



Friends of the Parks

THE YEAR IN REVIEW 2002



Friends of the Parks
CHICAGO





Dear Friends

Overall, this has been another good year for greening in the City of Chicago. The Chicago Park District continues to improve and expand Chicago parks. Mayor Richard M. Daley continues his commitment to greening, mandating that all City departments look for ways to make Chicago a greener, more environmentally-friendly city. Nevertheless, the events of this year show that Friends of the Parks' role as the city's strongest parks advocate remains crucial.

This past year, Friends of the Parks turned its attention to the Cook County Forest Preserves. Four thousand of the 68,000 acres of the Cook County Forest Preserves are located within Chicago. Many thousands more border the City of Chicago. Friends of the Parks joined with Friends of the Forest Preserves to conduct a two-year study of the condition of the Forest Preserve District. The comprehensive report released in 2002 found the forest preserves to be in deplorable condition and recommended that the Forest Preserve District develop active and independent leadership and staff, focus on its core mission of restoring natural lands, provide opportunities for public participation, and acquire 7,000 acres of additional land in 2003.

Friends of the Parks, in two lawsuits, also challenged the plan to rebuild Soldier Field to benefit the Chicago Bears, and argued on direct appeal before the Illinois Supreme Court. While Friends of the Parks suffered setbacks in the courts, we successfully publicized the drawbacks of the new stadium being built in the historic walls of Soldier Field.

This past year Friends of the Parks partnered with a number of community groups and public officials to protect and improve neighborhood parks in numerous communities, from Rogers Park on the north to the Altgeld Gardens Public Housing project on the south. While other cities may envy Chicago's spectacular park-filled lakefront, the City still has only 7,300 acres of parkland (half of which are on the lakefront), well below the recommended standard of two acres per 1,000 residents in more than 55 of Chicago's 77 community areas. We worked with park advisory councils and community groups to help identify and advocate for additional parks in neighborhoods.

Friends of the Parks continued its tradition of getting the public involved in enhancing parks through volunteer programs. This past year Friends of the Parks began a unique program in which Chicago Public School students from three high schools became park stewards while earning service learning hours for graduation. Students complete a park survey showing they have become familiar with their local park, and may also clean and beautify the park, photograph or map the park, and work with the local park advisory council to participate in advocacy on behalf of the park.

Friends of the Parks:

- Helped a coalition of 17 organizations push for the long-delayed development of DuSable Park on a three-acre site just north of the mouth of the Chicago River.
- Completed a study of the concession operations in Chicago parks.
- Worked with residents in the Rogers Park neighborhood on a new design for Triangle Park north of Howard Street.
- Worked with North of Howard Community Association, the Chicago Park District and local officials to ensure that the Park District



Thomas G. Sanberg,
Chairman of the Board



Erma Tranter,
President

would acquire and rebuild the privately-owned Harold Washington Playlot.

- Worked with Alderwoman Mary Ann Smith and the Edgewater Community to acquire lakefront property on the North Side that was sought for high-rise development.
- Sponsored a successful Earth Day clean-up involving more than 2,000 volunteers (despite bad weather) and the year-round Adopt-a-Park program involving a total of ninety-three participating groups, each of which agree to complete six workdays in a particular park.
- Sponsored an educational program called "Nature is a Classroom," which brings twenty classes from eight schools to Montrose Harbor to experience hands-on interdisciplinary lessons in an outdoor setting.
- Monitored a proposed widening of the Eisenhower expressway to try to prevent the taking of parkland in Columbus Park.
- Co-sponsored the sixth annual Osaka Garden Festival in Jackson Park, a two-day festival featuring Japanese cuisine, arts and crafts, music, dance and children's activities.

All in all, despite the sad mistake of the new Chicago Bears' stadium in Soldier Field, Chicago saw many improvements, both big and little, in the park system. Friends of the Parks takes pride in its ongoing advocacy of such improvements, and in the greener, more livable city that results from such efforts.

Encouraged by our achievements and by the broad public support that makes them possible, we pledge to continue working with you, our members and supporters, to create new recreational and educational programs in our parks, and to protect our parks from encroachments. We urge your participation and financial support.

Sincerely,

Thomas G. Sanberg
Chairman of the Board

Erma Tranter
President



Park Advocacy: Protecting the Public Interest



We are trying to raise money from both public and private sources to renovate and expand the playground in Wicker Park. I contacted Friends of the Parks early in the process for ideas and assistance. I found Friends of the Parks' staff very supportive and informative in every way possible, from writing letters of support to local officials to finding potential funding sources. Chicago is fortunate to have an organization such as Friends of the Parks to help local communities protect and enhance their parks.

*Daniel Marre
Partner, Altheimer & Gray
Chair, Development Committee
Wicker Park Advisory Council*

Forest Preserve Project: A New Initiative

In 2002, Friends of the Parks and Friends of the Forest Preserves released a two-part study of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County. Phase I found that the Forest Preserve District has virtually abandoned its histori-

cally aggressive land acquisition program, with the rate of land purchase since 1990 falling to the lowest rate since the Forest Preserve District started in 1913. Furthermore the land managed is in bad shape, with 57% to 70% bare ground and almost no wildflowers in the woodland communities surveyed.

User survey respondents also expressed frustration because the District does not respond to their requests or needs. District officials do not make annual budgets available for timely public review. The Board of Commissioners does not provide an opportunity for citizens to comment on proposals until after the items have been approved at the Board hearings. Survey respondents also gave failing grades for sanitary facilities, trail signs, trash collection and public information in the forest preserves.

Phase II of the study found that essentially all authority rests in the hands of the president, with little role for board members or the public. Few jobs in the District focus on the core mission of restoring and protecting natural lands. Instead operations focus on mowing grass, collecting garbage, and repairing facilities; and running golf courses, swimming pools and toboggan slides. The District makes almost no attempt to communicate with the public. Finally, the District budget lacks detailed information, such as a balance sheet, needed for useful analysis, and does not always reflect the true costs of operation.

Study recommendations include:

- Develop an active Board of Commissioners and select a separate president of the District who is not also the president of Cook County.
- Develop and reorganize the staff so that qualified persons can make independent decisions, so the staff can focus on acquisition and management of land while turning over law enforcement and recreational pursuits to local governments.

- Take care of the land by creating a new Department of Land Management out of the existing Departments of Forestry and Conservation, increasing the new department's staffing, preparing management plans for all of the District's land, engaging and supporting volunteers, and increasing public education and outreach about land management.
- Invite the public to get involved by allowing citizens to comment on agenda items before the board acts on them, by welcoming input from environmental groups, and by restructuring and reinvigorating the board committees.
- Improve the budget by including comparisons to actual figures from the previous year and realistic projections for the current year, taking immediate steps to control financial losses and improve financial controls, and releasing the budget in time to enable public review.

As a result of our efforts, the County Board President proposed in October 2002 a dramatically reduced 2003 budget which followed many of the study recommendations.



DuSable Park Comes Into View

DuSable Park, dedicated as parkland in 1988 by the late Mayor Harold Washington, is located where the Chicago River meets Lake Michigan. Developing this park site provides an opportunity to celebrate Chicago's origins. DuSable Park is named for Chicago's first non-native settler, Jean Baptiste Pointe DuSable, whose contribution to the development of Chicago is only beginning to be known and celebrated by Chicagoans.

Friends of the Parks helped form the DuSable Park Coalition, a group of 17 organizations seeking the development of DuSable Park. The Coalition met with key elected officials and the U.S. EPA to push for the environmental testing and clean-up needed to pre-

Top: The Forest Preserve District of Cook County maintains 68,000 acres of forest preserves.

Right: The box highlights the future DuSable Park, located where the Chicago River meets Lake Michigan.



I always count on Friends of the Parks to be on top of any issue that involves Chicago's lakefront and its parks. They're willing to dig for the information they need to take decisive action. And they're never afraid to stick their necks out if Chicago's parks and open spaces are at risk. They're a great ally.

*Joyce O'Keefe
Associate Director,
Openlands Project*

pare for development of the park. In spring of 2002 Kerr-McGee, subsequent owner of the Lindsey Light Company that had contaminated the land with thorium in the early 20th century, completed comprehensive thorium testing on the site of the future park. In September 2002, crews spent two days removing 18 inches of thorium-contaminated dirt from a few "hot spots" on the site.

We are happy to report that the DuSable Park site was cleaned of thorium and the Chicago Park District has established a steering committee to design and develop DuSable Park. Also in spring of 2002, Friends of the Parks sponsored a symposium to discuss the struggle to develop the park, part of a month-long exhibit assembled by artist Laurie Palmer, entitled "The DuSable Park Project," at the Chicago Architecture Foundation.

Friends of the Parks Undertakes Park Concessions Study

During 2002, Friends of the Parks conducted a study of concessions in Chicago's parks. The study focused on 70 lakefront park concessions, or three-fourths of the concessions in all Chicago parks. The study found that permanent concession facilities were better maintained and better designed for a park setting, while concession trailers, trucks, tents and temporary wooden kiosks were unsuitable for parks, and were densely congregated in high-congestion areas.

The report recommended that the Park District develop a concession plan which follows existing park framework plans, avoids congestion, standardizes concession designs, relies on permanent facilities, and provides an opportunity for the public to review and comment on the selection of concessions before approval. Friends of the Parks further recommended that the Department of Research & Planning and the Department of Natural Resources of the Park District review such concession plans, and that the Park District enforce the standards for concession site choice and site maintenance.

Chicago Shoreline Revetment Project Update

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has maintained its partnership with the City of Chicago and the Chicago Park District for the 20-year restoration of eight deteriorating miles of Chicago shoreline. Friends of the Parks has advocated for lakefront restoration which complements the park setting, promotes public and visual access to the lake, and includes public participation in the ongoing project. As a result, changes to the design have been made. In 2002 Friends of the Parks continued to monitor the following sections: Belmont to Diversey; 33rd – 37th Street; 37th – 43rd Street; 43rd – 51st Street. Friends of the Parks also monitored the reconstruction of the step-stone revetment between 54th and 57th, with land expansion to accommodate new pedestrian underpasses at 57th Street. In addition, Friends of the Parks supported the Hyde Park community's separate study of the design and materials for the revetment repair at Promontory Point. This project is on hold until these issues can be resolved.

Eisenhower Expressway Threatens Columbus Park

In the spring of 2002, the Illinois Department of Transportation began planning to expand the Eisenhower I-290 Expressway. Friends of the Parks wrote to the Department stating that in expanding the Eisenhower, the State should not, under any circumstances, take any part of Columbus Park, a 135-acre park immediately north of the Eisenhower on Chicago's west side. We further requested that the State conduct an Environmental Impact Study for the Eisenhower Expressway expansion proposal, and fully evaluate alternative plans.

A task force is now studying the feasibility of decking over the Eisenhower Expressway, and creating parkland above it.

During 2002, Friends of the Parks conducted a study of Chicago park concessions. The concessions pictured above negatively impact the park in which they're located by blocking most of the sidewalk, cluttering the park with storage materials, and detracting from a tranquil park setting.



The new Bears Stadium at Soldier Field is not just the Mistake on the Lake. It sets a dangerous precedent that could lead, if unchallenged, to private development anywhere on Chicago's magnificent lakefront. Friends of the Parks immediately recognized what was at stake and was in the vanguard of the effort in court to protect our lakefront. Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois is proud to have partnered with Friends of the Parks in this effort.

*John H. Stassen
Partner, Kirkland & Ellis
Chairman of the Board,
Landmarks Preservation
Council of Illinois*

Soldier Field (left) was a noble structure, a national historic landmark, dedicated to Americans who served in our armed forces. Friends of the Parks' two lawsuits challenged the legality of the Bears' stadium plan, which will continue a wasteful use of a key public lakefront park, as well as the misuse of public monies. The visual domination of Soldier Field by the new addition (right) has destroyed its historical significance, as well.

"Pitch and Putt" Golf Course at Monroe Street Not Appropriate for Grant Park

Friends of the Parks objected to a Park District proposal for a "pitch-and-putt" golf course in Grant Park, between the Daley Bicentennial Plaza and Butler Field at the old Monroe Street garage entrance. The landscaped pitch and putt course, which did not receive review by the Park District Board, did not comply with the Grant Park Framework Plan, which called for "Grove Overlooks" at that site.

Despite the concerns raised by Friends of the Parks, Openlands Project, and Metropolitan Planning Council, the pitch and putt course is under construction.

Edgewater to Get New Lakefront Park for Its Residents

In September 2002, the Chicago Park District acquired lakefront land in Edgewater — the only remaining undeveloped lakefront property on the North Side. More than ten years ago a developer proposed a high-rise condominium on the property. The community, Friends of the Parks and Alderwoman Mary Ann Smith successfully organized opposition to construction at that time, and opposed another such proposal two years ago. At that time Alderwoman Smith down-zoned the property from a designation that allowed high-rise condominiums. Finally, the City of Chicago acquired the property in September and transferred it to the Park District to be developed into a park.

Friends of the Parks Stands Up for the Lakefront

In 2001, Friends of the Parks filed two lawsuits challenging the legality of the construction of a new football stadium within the walls of the historic Soldier Field. In November 2001, Judge Lester Foreman dismissed Friends of the Parks' first lawsuit,

which challenged the Chicago Plan Commission's approval of the commercial sports stadium without sufficient findings of fact as required by the Lakefront Protection Ordinance. In April 2002, Judge John Madden dismissed Friends of the Parks' second lawsuit, which challenged the use of public parkland for the primary benefit of a private football corporation, as well as the state's funding legislation.

The Illinois Supreme Court granted direct appeal. Friends of the Parks and Landmark Preservation Council of Illinois argued that the Bears' commercial sports stadium project on Chicago's lakefront violates the Illinois constitution, as well as the public trust doctrine. Article VIII of the Illinois Constitution provides that public funds or public property shall be used only for public purposes. The public benefit must be primary.

With the Bears' deal, Friends and Landmarks argued that this standard of public benefit is completely reversed. The deal was structured for the Bears' benefit. The public pays almost \$500 million in construction costs for the Bears' new commercial sports stadium with \$1.3 billion in debt service over 30 years; the public assumes primary maintenance and replacement obligations. And the construction of the commercial sports stadium destroys public trust property.

The Illinois Supreme Court recently sided with the lower court and upheld the Bears' Stadium plan.

While Friends of the Parks lost in the courts, we did successfully spotlight the major drawbacks of the new stadium being built within Soldier Field, and exposed the millions of dollars of profits the Bears expect to make from this deal. We are saddened by the court's decision but feel proud of our work to defend Chicago's lakefront.



Neighborhood Parks: Friends of the Parks Reaches Out to Communities Throughout the City



Friends of the Parks was my lifesaver. I was a newly-elected advisory council president in need of the support and experience Friends of the Parks provided and continues to share. The group came to my aid quickly when I had questions about establishing a non-profit status for our group and getting a new fieldhouse built for our community. Friends of the Parks is also helping us find out what residents want the park to provide. That way we'll have the backing to proceed.

*Eleaza Peterson
President, Lake Meadows
Advisory Council*

The Chicago Park District recently improved Berger Park by adding new woodchips in the children's playlot, repairing play equipment and adding concrete chess boards.

Friends of the Parks' mission is to work with park advisory councils, citizens, community organizations and government agencies to preserve, improve and expand the amount of park space in Chicago's park-deficient neighborhoods. In 2002, we worked with groups in over 100

parks to enhance parks. Friends of the Parks:

- Worked with the Berger Park Advisory Council, Alderman Joe Moore, and the Park District to advocate for a new playground in Berger Park (6205-47 N. Sheridan Road) and will serve as the Council's fiscal agent.
- Partnered with the Carver Park Advisory Council, the Park District and the Chicago Housing Authority to improve Carver Park (939 E. 132nd Street) in the Altgeld Gardens Public Housing project.
- Served as the fiscal agent for Wrightwood Park Advisory Council as they rebuilt Wrightwood Park (2534 N. Greenview Avenue) in the Lakeview community; served as the fiscal agent for Schaefer Park Advisory Council as they work to beautify and enhance nearby Schaefer Playlot (2415 N. Marshfield).
- Collaborated with the East Village community, Alderman Ted Matlak, the City and the Park District to protest the sale of Honore Playground (916-20 N. Honore). The Park District successfully acquired the playground in 2002.
- Worked with the Calumet Heights Community Coalition to identify potential parkland, which the Chicago Park District did acquire and now plans to develop into a park;
- Partnered with the Abbott Park Advisory Council to seek a variety of requested improvements at Abbott Park (49 E. 95th Street).
- Worked with the Lake Meadows Park Advisory Council to help find fieldhouse space for children and adult programming at Lake Meadows Park (3117 S. Rhodes).
- Served as the fiscal agent for the Wicker Park Advisory Council as they secured two grants to construct a sculpture in Wicker Park (1425 N. Damen Avenue) commemorating the late Charles Wicker for his community efforts.
- Sought to persuade Wendell Smith School adjacent to Gately Park (810 E. 103rd Street) to comply with an

intergovernmental agreement to allow park programs at the school.

- Served as fiscal agent for the newly-formed Friends of Park West Playlot, which seeks to renovate the Park West Playlot (745 W. Wrightwood).
- Worked with the Little Village Environmental Justice Organization on an open space study for Little Village.
- Joined with Alderman James Balcer in requesting that City officials reopen Olive Park (a 10.5-acre waterfront park immediately east of Ohio Street Beach), which the City did after reviewing security for the nearby water filtration plant.

Friends of the Parks Continues 'Build-a-Park' Program

In more than 55 of Chicago's 77 community areas, residents do not have a bare-minimum two acres of parkland per 1,000 population in which to play. Through our Build-a-Park program, Friends of the Parks worked with neighborhood groups to develop new programming and parks in park-poor communities.

Friends of the Parks worked with residents in the Rogers Park neighborhood on a new design for Triangle Park north of Howard Street. A nearby condominium developer threatened to build parking spaces on this land. We hired landscape architect Josephine Bellalta to work with residents to redesign Triangle Park and find a solution for parking. Working with the Howard Area Community Center, Family Matters, Alderman Joe Moore and the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Friends of the Parks and the community created plans to protect Triangle Park while providing parking spaces for nearby condominium owners off-site. Our combined efforts resulted in a new park design and the Park District's successful acquisition of Triangle Park.

We also worked with the North of Howard Community Association, Alderman Joe Moore and the Park District to ensure that the Park District would acquire and rebuild the privately-owned Harold Washington Playlot (7710 N. Paulina) in Rogers Park. Our combined efforts resulted in development of a playground design plan and initial steps to transfer the land to the Park District.



The Logan Square Musician's Showcase highlighted the summer at Unity Park. A Seed Grant from Friends of the Parks allowed us to publicize the event and pay our participants an honorarium. Friends of the Parks helped us make the evening a celebration of creativity in our neighborhood.

*Jane Michalski
Co-Chair, Unity Park
Advisory Council*

Top: Earth Day participants helped gather and spread mulch at one of sixty parks tended by Friends of the Parks' volunteers.

Below: Children participate in the Musicians' Showcase at Unity Playlot Park. The events were sponsored by the Unity Park Advisory Council with support of a Seed Grant from Friends of the Parks.



Friends of the Parks' 2002 Round of 'Seed Grants' Funds Eight Neighborhood Park Projects Around Chicago

In 2002, for the third year, Friends of the Parks awarded small "seed grants" totaling \$5,500. The recipients and their projects included:

- West Andersonville Neighbors Together beautified Mellin Park (a playlot at Bryn Mawr and Ashland).
- River Park Advisory Council beautified River Park (5100 N. Francisco).
- Friends of Juniper Park beautified Juniper Park (3652 N. Greenvew).
- Gompers Park Advisory Council and Mayfair Garden Club beautified Gompers Park (4222 W. Foster Avenue).
- Kedvale Park Advisory Council recruited children to beautify Kedvale Park (4134 W. Hirsch Street).

- Pro Arts Studio helped disabled youth beautify McGuane Park (2901 S. Poplar) with ceramics and art.
 - Washington Park Advisory Council funded Washington Park Discovery Day, a park event for schoolchildren.
 - Unity Park Advisory Council funded a Musicians' Showcase at Unity Playlot Park (2636 N. Kimball Avenue).
- Friends of the Parks plans another round of seed grants in 2003.

High School Students to Become Park Stewards

During the 2002-2003 school year, Friends of the Parks partnered with Chicago Public Schools to work with three high schools to enable students to earn service learning hours while completing park-related activities. For the pilot program, Friends of the Parks chose schools geographically distributed throughout the City and close to parks. Friends of the Parks worked with teachers and service learning coaches at each school to introduce park-related activities. Students are required, at a minimum, to complete a park survey showing they have become familiar with their local park, and to clean and beautify the park, photograph or map the park, and work with the local park advisory council to participate in advocacy on behalf of the park.



Volunteers in Parks: Our Greatest Assets



In 2002, our neighborhood decided to improve Schaefer Playlot, a small park on North Marshfield in the West DePaul community. We needed direction, so we contacted Friends of the Parks. Their staff has been extremely helpful. They attended many meetings with neighbors, visited the park several times, organized budget meetings, and provided us with a framework in which to proceed. Friends of the Parks' level of expertise and professionalism have truly impressed me and those on our advisory board. Though we have a way to go, we could not have accomplished what we did without help from Friends of the Parks.

*Geri McMahon
Client Development Specialist,
FindLaw / Member, Schaefer
Playlot Advisory Council*

Top: Through Friends of the Parks' new "Nature is a Classroom" program, students investigated the lakefront ecosystem at Montrose Harbor.

Right: A young participant showed off the birdhouse he created during the Earth Day Fair at Murray School in Hyde Park. ComEd donated wooden birdhouses and helped children put them together.

"Nature is a Classroom" Project Off to a Great Start

Ln 2002, Friends of the Parks sponsored the "Nature is a Classroom" program, which brings twenty classes from eight schools to Montrose Harbor to experience

hands-on interdisciplinary lessons in an outdoor setting. Nadine Zelle, Friends of the Parks' program coordinator, meets with teachers before each visit to coordinate lakefront activities with classroom curriculum and to provide the teachers with resources so the students can prepare for their trip. During the trip, students learn about the lakefront ecosystem not only through scientific methods but also by incorporating music, drama, scavenger hunts, reading, poetry and art. Most classrooms visit at least three times each school year, giving them a change to experience seasonal changes at Montrose Harbor.

Earth Day 2002 Parks Clean-up Attracts Enthusiastic Volunteers

On Saturday, April 20, 2002, more than 2,000 volunteers cleaned and beautified sixty parks during Friends of the Parks' annual Earth Day clean-up. Outfitted with gardening gloves, garbage bags, rakes, shovels, wheelbarrows and a few Clif Bars, volunteers planted trees, shrubs and other greenery and removed hundreds of pounds of trash, including countless bottles. They also wore beautiful Earth Day T-shirts distributed by Friends of the Parks and designed by Pamela Torres, a fifth grader from Sandoval School who won the T-shirt design contest.

Despite bad weather, many volunteers attended the Earth Day Fair at Murray School playground in the Hyde Park neighborhood. ComEd donated wooden birdhouses and ComEd employees helped children nail them together. Hiroshi Kaneko brought supplies for Japanese kites. Angela Myles painted beautiful designs on the faces of kids and adults alike. Friends of the Parks provided refreshments donated by Whole Foods, Fantasia, Starbucks and Hinckley and Schmitt. Individuals continued to pick up trees donated by ComEd, with all 300 trees finding homes. In addition to those companies mentioned above, Earth Day sponsors included Chicago Earth Month, Eli's Chicago's



Finest, Simple Green, the U.S. EPA Region 5, WPWR-TV Channel 50 Foundation and the Wells Lamont Glove Company.

Adopt-a-Park Program Draws More Volunteer Groups

Ln 2002, Friends of the Parks' Adopt-a-Park program grew to include a total of ninety-three participating groups, all of whom agreed to complete six workdays throughout the year in a particular park. Businesses, community groups, and schools signed on to remove and recycle litter, plant flowers and trees, paint over graffiti, replace and spread soft surfacing around play equipment, and monitor the care and maintenance provided by the Park District.



Annual Meeting, Fundraisers, and Educational Events



Friends of the Parks Salutes Park Stewards at 26th Annual Meeting and Awards Celebration

In March 19, 2002, Friends of the Parks hosted its 26th Annual Meeting and Awards Celebration at the Garfield Park Conservatory. Keynote speaker Jo Ann Nathan, Director of the Jens Jensen Legacy Project, discussed the legacy of Jens Jensen and the Park District's efforts to keep that legacy alive through an exhibition of his work and renovation of his west-side parks.

In addition, Friends of the Parks honored a number of park stewards, including the Boeing Company for sponsoring artist Dale Chihuly's "Garden of Glass" exhibit at

the Garfield Conservatory, the South Shore Cultural Center Advisory Council for improving a Park District plan to add a culinary institute to the South Shore Cultural Center, Charles Thompson and Friends of Busse Woods for their work to preserve Busse Woods, the Neighbors Garden Association for developing and maintaining the Neighborhood Garden in the Logan Square community, and Lois Buenger for her successful efforts to save Warner Park. Friends of the Parks also presented a special award to John Stassen and David Bahlman of Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois, John Buenz of Solomon Cordwell Buenz & Associates, and Joe Antunovich of Antunovich & Associates for their leadership in challenging the Soldier Field commercial sports stadium plan.

Friends of the Parks Honors LR Development Company at the 13th Annual Parks Ball

In May 2002, more than 250 guests honored LR Development Company at the 13th Annual Parks Ball. LR Development, a real estate firm responsible for projects like Park Tower on Michigan Avenue and The Residences on Lake Shore Park, has also cleaned contaminated sites and replaced them with affordable housing. Friends of the Parks commended LR Development's commitment to beautifying Chicago. The company has donated more than a quarter-million dollars to improve five Chicago parks, renovated historic landmarks, and designed beautiful public spaces around many of its buildings. Furthermore the firm makes a point of seeking community involvement in planning its developments. The event raised approximately \$50,000 for Friends of the Parks' citywide advocacy work.

More than 9,000 Bicyclists Ride 25 Sleepless Miles in 14th Annual L.A.T.E. Ride.

In July 2002, Friends of the Parks hosted its 14th annual non-competitive, after-midnight bicycle ride, and raised over \$200,000 for its citywide park advocacy work. Over nine thousand participants came to Buckingham Fountain in Grant Park after midnight, began their ride between 1:30 a.m. and 2:15 a.m., then cycled through the Loop, northwest to Foster and Pulaski, east to Foster Avenue Beach, and south along Lake Michigan back to the fountain, where they enjoyed a sunrise breakfast in Grant Park. The cyclists also enjoyed refreshments at two rest stops along the 25-mile route. We thank all of our sponsors, and particularly our major supporter WGN-TV Children's Charities, for making this year's ride such a success. Mark your calendars now for The L.A.T.E. Ride 2003 on Saturday night / Sunday morning, July 13th.

Urban Parks Offer Respite from City Life

In May 2002, Friends of the Parks and the Grant Park Advisory Council co-sponsored a workshop entitled "Making Money in Our Parks: Good or Bad?" Panelists included Laura Foxglover, Park Services Director, Chicago Park District; Dr. Robert Gordon, Board Member, Friends of the Parks; Bob O'Neill, President, Grant Park Advisory Council; Alderwoman Mary Ann Smith, Chair, Parks & Recreation, City of Chicago; Bruce Wicks, Professor, Department of Leisure, University of Illinois; and Ed Uhler, Project Director, Millennium Park Project. Friends of the Parks' board member Dr. Robert Gordon asked that we "be careful when we think about concessions and commercial development in the parks" because "nature once lost may never be recovered."

Visitors Experience Tranquility of Japanese Wonder in Jackson Park During Annual Osaka Garden Festival

In September 2002, Friends of the Parks co-sponsored the sixth annual Osaka Garden Festival in Jackson Park. Other co-sponsors include the Osaka Committee of the Chicago Sister Cities International Program, the City of Osaka, Japan, the Chicago Park District, the Mayor's Office of Special Events, the Consulate General of Japan, the Japan National Tourist Organization, and the Chicago Transit Authority. The two-day festival featured Japanese cuisine, arts and crafts, music, dance and children's activities.

Friends of the Parks has always been supportive of our arts and culture initiatives at Dvorak Park in Pilsen. Despite budget cuts and other challenges, they've helped us keep the park alive and open.

*Jean Parisi
Executive Director,
Pros Arts Studio*

At The L.A.T.E. Ride, one may see riders carrying dogs in baskets, pulling children in trailers, and participating in groups with family members, co-workers and friends. "It's like Woodstock on wheels," said one rider.



Parks Ball 2002 Supporters



Friends of the Parks thanks the following individuals, businesses and foundations for their generous support of the Parks Ball.

Tom Sanberg (left), Chairman of the Board; Erma Tranter, President; and Fredda and Kitty Kurth, Parks Ball Co-Chairs, congratulate Tom Weeks (second from left), President of LR Development Company, at the Parks Ball 2002. Friends of the Parks honored LR Development for its strong commitment to beautifying Chicago and for creating properties that benefit entire communities.

Three Protector Tables of Ten (\$7,500)

Tom Weeks / LR Development Company

Conservator Table of Ten (\$5,000)

LaSalle Bank

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Conservers (\$500 per person)

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Friends Indeed

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Cindy Mitchell: Park Ambassador



Cindy Mitchell is a past president of Friends of the Parks' Board of Directors, a present member of Friends of the Parks' Advisory Board, and has served in many other volunteer positions with non-profit and government entities in Chicago. She also served as the president of Parkways Foundation, a private, non-profit partner of the Chicago Park District, whose mission focuses on

developing and improving Park District programs and facilities through private philanthropy. In 2002, she became a Commissioner of the Chicago Park District Board.

Cindy says Chicago's parks are "important on every single level. Obviously, as we are relearning today, parks can be a great economic engine in the city. Redevelopment around Garfield, Humboldt and Douglas Parks shows that well-maintained parks spur economic development. People want to live near great parks. Millennium Park has encouraged residential development all over the Loop. When you have good parks, businesses want to have their corporate headquarters here. Furthermore Chicago parks, because of their fieldhouses, become centers for the arts, athletics, cultural events, tutoring, and after-school programming in the neighborhoods. Improving the parks improves neighborhoods by establishing community centers. So much of what we do in Chicago centers around our parks."

When Cindy Mitchell and her husband moved to Chicago from New Mexico in 1968, she decided to write a book about 19th century bronze statues in Chicago's parks. One day she saw workers moving one of those statues from the park across from her house. With her baby in her arms, she marched across the street to stop the workers. Through some twist of fate, Lois Weisberg, founder of Friend of the Parks, happened upon the scene, and as Humphrey Bogart once said, thus began a beautiful friendship. In 1975, Cindy joined Friends of the Parks' Board of Directors and soon after became its president, a position she held until 1991.

During that time Cindy and Friends of the Parks helped reshape the Park District from a bastion of patronage to a system that served the taxpayers of the City. Not only did Friends of the Parks save parks — including statues — from neglect, but under Cindy's leadership the organization also helped create the first jazz festival, Shakespeare in the Parks, many free festivals, and the Chicago Marathon. During her tenure Friends of the Parks' annual budget rose from \$50,000 to \$350,000.

Cindy also helped add to the City's sculptures, by the way, chairing the program for the installation of the modern Ellsworth Kelly sculpture on Fullerton Avenue in Lincoln Park. She did indeed publish her book, *Have You Talked to Lincoln Lately*, a Friends of the Parks' publication, as well as *Your Guide to Loop Sculpture*, a City of Chicago Office of Fine Arts Publication. And she later created the film "Heroes in Bronze" for the Chicago Board of Education under the auspices of the Department of Fine Arts.

She reflected on the changes in the Park District since she became the president of Friends of the Parks in 1975. "In the 1970s, our parks were recognized as the worst among major cities in the United States. Today they're recognized as the best among major cities. Our parks are the example that other cities strive for. Not just in their appearance, but in programming, land acquisition — which we had none of in the 1970s — a better-trained staff, and opportunities for volunteering in the parks, which didn't exist in the 1970s."

But in new times Chicago parks face new challenges, says Cindy, particularly "how we can maintain excellence at a time of decreasing available tax money. We don't want to decrease any of the good things we do, and yet we have to maintain a balanced budget. So we need creative solutions. We still need to acquire land. Chicago's population has increased, and families now stay in the city, so we need more parkland. Yet land has become expensive, so we must find ways of creatively acquiring land."

And even though she is now a member of the Park District Board, Cindy recognizes the need for an independent voice like Friends of the Parks. "In an ideal world," says Cindy, "every city agency or government agency should have a Friends group to serve as that outside voice of the public pushing that agency into being the very best, and helping them find creative ways to meet that goal, ideally working in a quasi-partnership to make the parks the best they can be."



Financial Statement

October 1, 2001 – September 30, 2002

Revenue

Membership Contributions	\$ 109,717
Corporate Contributions	\$ 25,850
Foundation Grants	\$ 240,000
The L.A.T.E. Ride 2002	\$ 334,442
Parks Ball 2002 Benefit	\$ 97,975
Park Tours and Special Events	\$ 1,662
Environmental Fund of Illinois	\$ 2,015
Miscellaneous / Interest	\$ 4,195

Total Revenue **\$815,856**

Expenses

Education /Member Services	\$ 130,159
Volunteers in Parks Program	\$ 107,289
Citizens Advocacy in Parks	\$ 133,656
Policy and Research Program	\$ 112,248
The L.A.T.E. Ride 2002	\$ 155,741
Parks Ball 2002 Benefit	\$ 52,827
Park Tours and Special Events	\$ 34,735
Forest Preserve Study	\$ 20,813
Seed Grant Program	\$ 5,800
Administration	\$ 47,999

Total Expenses **\$801,267**

(Deficiency) Excess Revenue Over Expenses \$ 14,589

Fund Balance

Beginning of Year	\$ 266,047
End of Year	\$ 292,144

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