



Friends of the Parks
Annual Report

2003



Chicago's Best Friend





Dear Friends



*Kendra Beard Gassel,
Chair of the Board*

It has been nearly 29 years since a small group of park advocates joined to form Friends of the Parks as a citywide organization focused on improving the conditions of Chicago parks. At the time, their major goal was making parks more usable for children and families. Little did we imagine the impact that a group of concerned citizens would have on public parks, plazas and open spaces in the city. Over the years, Chicago's parks have been transformed and we now can boast of improved landscapes, better-maintained playing fields and more creative park programming. In more recent years, Friends of the Parks focused on the deteriorating conditions of the Garfield Park Conservatory. We established the Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance, which has partnered with the Chicago Park District to restore the historic Conservatory as one of the most important west side treasures.

In the last year, Friends of the Parks expanded its focus to advocate for improved forest preserves in and around Chicago. In October 2002, we released the second phase of a major study of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, which helped prompt substantial changes in the management of the forest preserves.

Also this past year we worked to advance development of DuSable Park, which stands at the confluence of the Chicago River and Lake Michigan. This 3.5-acre site was troubled with thorium contamination and no plan for development. Friends of the Parks stepped in to work with the DuSable Coalition, and together we pushed for a clean-up of the site under the direction of the U.S. EPA. Secondly, we saw the Park District establish the DuSable Park Steering Committee to complete a conceptual plan.

In Chicago's neighborhoods, we worked to acquire and expand parks and children's playgrounds. We succeeded when the Park District listened to us and moved to acquire a new park in Rogers Park as well as a three-acre site in Cottage Grove Heights. Friends of the Parks began the work three years ago in researching three possible park sites in the Cottage Grove Heights community, and the project was finalized in 2003. Neighbors will have the first Park District-owned park there.

Throughout the year we worked with park advisory councils and community groups who had visions, plans and concerns about their neighborhood parks. As a result, several playgrounds have been restored with Friends of the Parks serving as fiscal agent. In addition, new programs for children were initiated.

As the only citywide parks advocacy organization in Chicago, we take special pride in building partnerships and coalitions to address community issues throughout Chicago's neighborhoods. With your support, we will continue to work on behalf of citizens in the coming years.

The economy had an impact on Friends of the Parks' revenue in 2003, as it did with most non-profits and businesses. Despite not reaching our budgetary goals, Friends of the Parks was able to continue all of its work with a complete staff, due to the surplus carried over from previous years' budgets. In these times of tight budgets, advocacy on behalf of Chicago's parks has become even more important, and your support of our work is even more appreciated.

We thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kendra Beard Gassel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

*Kendra Beard Gassel
Chair of the Board*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Erma Tranter". The signature is cursive and elegant, with a prominent loop at the end.

*Erma Tranter
President*

Friends of the Parks: An Independent Advocate for the Parks

Making a Difference

Friends of the Parks proudly takes an independent stand on behalf of Chicago parks and forest preserves. Effective, independent advocacy requires relationships with public officials based upon mutual respect and the best interests for public parkland, now and in the future. Friends of the Parks usually succeeds through persuasion, particularly when we can show that you, the voters, *want* to expand and improve Chicago parks. By educating the public about parks, listening to citizens who use parks, shedding a spotlight on park issues in Chicago's neighborhoods and lakefront, and maintaining constant vigilance on behalf of the parks and forest preserves, Friends of the Parks works to ensure that short-sighted private interests do not jeopardize the long-term public interest in the parks.

Catalyzing Change

In October 2002, Friends of the Parks in partnership with Friends of the Forest Preserves released the second part of a major study of the operations and management of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, which found that the forest preserves are in serious trouble. Traditionally, Friends of the Parks has focused on parks within Chicago, but many citizens of Chicago rely on our forest preserves for biking, running, walking, picnicking, playing sports, learning about nature, and just finding a temporary refuge from urban life. The obvious neglect and mismanagement of the 68,000 acres of preserves prompted Friends of the Parks to co-sponsor the study. The study suggested that the District develop an active board of commissioners, select a separate president of the Forest Preserve District, develop and reorganize its staff, focus on caring for land, open the District to public involvement, and move immediately to acquire additional land to expand the preserves for future generations. We identified two tracts of land in the city that should be acquired: 1,000 acres in the Lake Calumet area and 30 acres on the Northwest Side. As a result, a new general superintendent was hired and several departments restructured.

During the first six months of 2003, Acting Superintendent of the Forest Preserve District Al Pritchett did an outstanding job beginning necessary reform in the District. In August 2003, the Cook County Board took the positive step of appointing Steven M. Bylina, Jr. as the General Superintendent of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County. In September, Friends of the Parks co-sponsored a reception for the new superintendent, who announced his commitment to working in partnership with citizen groups.

Working Together

Friends of the Parks worked with a coalition of citizen groups to ensure that the Chicago Park District develops DuSable Park on the north side of the entrance to the Chicago River. In fall 2002 and winter 2003, soil contaminated with thorium was removed from the site. In October 2003, the DuSable Park Coalition asked the Park District to establish a steering committee to create a park design. After months of work, a comprehensive park plan was developed. In fall 2003, the City amended the River East Planned Development to clarify open space requirements, and, among other things, required completion of the River Esplanade to connect with DuSable Park, and to be developed at the same time as DuSable Park.

This picture shows an aerial view of DuSable Park, located where the Chicago River meets Lake Michigan. DuSable Park was cleaned of contaminants and a park plan completed.



Photo: Lawrence Okrent

Demonstrating Possibilities

One opportunity for 100 acres of lakefront parkland is situated just across Burnham Harbor from Soldier Field, on Northerly Island. Friends of the Parks for years consistently advocated turning the 100-acre Northerly Island into a park, and was instrumental in bringing this opportunity to the attention of the public beginning in the late 1990s. In March 2003, Mayor Daley closed the airfield. Last summer, the Park District Board of Commissioners approved a \$1.5 million contract to remove the runway and restore the land on Northerly Island “to a condition suitable for planting, pathways, and other programming.” The Park District completed Phase I of the remediation, which included the complete removal of the runway. Phase II of the Northerly Island Park Plan calls for planting grass and trees and installing paths to make Northerly Island Park usable in the near term. The Park District plans to reuse the existing terminal building for park programs.

Protecting our Lakefront

The Chicago Park District and Westrec Marina have announced preliminary plans to build a 1,500-foot pier and 900 permanent boating slips in Monroe Harbor. Friends of the Parks supports improving boating facilities, but contends that each harbor plan should be compatible with the adjacent park and community.

Monroe Harbor is unique in the City’s 24 miles of lakefront public parks, because it is the blue centerpiece of Chicago’s front yard, Grant Park. This proposal calls for a 1,500-foot pier east of Adams Street, with permanent finger docks for boaters north of that pier. This marina construction plan would destroy the open vistas of the harbor, and is inconsistent with the historical legacy of Grant Park. The marina plan violates the Lake Michigan and Chicago Lakefront Protection Ordinance and the recently-approved Grant Park Plan.

In 2003, Friends of the Parks worked to block the proposed plan and created a harbor plan for additional docking spaces in other Chicago harbors instead. Friends of the Parks petitioned the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency to conduct a formal review of the Park District’s Monroe Harbor proposal. Friends of the Parks further requested that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers complete an environmental assessment of the Chicago Park District’s proposal. As part of that work, Friends of the Parks formed the Monroe Harbor coalition to urge preservation of Monroe Harbor.

Fighting the Fight

Friends of the Parks convinced many citizens that Chicago should not have rezoned 96 acres of prime lakefront parkland as “commercial, manufacturing” for the Bears sports stadium, a four-lane roadway, and 600 parking spaces. Unfortunately, Friends of the Parks did not convince the various governmental entities which approved the project, nor did Friends of the Parks convince the courts that the project violated the law. In early 2003, the Illinois Supreme Court decided that the Bears stadium had a public purpose: promoting the state’s economic development. Friends of the Parks felt strongly about its position, but recognizes the court’s decision.

Evaluating Park Concessions

Friends of the Parks completed a study of park concession facilities and operations in lakefront parks. The study found sloppy facility design, including tents and trailers, as well as incoherent concession placement that conflicted with pedestrians, runners and bicyclists. Our report recommended strict design standards, thoughtful placement of concessions, and more diverse food



Photo: John Buenz

Taken in the summer of 2003, this photo (top) shows Monroe Harbor with 1,000 mooring cans. This simulated image (above) shows what Monroe Harbor would look like with 900 new constructed finger docks. In 2003, Friends of the Parks and the Monroe Harbor Coalition worked to preserve the open character of Monroe Harbor.



Each year, Friends of the Parks forges many partnerships with local park advisory councils and elected officials to protect, improve and sometimes create new parks. As part of our Build-a-Park program, for example, an undeveloped Chicago Park District-owned property (top) became an exciting fully-accessible playground for neighborhood children at 1420 N. Artesian Avenue.

offerings. Friends of the Parks hosted a public symposium to address the need for a concession master plan.

Expanding and Protecting Parks and Playgrounds

Friends of the Parks assisted park advisory councils and community groups with numerous neighborhood park issues, monitored Chicago Park District proposals throughout the City, established dozens of partnerships, and in general worked to ensure that Chicago parks serve the long-term interests of all the citizens of Chicago. We cannot overemphasize the importance of citizen involvement in this process. When Friends of the Parks succeeds, it is because ordinary citizens of Chicago have let it be known that they value their parks.

Friends of the Parks worked last year with the North of Howard Community Organization, Good News Church, Family Matters, community residents, the Chicago Park District, and Alderman Joe Moore to save parks in the north Rogers Park area. First, we hired an architect to work with the community to redesign Triangle Park. Then we worked to ensure that the Chicago Park District acquired the land as a public three-acre park. As a result, Triangle Park was acquired by the Chicago Park District as a publicly owned park. Friends of the Parks has worked to develop an active Adopt-a-Park group at the site.

Friends of the Parks also worked with the North Howard Community Organization (NHCO) to save Harold Washington Playlot (7710 N. Paulina) from being paved as a parking lot. Friends of the Parks actively worked with the First Commercial Bank and Alderman Joe Moore to request that the land be donated to the Chicago Park District for a children's playground (the parcel had been owned by a now defunct non-profit agency). Friends of the Parks also hired an architect to work with the community to complete a design for the site. The Park District recently approved the acquisition of the playground. Friends of the Parks has since met with state legislators to begin to seek a state grant for the reconstruction of the Harold Washington Playlot. We assisted NHCO in designing a fundraising brochure. The goal for 2003/2004 is to help the organization and the Park District reach out to the community and local businesses to obtain funding to rebuild the playground.

We recently worked with the Cottage Grove Heights Community Association to complete an open space survey of this area bounded by the Tri-state Tollway to the south, 95th Street to the north, the railroad tracks to the east, and a large industrial area to the west. Staff researched land ownership of three tracts of land and presented our findings to the Park District, which helped stimulate the Park District to take action. The Chicago Park District recently acquired one of the three identified properties as a public park.

In New City, there is a large open space that is currently owned by the Chicago Park District, located at 5300 South Halsted Street. This land was slated to be sold off, but Friends of the Parks worked to protect the property from being sold and developed. Friends of the Parks began working with the community, church groups, local park advisory councils, and local community organizations to develop a community vision for this parcel.

In 2003, Friends of the Parks developed a new *Park Advisory Council Handbook*, an indispensable source of information for advisory councils, park groups and community organizations throughout the city. The guide will be distributed to over 300 advisory councils and other community groups, as well as Friends of the Parks members and participants at special events. This guidebook will also be available to download off the Internet.

Friends of the Parks awarded nine small (\$500-\$1000) Seed Grants to park advisory councils, Adopt-a-Park groups, and block clubs in spring 2003. These grants helped community groups improve local parks and provide programs in those parks. We were pleased that our grants helped finance tutoring supplies, lighting for a park building, park beautification, gymnastic mats, piano restoration, and an art festival.

Friends of the Parks, working with GreenNet, a coalition of greening organizations in Chicago, co-sponsored the American Community Gardening Association's annual conference which was held in Chicago from August 31 to September 2. We participated in a panel discussion titled "Building Community in Chicago Parks," and assisted in organizing and conducting tours throughout Chicago highlighting community gardens and parks for the conference attendees from around the world.

Advocating for River-Edge Parks

Friends of the Parks supports developing parks with access points and recreational amenities along the entire Chicago River. For example, we advocated for a canoe launch ramp for river recreation in Erie Park, a 3.4-acre river edge site on Erie Street.

In Horner Park, the half-mile riverbank, currently cut off from the community by a rusty chain-link fence, is crumbling and in need of serious attention. Friends of the Parks has worked with the Horner Park Advisory Council seeking approval from the Army Corps of Engineers for re-grading the river bank into a more gradual slope, allowing for a riverwalk with native plantings and an oak savannah. The Park District has promised to be the local partner in sponsoring the project.

The first phase of Ping Tom Memorial Park emphasized the aesthetic and cultural concerns of the Chinatown community; the second phase involved development of a six-acre recreational oriented park, with river access. Friends of the Parks served on the park planning task force.

In Clark Park, a boat launch was included in the development of this park. We serve as the fiscal agent for the Clark Park Advisory Council. Additionally, we advocated for a boat launch in the development plan for Origins Park, on the south branch of the Chicago River.

Friends of the Parks worked last year to assure that recreational boating does not disappear with the reconstruction of the Coast Guard Station, located where the Chicago River meets Lake Michigan. The Chicago River Rowing & Paddling Center shared the facility with the Coast Guard for 25 years, but under the federal Homelands Protection Act, the public, including the Center, will be excluded from the \$6 million project. Friends of the Parks worked to secure a temporary alternative location for the Rowing Center under Lake Shore Drive, and will coordinate efforts to find a permanent location.



The Forest Preserve District of Cook County maintains 68,000 acres of forest preserves. In 2003, Friends of the Parks focused attention on the district's operations, management, budget and land acquisition.

Greening Parks



Volunteers spread mulch at the base of a tree in Gompers Park during National Public Lands Day.

Providing People Power

Friends of the Parks hosted the 14th annual Earth Day Citywide Parks Clean-Up on Saturday, April 26, 2003, from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Over 2,000 volunteers from all Chicago neighborhoods cleaned and beautified more than 80 parks. After the Earth Day Parks Clean-up, Friends of the Parks, along with the Humboldt Park Block Club Federation, the Humboldt Park Advisory Council and the Chicago Park District, hosted an Earth Day Fair at the Humboldt Park Boat House to serve as both an educational tie-in to the event and as a thank-you to volunteers. In addition, Friends of the Parks was a co-sponsor in coordinating the 9th Annual Osaka Garden Summer Festival on Saturday and Sunday, September 13 and 14, 2003 on Wooded Island in Jackson Park.

Another recent activity is the Public Lands Clean-Up Day. On September 20, 2003, Friends of the Parks, in conjunction with the Chicago Park District, mobilized volunteers to clean several areas of public lands in the Chicago

area. This event will take place again in September 2004.

Friends of the Parks also moved forward on our Adopt-a-Park program. A total of 82 parks have been adopted, with eighteen new or renewed parks this year. Each group agreed to complete a minimum of four cleaning and greening workdays in their neighborhood park or playground throughout the year. In the past 12 months, over 1,500 citizens have been directly involved in the Adopt-a-Park program, which achieved an estimated \$45,000 value in worker-hours from volunteers to benefit Chicago's parks and playgrounds.

Saluting Park Stewards

Friends of the Parks presented awards to several park friends at our Annual Meeting in February 2003 and at a Volunteer Appreciation Annual Awards Reception in March 2003. Friends of the Parks also presented a corporate award at its annual meeting, and presented special awards to public officials who befriended the parks. Honorees included park advocates, corporate donors, public officials who supported parks, volunteer park stewards, and volunteers at Friends of the Parks' offices.

Educating Children and Adults about Parks and Park Issues

Using Parks as Classrooms

Friends of the Parks worked with the Chicago Public Schools to sponsor “Nature Along the Lake,” which uses the 14-acre nature preserve at Montrose Point as nature’s classroom. Teachers worked with Friends of the Parks’ project coordinator Nadine Zelle to customize park experiences to school curricula. Through hands-on projects, students learned about various science topics, and about the history of the lakefront. Twenty classes from eight schools participated during the 2002/2003 school year, and up to fifteen schools are expected to participate during the 2003/2004 school year.

Friends of the Parks worked with local public high schools to get students involved in their local parks. Friends of the Parks assisted teachers and service learning coaches at three schools to introduce park-related activities and educational materials the teachers incorporated into their curricula. Student activities included surveying, cleaning, beautifying, photographing, mapping, and advocating for nearby parks.



Educating Adults

Friends of the Parks continued to host educational workshops, symposiums and seminars for adults about parks and park issues. Beyond our advocacy work, Friends of the Parks also worked to simply make the public more aware of the parks and forest preserves, and what they offer the citizens of Chicago. Last year, we offered two workshops on the Park District budget, two workshops on playground safety, and a symposium on Monroe Harbor.

In July 2003, Friends of the Parks began a series of “Tuesday Park Talks” with a lecture on how community gardens help revitalize neighborhoods, showcasing three individual efforts to transform vacant lots into gardens. The series continued in August 2003 with a discussion of Park District and Westrec Marina plans to build a 1,500-foot pier and 900 permanent boating slips in Monroe Harbor. And in October 2003, Dr. Lisa Roberts, Director of Conservatories for the Chicago Park District, presented a slide show about the astonishingly-successful restoration of the Garfield Park Conservatory. Throughout the year, Friends of the Parks publishes a quarterly newsletter, which we distribute to thousands of members and supporters.

Children have a chance to learn about the dune ecosystem during a visit to Montrose Harbor as part of the “Nature Along the Lake” program sponsored by Friends of the Parks in partnership with Chicago Public Schools.

Having Fun in the Parks and for the Benefit of the Parks



Alberta Johnson; Maria Saldana, President of the Chicago Park District Board of Commissioners; David Doig, General Superintendent of the Chicago Park District; and Eleaza Peterson, President of Lake Meadows Advisory Council, mingle at a reception held on October 9, 2002 in Millennium Park. The event was co-hosted by Friends of the Parks and the Chicago Park District to welcome newly-appointed and returning members of the Chicago Park District Board of Commissioners.

Getting People into Parks

Throughout the year Friends of the Parks sponsors various park-related events and fundraisers. In October 2002, Friends of the Parks and the Chicago Park District co-hosted a reception for new Chicago Park District Commissioners in Millennium Park, with over 100 people attending. Friends of the Parks also co-hosted receptions for the new Forest Preserve District commissioners and the new Forest Preserve District General Superintendent, Steve Bylina.

Celebrating our Parks

In May 2003, Friends of the Parks hosted its annual Parks Ball black tie gala in the beautifully-restored South Shore Cultural Center. We honored Exelon Corporation, Proud Parent of ComEd and one of the nation's leading energy companies, for its outstanding commitment to Chicago's urban environment. Through Exelon's dedication, passion and advocacy, "The Earth From Above Exhibit" in Millennium Park served as a striking example of the remarkable impact that visionary leadership can have in creating new public exhibits that enrich our community. Accepting the 2003 award were Frank Clark, President of ComEd, and Randy Mehrberg, Exelon's Executive Vice President and General Counsel. Guests at the gala talked, danced, dined, bid on prizes in a silent auction, viewed light sculptures, and took home donated potted plants and trees. We pay special thanks to the event's planning committee, headed by Nancy Nugent and Tony Belluschi.

Pedaling for Parks

For the last 15 years, Friends of the Parks has hosted an unlikely but incredibly successful fundraiser in the wee hours of a summer night. In July 2003, thousands of people once again congregated at Buckingham Fountain with their bicycles, and after midnight began a 25-mile ride through the City streets and parks. This year, for the first time, they began the ride on Lake Shore Drive. As in previous years, the ride ended in the parks along the shores of Lake Michigan. And, as the sun rose over the water, riders ate breakfast back in Grant Park. The L.A.T.E. (Long After Twilight Ends) Ride is Friends of the Parks' largest fundraiser. We pay special thanks to our incredibly hard-working planning committee and all of our L.A.T.E. Ride volunteers.



Lynn and Gary Van Sipma participated in Friends of the Parks' 15th annual L.A.T.E. Ride with their teenage children and friends. The 25-mile ride took participants along Lake Shore Drive, through North Side neighborhoods, and back down along the lakefront bicycle path.

Parks Ball 2003 Supporters

Friends of the Parks would like to thank the following individuals and businesses for their very generous support of the Parks Ball 2003.

Two Protector Tables of Ten (\$5,000)

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Kendra Beard Gassel, elected in February 2003 as Chair of Friends of the Parks' Board of Directors, enjoyed the Parks Ball with her husband David.



World-renowned artist John David Mooney (left) displayed a dazzling light installation for Parks Ball guests in the Solarium of the South Shore Cultural Center. Here, he is joined by Parks Ball Co-Chairs Nancy Nugent and Tony Belluschi.



Friends Indeed

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Prince Charitable Trusts
Smart Family Foundation

\$10,000 – \$19,999

Gaylord & Dorothy
Donnelley Foundation
Lloyd A. Fry Foundation
Louis R. Lurie Foundation
The Albert Pick, Jr. Fund

\$5,000 – \$9,999

Chicago Public Schools
(BP America, Inc.)
ComEd
Home Depot

\$1,000 – \$4,999

Blowitz-Ridgeway
Foundation
Davee Foundation
Ford Motor Company
Jordan Industries
McDougal Foundation
McMaster-Carr Supply Co.
Northern Trust
Oppenheimer Family
Foundation
Peoples Energy
Replogle Foundation
S&C Electric Foundation
Schwartz Family
Foundation
Simple Green

\$100 – \$999

Alsdorf Foundation
Bill Bartholomay
Foundation
Kenneth Douglas
Foundation
Edelman Public Relations
Eli's Chicago's Finest
Enelow Fund
Koldyke Family Fund
of the Chicago
Community Trust
MidAmerica Bank
Donald Learner Family
Foundation
Schawk Family
Foundation

**In-Kind
Contributions**

Srilatha Alase
Austin Quality Foods, Inc.
Balance Bar
Josephine Bellalta /
Altamanu
Kenneth C. Burkhart
Chicago Athlete Magazine
Chicago Black Hawks
Chicago Children's
Museum
Chicago Cultural Center
Chicago Department of
Cultural Affairs
Chicago Department of
Streets and Sanitation
Chicago Park District
Chicago Police
Department
Chicago Social Magazine
Chicagoland Bicycle
Federation
City of Chicago
Clif Bar
The Dannon Co.
Yvette Diaz DeLeon
Duro Bag Mfg. Co.
Eli's Chicago's Finest
A. Finkl & Sons Co.
Gatorade / Propel
Fitness Water
Louis Glunz Wines, Inc.
The Great American Bagel
Rebecca Hardin
Home Run Inn Pizza
Jewel Food Stores
Mark Kleinle
Joel Krauss
Kurth Lampe Public
Relations
LaGrou Distribution
Systems
Lifeway Foods
Robert Lightfoot

Mayor's Office of
Special Events
Kelly McQueen
McFarlane Douglass &
Companies
Midwest Glove
Barbara K. Minster
John Mitchell
John David Mooney
Laura Morales
Motts
Museum of Science and
Industry
Naked Food-Juice
National University of
Health Sciences
On Line Productions
Ortho Seating
Larry Patron
Sidney Pazol
Kevin Putz /
Toolboxinc.com
Quaker Oats
Rank Entertainment
runningdoctors.com
Sara Lee Coffee & Tea
Smoky Sakurada
Sheffield Press
Shoreline Sightseeing
Henriette Simon
The J.M. Smucker Co.
Sportmart
Starbucks
Phil Stefani Signature
Events
The James R. Thompson
Center
Jessica Tonia
Tyson Vanek
Village Cycle Center
WXRT-FM 93.1 Radio
Lynn Weston
Whole Foods
Holly Wolfe

Financial Statement

October 1, 2002 – September 30, 2003

Revenue

Membership Contributions	\$92,397
Corporation Contributions	\$24,300
Foundation Grants	\$213,700
The L.A.T.E. Ride 2003	\$286,242
Parks Ball 2003 Benefit	\$90,216
Park Tours and Special Events	\$2,937
Environmental Fund of Illinois	\$3,400
Miscellaneous / Interest	\$2,361
Total Revenue	\$715,553

Expenses

Education / Member Services	\$139,089
Volunteers in Parks Program	\$107,305
Citizens Advocacy in Parks	\$133,625
Policy and Research Program	\$112,156
The L.A.T.E. Ride 2003	\$169,870
Parks Ball 2003 Benefit	\$54,561
Park Tours and Special Events	\$5,902
Forest Preserve Study	\$10,458
Seed Grant Program	\$5,000
Administration	\$71,346
Total Expenses	\$809,312

(Deficiency) Excess Revenue Over Expenses (\$93,759)

Fund Balance

Beginning of Year	\$292,145
End of Year	\$207,430

Yes! I'll help preserve, protect and improve Chicago's parks.

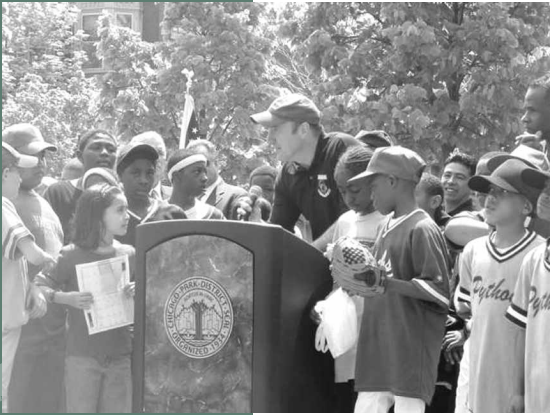
Sign me up as a member today! Enclosed is my contribution.

- \$15 Student/Senior
- \$25 Advisory Council
- \$35 Individual
- \$50 Family
- \$75 Protector
- \$100 Patron
- \$250 Conserver
- \$500 Benefactor
- \$1,000 Frederick Law
Olmsted Circle

- My check payable to Friends of the Parks is enclosed.
- My company's matching gift form is enclosed so that the value of my contribution will be multiplied.
- Please charge my credit card:
 - VISA
 - MasterCard

Account number _____ Expiration date _____
Signature _____

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zipcode _____
Telephone number _____
Email address _____
Employer (if applicable) _____



Bob Muzikowski: Board Member and Volunteer

Bob Muzikowski knows that good parks can make a big difference for youth in Chicago. He has seen first hand the effects of crime, drugs and gangs on neighborhoods, and the destructive influence they have on impressionable children. He also knows the positive effects that can be gained when adults get involved with at-risk youth, and the importance of serving as a strong role model.

Nearly 15 years ago, Bob decided to make a difference in the lives of children. Bob took his energy and his Christian faith, and applied it to starting youth baseball leagues in the inner city.

Born and raised in Bayonne, New Jersey, Bob grew up on some very mean streets in the shadow of Manhattan Island. He graduated from Columbia University with both undergraduate and graduate degrees, working part-time in a campus pub to help pay expenses. While in New York, Bob started down a dangerous path, and an altercation at a bar led to a brief stint in jail. Bob took this as a wake-up call, joined Alcoholics Anonymous, and committed his life to helping others. He started his own insurance agency, and moved with his wife, Tina, to Chicago in 1988 to raise a family, which now includes seven children.

One day in 1989, after a morning jog past an abandoned lot, a casual conversation with a community organizer near the Cabrini-Green housing project led to a life-changing experience. Bob saw dozens of young children living in the project without hope or direction. He saw a great need for organized athletics there, which he believed could teach children raised in single or no-parent households values like responsibility and teamwork. Motivated by his faith and a deep sense of commitment to society, Bob founded the Near North Little League, which eventually grew to include a chapter in Chicago's Near West side, one in New York's East Harlem, and one in Boston.

Bob tirelessly recruited dozens of adults to become coaches and umpires, as well as solicited sponsorships for teams from many of his business connections. Together, these volunteers cleaned up abandoned lots and turned them into playable ball fields. They signed up hundreds of children who otherwise would have nothing else to occupy their time. They scheduled practices and games, working with the Chicago Park District and the Mayor's office to make their dream a reality. Bob found time to coach several teams as well.

Collectively, his inner city baseball programs are the largest of their kind in the nation, and have been the focus of countless articles, even earning a "Point-of-Light" citation from President George H. W. Bush. It was because of his selfless work that hundreds of inner city children now have an outlet to help steer their energies away from gangs and drugs. His story was even dramatized in a major motion picture, *Hardball*, starring Keanu Reeves, and his book, *Safe at Home*.

But Bob hasn't stopped there. He is currently raising funds to establish a brand-new junior high school. To be called Chicago Hope Academy, it promises to be another chapter in Bob's tireless quest to give back to society, and make a difference in his adopted city of Chicago.

Bob has also applied his experience in dealing with troubled inner city youth by becoming a member of the Board of Directors of Friends of the Parks. Bob feels that Friends of the Parks is "...a kindred spirit. Friends of the Parks brings new hope to neighborhood parks in a city that emphasizes its lakefront parks to the neglect of smaller facilities and programs."



We'd like to hear from you!

Friends of the Parks helps residents with questions, problems and issues concerning their neighborhood parks. If you have concerns you wish to discuss or help solve, you may contact us in one of the following ways:

Phone:
(312) 857-2757

Fax:
(312) 857-0656

Website:
www.fottp.org

Address:
55 E. Washington
Suite 1911
Chicago, IL 60602

"It's not right," Bob continues, "that we should neglect the neighborhood parks. Friends of the Parks helps the city to get behind this important need. We need a voice, and Friends of the Parks is one of the only organizations that operates without an 'angle.' They help because Chicago needs an independent voice not tied into special interests."

Bob thinks that good parks are vital for the youth of our city: "You gotta have green — it's the way for children to see God's own creation." He believes it is also important that developers and other parties who benefit from our city should give something back: "We need a serious volunteer injection."

Bob lives his faith every day, making a difference in the toughest neighborhoods in the city. It is through the leadership and example of volunteers like Bob Muzikowski that Friends of the Parks helps to make Chicago's parks the heart centers of neighborhoods. We need more Bobs in Chicago, people who are proud to be called Friends of the Parks.

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