

*Friends of the Parks*  
*Annual Report 2008*



Chicago's Best Friend



*“Unless everyday citizens get involved  
and work together with elected officials,  
nothing can happen.”*

— Serge JC Pierre-Louis, M.D.  
Board Member, Friends of the Parks



## Dear Friends



Erma Tranter, *President*



Fred Bates, *Board Chairman*

**F**riends of the Parks celebrated its 33rd year working in partnership with park advisory councils, volunteers, forest preserve groups, and elected officials.

In 2008, we continued our work on the Last Four Miles initiative. This community-based planning project brought together park groups with architects in a three-year-long series of dialogues and architectural charrettes about their visions for the completion of the north and south lakefront park system from Hollywood to Evanston on the north and from 71st Street to the Indiana border on the South.

Our advocacy for new parks moved forward on several projects. Gale Park Fieldhouse was completed in West Rogers Park. Construction began on a new fieldhouse in Jesse Owens Park. The Park District expanded the number of new children's playgrounds to 25 based on the findings of Friends of the Parks and Children's Memorial Hospital's Playground Safety Study. We finalized a conservation easement with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources on more than twenty acres of land on Chicago's Northwest Side.

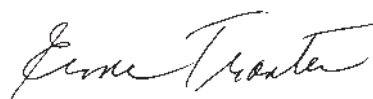
The work of volunteers was the heart of community service in our parks and preserves. Together with our adopt-a-park groups, Earth Day volunteers and corporate service projects, nearly 4,000 volunteers rolled up their sleeves, got their hands dirty and cleaned and greened dozens of parks and preserves. Fifty new trees were planted. Thirty children's playgrounds were made safer with new fibar soft surface material. Gardens were maintained and thousands of trees were mulched.

In addition, the work of volunteers resulted in funds being raised for children's new playgrounds, recreation scholarships for low income residents, yoga classes and new neighborhood gardens. Seed grants totaling \$15,000 were awarded to 23 advisory councils or community groups.

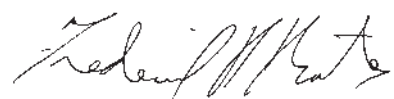
Our newest Environmental Education Program expanded to the South Shore Cultural Center with Nature All the Lake outdoor classes in the natural dunes area. In 2008, 800 Chicago Public School children from grades 2 to 5 experienced three seasonal outdoor fieldtrips to either Montrose Harbor or the South Shore Cultural Center. Over 150 high school students participated in Friends of the Parks' After School Matters program in six park locations.

It goes without saying that it is our members, partners and volunteers that make all of this possible. Our deepest thank you to you for your work and support.

Sincerely,



Erma Tranter, *President*



Fred Bates, *Board Chairman*

## *Volunteers in Parks and Preserves*

### *Greening Chicago's Public Spaces*



*Students learn about biodiversity while performing stewardship in the forest preserves.*



*Volunteers learn how to cut invasive brush to protect native ecosystems.*

**F**riends of the Parks' Volunteers in Parks (VIP) program partnered with park advisory councils, schools, universities, corporations and community groups to clean and green parks and preserves. The program also trained and educated Chicagoans on stewardship and environmental initiatives.

Friends of the Parks hosted two major citywide events in 2008. The 19th annual Earth Day Citywide Parks & Preserves Clean-Up was held on Saturday, April 19, 2008. Nearly 4,000 volunteers from in and around Chicago cleaned and beautified more than 100 parks and 15 Cook County Forest Preserves.

With Friends of the Parks' help, over 900 volunteers celebrated National Public Lands Day on September 27, 2008 by restoring natural areas in the greater Chicago/Cook County region.



*Employees from Starcom Worldwide plant trees in Lincoln Park.*

During the year, Friends of the Parks organized over 40 community

service work days. Groups and corporations requested our help to organize a service day for their volunteers to plant trees and shrubs, to remove invasive plants, or to install Fibar (soft wood chips) in children's playgrounds. These "clean and green" efforts in parks and preserves provided an estimated \$150,000 in worker hours to the Chicago Park District and to the Forest Preserve District of Cook County. In doing so, volunteers helped create a safer, cleaner environment.

Friends of the Parks also led an impressive Adopt an Ecosystem effort in partnership with the Chicago Public Schools. Students from nearly 20 high schools adopted sites and earned service learning hours by becoming active stewards at their local park or preserve.

## *Public Trust, Research and Advocacy*

### *Protecting Chicago's Park Legacy*

The Public Trust and Policy Initiative focused on protecting parks in Chicago by reviewing all major policy issues and park initiatives that would impact parks. We monitored legal requirements, planning guidelines and legislation, serving as Chicago's strongest advocate of the publicly owned lakefront and neighborhood parks.

In the last year, policy initiatives included the Last Four Miles: Completing Chicago's Lakefront Parks. The third year of this planning initiative, Friends of the Parks worked to actively engage the communities of Edgewater and Rogers Park on Chicago's North Side in developing a concept plan to complete the lakefront from Ardmore to the Evanston border. Visioning sessions and charrettes were held in both the Edgewater and Rogers Park communities. Together with our previous community planning charrettes on the city's south side, the Last Four Miles Plan will be published in 2009 as part of the Burnham Centennial Celebration.

Friends of the Parks worked for a greener harbor design for a proposed new boat harbor at 31st Street. We pushed for public hearings in the community on the proposed harbor and partnered with Alderman Toni Preckwinkle to promote three public hearings in January, February and March. Friends of the Parks pushed for more park space in the final design. As a result, the 31st Street Harbor plans were changed to put all parking underground and to create eight acres of new park land.

In Grant Park, the proposal to construct the new Chicago Children's



*The natural grass of the south field of Lincoln Park was replaced with artificial turf.*

Museum garnered much attention. Friends of the Parks reviewed and commented on three different plans as they related to the Lakefront Protection Ordinance and the A. Montgomery Ward court decisions. After much analysis of the proposed design, Friends of the Parks determined that the museum building would violate the Lakefront Protection Ordinance and the A. Montgomery Ward rulings. We testified at the Chicago Plan Commission hearing against the proposed building. The City Council approved the plans despite massive public outcry, and 42nd Ward Alderman Brendan Reilly's strong opposition.

On the far south side, Friends of the Parks focused on new recreational opportunities along the western shore of Lake Calumet in Southeast Chicago to convert the land owned by the Illinois International Port District Authority for public use for recreation. We completed a study of the Illinois International Port District Authority in 2008. The report recommended that legislation be introduced in Springfield to transfer unused Port District land to the Chicago Park District and the Forest Preserve District of Cook County.

Friends of the Parks reviewed plans for the proposed Olympics in Washington Park and in other parks. We monitored the proposed plans, and argued that Washington Park, an historic Frederick Law Olmsted-designed park, should be returned to its original design at the completion of the Olympic games.

Working extensively to protect Lincoln Park from the encroachment of a private, artificial turf soccer field, Friends of the Parks pushed for public meetings on the subject. The hearings led to a tremendous outcry on the private use of a public park. Friends of the Parks worked with the Committee to Keep Lincoln Park Public which later filed a law suit to prevent the private lease agreement with the Latin School. The court ruled that the private lease was illegal. The Park District constructed a public soccer field.

In 2008, Friends of the Parks successfully worked with the Warren Park Advisory Council to prevent the construction of a senior center in Warren Park, a clear violation of the land covenant with the State that dedeed this former state park to the Park District for recreation use only.

## Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds

Supporting and Strengthening Park Advisory Councils to Improve Parks and Programs



*Park advisory council members pitch in to clean their neighborhood playground.*

Friends of the Parks worked with park advisory councils in more than thirty neighborhoods to improve parks and playgrounds and to secure more park land. As part of our Build-a-Park program, Friends of the Parks helped to identify potential park land in underserved communities and advocated developing new or expanded parks in several Chicago neighborhoods, including Little Village, Logan Square, Grand Boulevard, Englewood and South Shore.

In 2008, we formed the Park Advisory Council (PAC) Network and hosted quarterly meetings on topics that included safety in parks, artificial turf in parks, park advisory council guidelines and the 2009 Chicago Park District budget. Our advocacy on the Park District's 2009 budget led to the on-time release of the District's 2009 budget and capital improvement plan.

Friends of the Parks provided technical and organizing assistance to park advisory councils by answering

inquiries, hosting educational sessions, arranging aldermanic briefings and participating in local community meetings. Our work in the Englewood community included developing a plan for the creation of a new trail, known as Englewood's Remaking America Trail (ERA). Friends of the Parks partnered with Openlands Project, Greater Englewood Community, Family Task Force, Stay Focused Inc. and the City's Department of Community Development on the ERA.

Friends of the Parks completed the Playground Safety Study in partnership with Injury Free Coalition of Children's Memorial Hospital, a study to inspect all 500 Chicago Park District playgrounds. The Playground Safety Study provided a safety inspection score for each playground. The study was used to report to the Park District safety problems needing immediate attention and to help the District prioritize new playground construction and renovations as part of their annual and



*Park activists attend a public meeting on completing Chicago's lakefront park system.*

multi-year capital improvement plan.

In the spring of 2008, Friends of the Parks awarded Seed Grants totaling nearly \$15,000 to 23 park advisory councils and Adopt-a-Park groups. The small grants provided an incentive for community involvement and new partnerships across Chicago. Projects funded included cultural events, landscape projects, movies in the park, children's programs and new equipment purchases.



*Friends of the Parks' Playground Safety Study found that seventy percent of Chicago's playgrounds do not meet National Safety Standards.*

# Forest Preserve Initiative

## Protecting Chicago's Natural Heritage in Forest Preserves and Parks

### Advocacy for Forest Preserves

Friends of the Parks' advocacy has led to major improvements in the management and operations of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County. Under Superintendent Steven Bylina's leadership, training, best practices and efficiencies in operations have been implemented.

Friends of the Parks' continued advocacy was required to counter political pressure from other governmental municipalities who continued to seek the use of forest preserve land to meet their needs for stormwater management, sports facilities or other uses that conflict with the mission of the preserves.

Friends of the Parks worked to prevent the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) from taking eight acres of woodland and wetland in Deer Grove Forest Preserve for expansion of Quentin Road. Public hearings were held, and many Forest Preserve District Commissioners said that they would vote against the easement request.

Friends of the Parks successfully protected Pottawattomie Prairie in Wheeling from being leased to the City of Wheeling for a detention pond for hotel storm water runoff. After a meeting with the City of Wheeling during which we opposed the plan, village officials came back with a sustainable alternative proposal for enhancing the open space that did not involve a detention pond.

On the Forest Preserve District's county-wide Land Acquisition Program, we pushed the District to be more aggressive in acquiring land. The District did shift into a faster gear, working on acquiring several important



*Volunteers at the Dunning-Read Conservation Area stand proud after completing one of their monthly work days.*

sites. The District resumed holding monthly Land Acquisition Team meetings, completed acquisition of two sites that had been pending and obtained approval from the FPD Board to pursue six new sites totaling more than 200 acres.

Friends of the Parks helped to organize and host a series of community events to generate support among citizens on the northwest side of Chicago to prevent the passage of an ill-advised ordinance banning ecological burning within the city limits. We sponsored a "Winter Nature Fair" in January and a special panel presentation at North Park Village on use of herbicide to control invasive species.

### Expanding Volunteer Stewardship

Friends of the Parks established two new stewardship groups, one at the Dunning-Read Conservation Area and the other at Spicebush Woods.

The Dunning-Read group held monthly workdays to remove invasive species and plant native seeds and

plants, including a 70-person workday on National Public Lands Day.

In northwest Cook County we were instrumental in the launch of a new stewardship effort at Busse Woods.

### Education and Outreach

Our Environmental Education Program included an Earth Team Teen Apprentices program in forest preserves. More than 150 inner-city teens learned biodiversity concepts and tried out restoration techniques. In summer 2008, twenty-five teens from diverse backgrounds were hired to work for six weeks with Friends of the Parks instructors on biodiversity topics and woodland restoration projects in the forest preserves along the North Branch of the Chicago River.

Our "Adopt-an-Ecosystem" program linked high school students with nearby forest preserves. We developed partnerships with teachers at seven high schools. More than 100 students put in hundreds of hours of service in spring, summer and fall doing scientific studies and restoration projects at Edgebrook Woods on the northwest side of Chicago, and at Whistler Woods in the Calumet area.



*Students study native plant species.*

## *Environmental Education*

### *Bringing the Classroom Outdoors*



*Earth Team teacher Jay Majetich works with his teens at the Humboldt Park wetlands.*



*Fourth graders from Carver Primary investigate a grasshopper at the South Shore Cultural Center during their Nature Along the Lake field trip.*

**F**riends of the Parks successfully expanded its environmental education program for public school students, connecting with a broad range of students primarily from low-income communities.

Through our Nature Along the Lake program, Friends of the Parks provided outdoor science education to more than 1400 students at 15 Chicago public schools. Since January 2008, 800 students from 12 schools took field trips to Montrose Beach or the South Shore Cultural Center. The Nature Along the Lake program provided outdoor environmental education activities to elementary school students in grades two through seven.

We expanded our After School Matters Earth Team program for teen apprentices to 150 teens at five sites

in parks in Chicago. Two instructors led each of the five apprentice Earth Teams, teaching a curriculum of environmental science, park stewardship and community-based activism. Earth Teams operated at Calumet Park, Horner Park, Humboldt Park, Norwood Park, and Roosevelt High School, serving teens from nine high schools. Programs met three days a week for three hours to engage in field work, lab experimentation, wildlife study, and career-building activities.

In Spring 2008, the Earth Team program began two new projects. At Calumet Park, students and instructors began an “Arts and the Environment” unit, creating a unique hybrid of puppetry and green activism designed to engage the youth population. Students

re-imagined classic fairy tales to include environmental themes, and performed their “Green Puppetry” plays for community members during an Earth Day celebration at the park.

At Horner Park, the Earth Team produced a short documentary on the topic of responsible environmental living, targeting teens across Chicago.

In the summer, we added two Health and Fitness programs for teens, as well. The health and fitness programs served more than 200 city teens.

The CYCLE (Chicago’s Youth Changing Local Environments) program enabled high school students to earn service-learning hours for graduation. About 50 students from Bowen High School worked on ecological surveys and park improvements at Bessemer Park.

## Public Education and Member Events

### Activities Flourish Throughout the Year



*In July, Friends of the Parks hosted McDonald's L.A.T.E. Ride, drawing thousands of bicyclists from the city, suburbs and around the country for the annual after-midnight ride through the city.*

Throughout the year, Friends of the Parks hosted educational and social events focusing on parks and preserves.

In partnership with the Chicago Cultural Center and the Active Transportation Alliance (formerly the Chicago Bicycle Federation), Friends of the Parks hosted a monthly series of free public education lectures called "Creative Living in the City" to celebrate the urban environment. Topics



*Friends of the Parks' Jr. Board's Friends "Fore" Golf outing raised over \$15,000 for programs.*

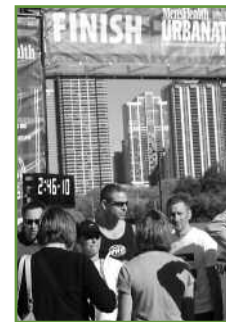
included how to turn dilapidated properties into gardens, creating pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods safe for children and seniors, the 100th Anniversary of the Garfield Park Conservatory and the history of the Chicago "L."

At our annual Parks Ball black tie gala, Friends of the Parks honored Ardythe and Gale Sayers for their commitment to Chicago-area youth. Their latest gift is the Gale Sayers Center, scheduled to open in Fall 2009. The non-profit center will provide an accelerated after-school learning environment at no cost for children ages 8-12. Ardythe and Gale Sayers support many youth charitable organizations, including the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Marklund Children's Home, Boy Scouts of America, and Junior Achievement and Better Boys Foundation. Of course, Gale Sayers is best known for his Hall of Fame career with the Chicago

Bears, but the Sayers' gifts to the community go far beyond football.

In May 2008, the Junior Board of Friends of the Parks hosted its 3rd Annual Friends "Fore!" Parks golf outing presented by Madison Dearborn Partners, William Blair & Company, and Deloitte. The event raised over \$15,000 for Friends of the Parks' Seed Grant Program, which awards numerous small grants to park advisory councils for park-related projects.

In July 2008, thousands of bicyclists stayed up all night for McDonald's L.A.T.E. Ride, hosted by and benefiting Friends of the Parks. The all-night bicycle ride raised funds for our vital advocacy work and gave cyclists a unique opportunity to bike through Chicago neighborhoods while most people sleep.



*The Men's Health Urbanathlon in Chicago attracted over 2,000 participants and helped raise funds for Friends of the Parks.*

In the fall, Men's Health Magazine hosted the Urbanathlon benefiting Friends of the Parks. Participants ran through the streets of Chicago and conquered obstacles at iconic landmarks of the historical Windy

City. Over 2,000 people participated in the 12-mile relay race. Men's Health selected Friends of the Parks as one of the event's non-profit beneficiaries. This unique event promoted park usage, promote health and fitness and show off Chicago's architecture.

## Profile: Dr. Serge JC Pierre Louis



*Dr. Serge Pierre-Louis*

One of the more remarkable members of Friends of the Parks' Board of Directors is a quiet, unassuming man with a lilting French accent. Dr. Serge JC Pierre-Louis originally hails from Haiti on the island of Hispaniola in the Caribbean, but for the last 20 years he has worked as a physician and teacher specializing in Neurology and Epilepsy at Rush Medical Center and Cook County Hospital. He currently serves as associate-chair of the Neurology Division at Cook County, is an associate professor at Rush, and is Board certified in Neurology and Clinical Neurophysiology. He also holds a Masters Degree in Public Health from the University of Illinois at Chicago and runs the Epilepsy Program at Cook County Hospital.

"I became a doctor because it was a way to combine several interests: understanding human behavior and the way the human machine works, understanding why people act the way they do, and teaching others." Serge wove all of these passions into a

rewarding career that combines clinical patient care, teaching and research, with a bit of community service on the side.

Raised in one of the poorest nations on earth, Dr. Pierre-Louis (or Serge, as he prefers to be called), left his birthplace of Port-au-Prince to practice medicine, but has never stopped giving back to his homeland. An active member of the Association of Haitian Physicians, he returns to Haiti regularly to spend time providing medical services to impoverished villages.

His Haitian roots led him to become active in the local Haitian community of Chicago, which numbers in the several thousands. He has served as President of the DuSable Heritage Association, and was invited to a meeting in 2000 to discuss the proposed DuSable Park at the mouth of the Chicago River, which to this day still waits for development. From that meeting grew the DuSable Park Coalition, a confederation of several organizations interested in the life and legacy of Haitian-born Jean Baptiste Pointe du Sable, the founder of Chicago. It was there he met Erma Tranter, President of Friends of the Parks, and developed a keen interest in seeing DuSable Park completed. Inspired by seeing the great parks of London during a business trip, it sparked his interest in parks and public policy. Serge joined the Board of Directors of Friends of the Parks in 2003, and sits on our Policy Committee.

"I look upon Friends of the Parks as a great way to be a part of what is happening in this city." Smiling broadly, he notes that unless one is

involved in their community, things just don't get done. "Well intentioned politicians sometimes make poor decisions when the public good is so obvious. Unless everyday citizens get involved and work together with elected officials, nothing can happen."

Serge has high hopes for DuSable Park, and believes that it will be completed in the not too distant future. Serge was instrumental in working with Friends of the Parks to have the city designate the north side Chicago River trail from Lake Shore Drive to Pioneer Court the "DuSable Founders Way," but feels that much more should be done to celebrate our first settler. "The founder of our city should have a place where his spirit and his life can be represented. It bothers me that he is not really honored here." As a way of educating Chicagoans on their founding father, Serge sponsors a DuSable Day Celebration for the city's birthday in March with a lecture, music and dance performances.

Serge has a daughter in college in Ohio who may follow him as a physician, a hope he unabashedly trumpets. He is understandably proud that the people of Haiti engaged in a slave revolt in the early 19th Century, becoming the world's first republic established by people of color. He notes that "Serge" is a common name in Haiti, and remarks that the name Pierre-Louis means "shining stone" in French. No doubt his energy, dedication and unselfish approach to life reflect that appellation — his strong leadership and care for his fellow citizens truly make him a bright rock upon which much can be built.

## Parks Ball 2008 Supporters

*Friends of the Parks would like to thank the following individuals and businesses for their very generous support of the Parks Ball 2008.*

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*Friends of the Parks' President Erma Tranter (right) listens as Parks Ball 2008 honorees Gale and Ardythe Sayers accept their award.*

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Alphawood Foundation  
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Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley  
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Richard H. Driehaus Foundation  
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Bowman C. Lingle Trust  
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Family Foundation  
Prince Charitable Trust

### \$10,000 - \$19,999

After School Matters  
Helen Brach Foundation  
HSBC  
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McDonald's  
Oppenheimer Family Foundation  
Peoples Gas & North Shore Gas  
Albert Pick, Jr. Fund  
Dr. Scholl Foundation  
REI  
Sports Authority

### \$5,000 - \$9,999

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William Blair & Co.  
Chicago Public Schools  
Commonwealth Edison  
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Earth Share of Illinois  
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Wenske Foundation

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The Brickman Group, Ltd.  
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Deloitte  
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Holsten Real Estate  
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Pritzker-Pucker Family Foundation

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### \$100 - \$999

Allied Glove & Safety  
Alsdorf Foundation  
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Back 9  
Bear Naked  
Be Our Guest  
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Factset  
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Harris Bank  
Heartland RV, LLC  
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Kirkland & Ellis Foundation  
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UBS  
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Allied Glove and Safety Products  
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American Chairs  
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Argo Tea  
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The Care of Trees  
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Chicago Athlete Magazine  
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## Annual Report

Editor: Erma Tranter

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## Financial Statement

October 1, 2007 – September 30, 2008

### REVENUE

Membership Contributions	\$139,724
Corporate Contributions	86,937
Foundation Grants	606,550
Special Events	
L.A.T.E. Ride 2008	288,804
Parks Ball 2008	187,520
Park Tours/Special Events	45,574
Direct costs	(326,937)
EarthShare of Illinois	8,289
After-School Matters	42,720
Miscellaneous / Interest	64,125
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$1,143,306</b>

### EXPENSES

Education/member services	\$128,464
Volunteers in Parks Program	103,219
Neighborhood Parks and Playground	113,751
Public Trust and Policy Program	125,583
Forest Preserve Initiate	85,578
Seed Grant Program	15,750
Environmental Education	71,119
Administration	127,920
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$771,384</b>

Change in net assets	\$371,922
Fund Balance	
Beginning of year	\$389,292
End of year	\$656,039



### 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

#### Websites

[www.fotp.org](http://www.fotp.org) • [www.lateride.org](http://www.lateride.org)

17 N. State Street

Suite 1450

Chicago, IL 60602

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

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Student/Senior                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Family                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Benefactor                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Individual                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Patron                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 Frederick Law Olmsted Circle         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40 Advisory Council                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Conserver                              |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My check payable to Friends of the Parks is enclosed. | <input type="checkbox"/> My company's matching gift form is enclosed. |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Please charge my credit card:                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Visa   | <input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard <input type="checkbox"/> Discover |

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