

# Local Focus

## dh Readers' comments at dailyherald.com Early inmate release politically risky for Quinn

Early Release? This will just embolden the criminals that are still on the outside. Crime will get worse, OUR living conditions will get worse. — posted by **Black Flag**

Depends what their sentence was for. If it was a non predatory crime, or a non predatory crime, I say go for it. Some people are oversentenced. — posted by **Vermin in Ermine**

I'm not for early release — but I guess I wonder what it could hurt — the people released early can't have done anything worse than our politicians do on a daily basis. — posted by **KittyBranch**

## It's festival season



Complete suburban listings today in Time out!

# Dreams for Kids splashes into Wauconda

*Youngsters with special needs ski on Bangs Lake*

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Quincy Dees had never water-skied, and admitted being a little scared before he tried it Thursday, but said he conquered his fear to do it.

The 15-year-old is physically and mentally disabled, so it was a pretty big deal to everyone involved when Dees successfully made it from his wheelchair, into the boat and onto the water.

Dees, his chaperones and volunteers screamed with delight when the resident of the Illinois Center for Rehabilitation and Education hit the water.

"I haven't stopped crying," said Lani McKinnon, one of eight volunteers who helped Dees into the boat so he could go water-skiing and tubing. "It's amazing to see these kids who've never seen water before water-ski."

In all, 50 kids participated in Wauconda's first-ever Dreams for Kids Extreme Recess Water Sports event. It gave kids with physical and mental disabilities from across the area a day of water-skiing, tubing, canoeing, kayaking, boat rides, face



PHOTOS BY PAUL VALADE/pvalade@dailyherald.com  
**Matthew Halemba, 16, of Highland Park water-skies on Bangs Lake in Wauconda. In all, 50 kids with disabilities were treated to a day of water activities, food and music as part of the Dreams for Kids event Thursday.**

painting, food, entertainment and more at little cost to them.

Some 100 volunteers and 70 donors contributed to making the event on Bangs Lake a success.

Tom Tuohy founded Dreams for Kids, a nonprofit organization in Chicago, almost 20 years ago with the goal to "take the 'dis' out of disability." He said kids who participate in the program named the event Extreme

Recess because, "they've (the kids) never had recess."

It was Wauconda resident Liz Richards' idea to bring Extreme Recess to Wauconda. She was inspired by Dreams for Kids after attending their Holiday for Hope party in December. Extreme Recess Water Sports has taken place annually in Twin Lakes, Wis., for 10 years. Richards said her goal is to make this an annual event in

Wauconda.

The community came together to make the event possible. Docks restaurant in Wauconda hosted, and lunch was mostly donated by Fox River Food. Boating stores donated adaptive water equipment, and several Wauconda residents donated personal boats and cash.

The participants sold 10, \$1 raffle tickets for a drawing in



**Rhianna Prince, 12, of Wauconda, left, gets a laugh from her mom, Jennifer, after telling her about tipping over at the start of her skiing adventure at the Dreams for Kids event Thursday on Bangs Lake in Wauconda.**

December to attend.

Shelly Gonsch, director of operations for Dreams for Kids, estimated without the donations, the event would have cost around \$10,000, or approximately \$50 for each participant.

Everyone involved said their donations were well worth it. Many said the best part was seeing the kids' smiling faces and knowing they had a great day.

"You just see the smiles on their faces when they're doing something they've never done before," Gonsch said. "We're (Dreams for Kids) trying to step it up and say that every kid is capable of doing something an everyday kid can do."

Safety was stressed as professional helpers and adaptive

equipment were present, and extra police patrol boats were on the lookout for accidents, although none occurred. Volunteers taught the participants hand signals if they wanted to stop, slow down or go faster while on the water.

"It's absolutely the most wonderful experience to them. They're free and moving, plus the fact that they're independent and can do it," said Susan Richey, an occupational therapist at Aquanuts in Twin Lakes, Wis., which donated all adaptive water ski equipment for the day.

Rihanna Prince of Wauconda was another participant enjoying activities she had never done before.

"I like speed," she said.