRD board agreed to do this. It is a wonderful example of how our communities continue to support ICA. On Tuesday, April 12 at 9 p.m., clients, families, staff and supporters of ICA will meet for a “picture perfect” moment to commemorate Autism Awareness in the Metro East,” said Rachel Newsome, Director of Communications and Development. The geyser has four scheduled eruptions every day from April to October, at noon, 3 p.m., 6 p.m., and 9 p.m.

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The Gateway Geyser is a fountain located on the riverfront of the Mississippi River in the Malcolm W. Martin Memorial Park in East St. Louis, Illinois, directly across from the Gateway Arch in St. Louis, Missouri. The fountain is the world's second tallest, lifting water to a height of approximately 630 feet (192 m). Four minor fountains represent the four rivers which converge at St. Louis and East St. Louis.

To complete the vision of a memorial on each side of the Mississippi River, the Gateway Geyser was designed and constructed by St. Louis-based Hydro Dramatics. Three 800-horsepower pumps power the fountain, discharging 8,000 U.S. gallons of water per minute at a speed of 250 feet per second. The fountain has an axial thrust of 103,000 pounds-force; water is jetted out of the 6-foot-tall aerated nozzle at a pressure of 550 pounds per square inch.

On June 17, 2005, ownership of the Gateway Geyser and its 34 acre site was transferred to the Metro East Park and Recreation District. The fountain now serves as the cornerstone for the Malcolm W. Martin Memorial Park, which opened officially in June 2009.

The Geyser was illuminated for the first time on October 28, 2005, in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the St. Louis Arch.

For more information, or to find out more about the celebration of Autism Awareness Month at ICA, please contact us at 618-398-7500.

*The Illinois Center for Autism, located at 548 S. Ruby Lane in Fairview Heights, is a non-profit, community-based mental health treatment and education agency. For more information about these services or autism, visit the Illinois Center for Autism website at [www.illinoiscenterforautism.org](http://www.illinoiscenterforautism.org).*