

illinois

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PARKS AND RECREATION

The magazine of the Illinois Association of Park Districts and the Illinois Park and Recreation Association



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## FROM THE EDITOR



This special issue of *IP&R* magazine focuses on partnerships. I was impressed with the number of great articles we received on the subject from agencies across the State. It is clear that in each example the partnerships are mutually beneficial.

Partnerships exist with government agencies, community organizations, large and small businesses, other park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation and special recreation organizations. Each relationship is different, but the end result is largely the same, a positive outcome for all involved. It is so exciting to learn about all of the partnerships that are fostered by park and recreation agencies!

It is not just about sharing buildings, facilities or fields. It is much more than that. It is a cooperation of resources that ultimately benefits both children and adult residents in a community. It's about seeing the smiles on the faces of the people participating in an event that otherwise would not have been possible without a partnership of some kind.

One article in our WebXtra section named family and friends as that park district's biggest partner. It is so true when you think about the involvement agency employees and their family and friends have in community events. For example, Mom works at the park district and has two teen-aged children. A spring Easter egg hunt is being planned. Who steps in to help? Perhaps outside partners, but always family and friends. The kids fill eggs while the husband and his friend hide them. These relationships are a kind of partnership that should be treasured.

Also in our WebXtra section you will find the Referenda Results.

Enjoy the spring weather! Make time to get outside and play in your community park.

— Rachel Laier, Editor



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Peter M. Murphy  
IAPD President and CEO

## Partnerships and Volunteers Set Park Districts Apart

As a unit of local government, nobody does it better. This issue of *Illinois Parks & Recreation* is filled with examples of the unique role of park districts as a result of community partnerships and volunteerism. In an era when we all are seeking efficiencies and cost savings, no government can match a park district's ability and capacity in this area.

Recent surveys reveal some interesting facts about volunteers. Did you know that in 2013, 62.6 million Americans reported volunteering? But, when you do the math, that's only about 25%.

Illinois ranked slightly higher than the national average with a reported 26.7% of residents volunteering, ranking Illinois 26<sup>th</sup> among the 50 states.

This means that each volunteer is exceptional and joins the ranks of those 2.57 million people in Illinois who volunteered a combined total of nearly 318 million hours of service which equates to more than 7 billion dollars in wages donated to their communities.

The value of volunteers to park districts and the citizens they serve is immense. Organizations that make volunteers central to their work are able to generate as much as 3 to 6 times the community value from volunteers as the cost to manage them.

Volunteers are essential to the health of our society and they play a vital role in our communities.

Studies have captured the generous nature and good will of volunteers. One such study revealed that volunteers are almost twice as likely to donate to charity than non-volunteers.

Author, Sally Koch, once said, "**Great opportunities to help others seldom come, but small ones surround us every day.**" Every park district that uses partnerships and volunteers are availing themselves of these opportunities.

Saving our members' tax dollars is a goal of IAPD and this year we continue to strengthen relationships with a number of companies in order to offer our members discounted pricing on services and products. The following is a brief overview of these money-saving services. For more detailed information, contact the IAPD offices or the sales contact directly.

### Illinois Parks Association Risk Services (IPARKS)

IPARKS is a local government risk-sharing pool, providing park districts throughout the State of Illinois with an alternative to traditional insurance. IPARKS is tailored to meet the specific property and liability coverage needs of Illinois park districts and recreation agencies. Having many features, the program currently covers **more than 176 members with 99% retention** year-to-year. Take advantage of the risk management expertise and stable, predictable pricing and coverage offered by the IPARKS self-insurance pool.

Eddie Wood, Burnham & Flower Agency, 800-692-9522,  
ewood@bfgroup.com

### Call One

The IAPD has partnered with Call One, a single-source telecommunications provider and the Nation's largest reseller of AT&T product and services. Call One simplifies telecommunication and provides agencies with a high emphasis on personal relationships and service. The level of attention you

receive from Call One is rare to the industry, and exclusive to members of the IAPD.

Some of our members may be paying more than what is necessary for their telecom needs. IAPD's lower pricing is accompanied by Call One's outstanding personalized customer care, simplified, consolidated billing, and management assistance and network support.

Bob Kintz, Call One, 312-496-6693, rkintz@callone.com

### Colonial Life

As a leader in the voluntary benefits industry for more than 70 years, Colonial Life has an award-winning reputation for hassle-free service, innovation and products. Colonial Life can help your agency put together a suite of cost-management solutions to help manage the rising cost of employee benefits - and still provide employees the quality benefits and services they deserve.

Their offerings include benefit plan designs, flexible spending account, communications, voluntary benefits insurance options, dependent verification services, wellness program implementation and promotion, enrollment planning and benefits communication.

David Weinstein, 630-935-7282, dave.weinstein@coloniallife.com

"I have been impressed with the urgency of doing. Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Being willing is not enough; we must do."

— Leonardo da Vinci



### Bank of America Merchant Services Credit Card Processing

Membership in the Illinois Association of Park Districts has its privileges, including a specially negotiated program of card processing services. Bank of America Merchant Services has teamed up with the IAPD to bring you:

- Specially negotiated rates
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- As soon as next business day access to funds

Our members who already rely on Bank of America Merchant Services enjoy benefits like these:

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Kim Stapleton-MacBeath, Bank of America, 972-898-4880  
kim.stapleton-macbeath@bankofamericamerchant.com

### Illinois Park District Liquid Asset Fund Plus (IPDLAF+)

IPDLAF+ offers its participants a professionally managed portfolio with a competitive money market rate and unlimited check writing privileges. The Fund stresses "safety of principal" as the number one objective and has earned a AAAm\* rating by Standard & Poor's.

Additional fixed income investment products are available through the Investment Adviser to assist IPDLAF+ participants in seeking to maximize results.

Michelle Binns, PFM Asset Management LLC, 312-523-2428,  
binns@pfm.com

### Seven Utility Management Consultants, Ltd. IAPD Energy Program

You can get in control of your park district's electricity costs and energy budget today.

We are excited to announce that IAPD has entered into an agreement with **Seven Utility Management Consultants, Ltd. (Seven)** to provide a professional consulting service for the purchase of electricity and natural gas for our membership.

The goal of this agreement is to save money for all of our member agencies on your utility expenses. As such, we anticipate **savings up to 20%** by having the utilities professionally negotiated and managed on a full-time basis by **Seven**. With utility rates bouncing off of historically record lows, we are confident that **Seven** will be able to negotiate lower, long-term rates for each of our members, and, in most cases, a lower rate than what you are currently paying today.

Seven will negotiate with the top 18 electricity and the top 8 natural gas providers in the state by having them all bid on your utility business. **Seven** will share all of its pricing analysis (including all bids) and prepare an individualized summary bid offer sheet for each park district.

Dale Snyder, Seven Utility Management Consultants, 501-835-3142,  
dsnyder@sevenutility.com

### The PFM Purchasing Card

The PFM purchasing card is a specialized credit card that enables agencies to streamline the buying process and receive money back on their purchases. Districts can use the card for community education, food service, supplies, leases, travel and expense claims, fleet usage, telephone usage, grants and utilities.

The cards look and operate similar to credit cards. Individual card limits can be established per transaction, per month or per vendor. For added convenience, usage and authorization parameters can be reviewed and managed via the Internet by district administration.

The PFM purchasing card replaces purchase orders, the use of personal cards, travel and expense claims, petty cash and service orders. The card is a cost-free payment mechanism.

Michelle Binns, PFM Asset Management LLC, 312-523-2428,  
binns@pfm.com

### AMI Communications

In IAPD's ongoing effort to offer programs that have your business continuity in mind, we are pleased to announce our partnership with AMI Communications, a very reputable managed network service provider of out-sourced IT services.

AMI currently provides their Managed IT service, on-site and remote support, to a number of our existing IAPD member agencies. AMI's outsourced IT services are ideal for organizations with limited IT resources or can assist by integrating these services with your existing IT personnel.

IAPD encourages our members to discuss their current IT needs with AMI's experienced and knowledgeable network specialists.

Robert Buchta, AMI Communications, 630-389-9001, [rbuchta@ami.net](mailto:rbuchta@ami.net)

## 2015 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April-May, 2015  
**Flying for Kids Month**  
Statewide Kite Fly

Monday, May 18, 2015  
**IAPD Summer Golf Tour #1**  
Bittersweet Golf Club,  
Gurnee  
GolfVisions  
Management, Inc.

Wednesday, May 27,  
2015  
**IAPD Boot Camp #1**  
Lockport Township Park  
District

Thursday, May 28,  
2015  
**IAPD Boot Camp #2**  
Morton Park District

Saturday, May 30, 2015  
**IAPD Boot Camp #3**  
Rolling Meadows Park  
District

Wednesday, June 3,  
2015  
**IAPD Boot Camp #4**  
Gurnee Park District

Thursday, June 4, 2015  
**IAPD Boot Camp #5**  
Carol Stream Park  
District

Thursday, June 25,  
2015  
**IAPD Summer Golf Tour #2**  
Deerfield Golf Club,  
Deerfield  
Park District

Thursday, July 16, 2015  
**Joint Legislative  
Awareness  
Golf Outing**  
White Pines Golf Club,  
Bensenville Park District

Wednesday, July 29,  
2015  
**New Rules for Managing  
Local Electronic  
Records Webinar**

Monday, August 17,  
2015  
**IAPD Summer Golf Tour #3**  
Inwood Golf Course  
Joliet Park District

Saturday, August 22,  
2015  
**Park District  
Conservation Day**  
IL State Fairgrounds,  
Springfield

Saturday, August 29,  
2015  
**Legislative Awareness  
Picnic**  
Inwood Park, Joliet Park  
District

September 15-17, 2015  
**NRPA Congress**  
Las Vegas, NV

Monday, September 28,  
2015  
**IAPD Summer Golf Tour #4**  
Glenview Park Golf Club  
Glenview Park District

Friday, October 2, 2015  
**IAPD Best of the Best  
Awards Gala**  
Chevy Chase Country  
Club, Wheeling Park  
District

Thursday, October 29,  
2015  
**IAPD Legal Symposium**  
McDonald's  
University/Hyatt Lodge

January 28-30, 2016  
**IAPD/IPRA Soaring to  
New Heights  
Conference**  
Hyatt Regency Chicago

**IAPD**  
Illinois Association of Park Districts

For the most up-to-date Calendar of Events, please  
visit the IAPD website at [www.ilparks.org](http://www.ilparks.org).

# EYE ON THE PROFESSION

A CLOSER LOOK AT TRENDS AND ISSUES IN THE PARK AND RECREATION PROFESSION



By Debbie Trueblood, CAE  
IPRA Executive Director

## IPRA is Your Partner in Service

This issue is dedicated to partnerships. At IPRA, partnerships allow us to do more with less, spread our reach further, and accomplish more together. IPRA has numerous successful partnerships which have allowed us to serve you better. This is a quick review of some of those partnerships which you might now be aware of.

IPRA has an award-winning partnership with the University of Illinois-Champaign for our partnership with them on the Leadership Academy program. U of I has been our partner on this program since the beginning of the program several years ago. U of I has a voting seat on the Leadership Academy Board of Regents and is actively involved in curriculum development of the program. This adds credibility to the educational aspects of the program because the university is involved. At graduation, the university always gives a closing speech, often noting some of the latest research affecting the field of parks and recreation and our future, and the university and IPRA co-sign the certificates of completion for Academy graduates.

IPRA partners with the University of St Francis in Joliet for our ProConnect mentoring program. We rolled out ProConnect last summer and will be accepting applications for our next cycle of the program this summer. ProConnect is a unique mentoring program designed to serve professionals in parks and recreation at all levels of their careers. Specifically, each mentoring match is a three person team of an early career, mid-level, and advanced professional. The teams meet together five times over six months for an educational event, two networking events, a service project, and a closing culmination with another educational component. This first year's participants reported that 96% "would recommend this program to a friend or colleague" and testimonials are positive. One team reported, "Both of my teammates are amazing women whom I have thoroughly enjoyed working with and learning from. Our experience together provided motivation, self-awareness and creativity both professionally and personally. I know that our relationship created through ProConnect will last for years to come." This program has the support of the University of St Francis. This relationship, modeled after the Leadership Academy partnership, ensures that the university will have a voting seat on the ProConnect Board of Regents as well as the Education Subcommittee. The university is actively involved in curriculum planning as I write this. At the culmination the university presented information about the role of mentoring in our professional community and certificates were co-signed by University of St Francis and IPRA.

Speaking of ProConnect, we are about to roll out a new program, ProConnect South which will duplicate the ProConnect model in southern Illinois. This will be a partnership between IPRA and our southern region affiliate, Southern Illinois Park and Recreation Association (SIPRA). While ProConnect is a member benefit for IPRA members only, ProConnect South will be for members of IPRA and members in good standing of SIPRA. This new program will again include teams of three at all levels of the profession and five events: education, two networking events, a service project, and the final culmination event will be in partnership with ProConnect up in the Chicagoland area, allowing all participants to be together for culmination.

At IPRA, partnerships allow us to do more with less, spread our reach further, and accomplish more together.



We also have joint educational events in partnership with SIPRA, usually once a year. This partnership allows us to work with SIPRA to serve all our members in the region better.

Recently, IPRA began rolling out partnerships with other state park and recreation associations to allow their members to participate in our webinar series. In some other states, they have struggled to make webinars successful, so by joining in our program in partnership, those states can better provide education on a wide variety of topics by participating in our series. We currently have agencies signed up in California, Alaska, Arizona, Kansas, Michigan and Indiana with additional interest in Wisconsin and South Carolina.

IPRA has partnerships with Illinois Afterschool Network and American Camp Association-Illinois and in fact, we recently facilitated a joint meeting to support a partnership between all three of our groups together. IAN's Executive Director Curtis Peace, Jr. has been a speaker for IPRA at our conference the last several years as well as standalone



events. IPRA's 2013 Board Chair Allison Niemela presented a greeting from IPRA at their 2013 conference and this year I will be introducing their keynote speaker at their conference. IPRA almost always has a guest editorial column in the IAN newsletter. This partnership allows us both to expand our reach into a closely related field. IAN even has a board position representing the park and recreation community, currently held by Dale Hanstad, Recreation Supervisor of the Village of Glendale Heights. The American Camp Association-Illinois has had a long time partnership with IPRA. Their Executive Director, Gordie Kaplan, has volunteered at the IPRA conference for several years helping us with the Agency Showcase competition. Further, IPRA's Finance Director Barry Franks is currently the ACA-IL Treasurer. Our three groups are in discussion now about ways we can work together to provide some specific educational opportunities for our joint members.

IPRA has partnerships with other affiliate groups including the Illinois Association of Museums (IAM), Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity (IAPO), Central Illinois Recreation Council for Leisure Experience (CIRCLE), Illinois Recreational Therapy Association (ILRTA), Midwest Institute of Park Executives (MIPE), Northwest Illinois Association of Parks and Recreation (NWIAPR), South Suburban Park and Recreation Professional Association (SSPRPA), and Suburban Park and Recreation Association (SPRA). We also have a state affiliate contract with National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). And of course, our closest partner, Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD), with whom we share this magazine, the Distinguished Accreditation Program, and our conference. In fact, you might not know, IAPD and IPRA have five joint committees together: Joint Editorial Committee, Joint Legislative Committee, Joint Distinguished Accredited Agency Committee, Joint Conference Committee, and the Joint Coordinating Council who manages the partnership.

As we move into the next stage of our strategic plan, IPRA is actively developing our Community Campaign program. In this public education campaign about the value of parks and recreation, we want to become more of a partner with you. We are working to create for you tools that you can use to communicate your value to your local community and we are working on tools for a statewide consistent education effort.

Finally, since our inception, IPRA has had a partnership with each of our members. Like any professional society, you get out what you put in, and while we rely on the hundreds of volunteers who help us serve our mission in so many different ways, we hope that in return, our volunteers will receive the benefits that come with professional development, networking, leadership opportunities, and enhanced involvement in the field at large. This partnership is mutually beneficial and is, for IPRA, our lifeblood. We could not do what we do with you and without that partnership that keeps us whole. I thank you for your partnership with us and I hope that together, we can better serve parks and recreation in Illinois.

## IPRA Calendar of Events

**May 7, 2015**

### **9th Annual Park Pursuit**

Participants of Park Pursuit are challenged both physically and mentally as they race through the streets and parks. Clue Cards direct teams to various parks and city landmarks where tasks are performed to continue on in the race. Not only are bragging rights at stake but participants get a true sense of unity while learning to work better as a team.

**May 13 & 21, 2015**

### **Skills Development**

#### **Webinar Series: Staff**

**Communication** The way you communicate greatly influences the outcome of a conversation. What you say and when and how you say it determines the conversation's success or failure. Our communication is continually influenced by individual filters

**May 28, 2015**

### **IPRA's Innovation**

#### **Renovation Series: "Life Balance is Bunk: Juggling Work, Family, Relationships & Personal Health"**

Gain essential skills for understanding, relating and working productively with all types of people...even the most resistant.

**June 10 & 18, 2015**

### **Skills Development**

#### **Webinar Series: Social Media Strategies 2015**

Using real social media success stories including West Sacramento's highly effective strategies, we'll demonstrate how to increase response, revenue and engage customers, volunteers and staff using a strategic team approach to social media management.

**July 8 & 16, 2015**

### **Skills Development**

#### **Webinar Series: Profitable**

**Non Profits** There are many models for raising financial support for parks and recreation agencies: foundations; friends groups; partners groups or operating organizations. Learn about each of these nonprofit models and what is required to start one and successfully operate it and what pitfalls to watch for.

**July 22, 2015**

### **Teen Camp Olympics**

The Teen Committee is excited to hold its fourth annual Teen Camp Olympics! The Teen Committee wanted to develop a teen program that would be convenient for Teen Supervisors to offer as well as bring teens together for a fun and rewarding experience.



For a complete list of upcoming events, and to register, visit [ILipra.org](http://ILipra.org)



Jason Anselment  
Legal/Legislative Counsel

## Partnerships Are a Key Part of Addressing Current Legislative Issues

The State's budget and other fiscal problems once again dominate discussions at the Capitol. This Spring Session, these debates and budget negotiations are also raising serious challenges for local governments. Sweeps of dedicated funds, grant suspensions, and diversions of other local revenues to use for the State's general operations are three important examples. Other proposals would tie the hands of locally elected officials through a state-imposed property tax freeze while some would eliminate local control and services by completely dissolving units of local government through consolidation.

Although Illinois park districts, forest preserves, and other conservation and recreation agencies have a proud history of success that has resulted in a high level of citizen satisfaction, we cannot simply rest on our laurels during these challenging times. What happens in Springfield directly impacts your agency and its citizens. Therefore, it is important that we let our voices be heard by reminding lawmakers that the essential services that are provided by park districts and other local conservation and recreation agencies improve the quality of life for Illinois citizens and help State government meet some of its fiscal challenges.

As we share our story, it is important to communicate a key part of our formula for success. In addition to ensuring the efficient delivery of core services, **partnerships** are also a key part of our advocacy efforts when it comes to some of our most pressing legislative issues.

Here are three examples.

### Capital Construction Grants Are Win-Win Partnerships that Provide a Great Investment Return

In recent months, IAPD has worked tirelessly to preserve and protect grant funding for park districts, forest preserves and other conservation and recreation agencies through programs like OSLAD, PARC and the Public Museum Capital Grant Program. As this issue goes to press, we continue our efforts to have the suspension lifted so the grant funding can be released.

The OSLAD grant program has been one of the State's most successful programs for more than 25 years because it is a true partnership that produces great investment returns for the State. OSLAD does not rely on the State's general revenue fund and instead has its own dedicated funding source through a portion of the real estate transfer tax. That dedicated grant funding also requires at least a 50% match by a park district or forest preserve, which guarantees the State an immediate 100% return on its investment. Although this local match means the State gets double the short-term payoff in terms of job creation and other economic activity through the purchase of building supplies and materials, the State's investment continues to pay dividends well into the future.

In fact, this partnership produces many long-term benefits. Grant-funded facilities are used to deliver essential programs and services that help the State tackle the root of many of its budget problems. For example, these facilities are used to provide after-school and summer school programs for working families. Law enforcement overwhelmingly agrees that these programs have a greater impact in reducing youth crime and violence than hiring more police officers. Long term, these programs help reduce the demand for costly correctional facilities. Additionally, convenient and affordable access to fitness facilities promotes health and wellness, thereby reducing Medicaid and other physical and mental health care expenses that are major cost drivers in the State budget.

Of course, these are just a few examples. Our local parks also mitigate costs associated with stormwater management, particularly in urban areas, and contribute to improved air and water quality. According to a recent study, every \$1 invested in land conservation returns \$4 in natural goods and services like these.<sup>i</sup>

While the State receives all of these benefits from a very modest investment of dedicated matching funds, the OSLAD and PARC programs differ from other State-funded programs in one extremely important respect. Once the matching funds are initially provided, the State does not have to bear the future burden or cost of maintaining the facilities, providing the services or paying the required personnel costs.

To summarize, by making a modest investment of dedicated funds, the State is able to leverage local matching funds, create jobs and grow the economy up front while reducing the demand on other State programs and services that require general revenue funding down the road.

Matching grant capital construction programs like OSLAD and PARC are truly win-win partnerships between the State and local park districts.

### Intergovernmental Partnerships Are the Key to Efficiency in Delivering Services

As the State works to address its own budget issues, some have once again attempted to shift attention away from these problems by targeting instead those local governments that provide essential services to communities throughout Illinois. These proponents of local government consolidation always seem to start with the false premise that simply reducing the total number of units of government will save taxpayers money.

Local government consolidation has been studied many times throughout the years. Other states have found no clear relationship between spending per person and the total number of local governments or number of persons per local government.<sup>ii</sup> In fact, according to national research, consolidation does not guarantee cost savings or more efficient operations.<sup>iii</sup>

While government should always deliver services as efficiently as possible, of great concern with local government consolidation proposals is that they almost never guarantee taxpayers that the quality and level of their services will not be diminished as a result. Experience suggests that bigger bureaucracy is typically not more efficient when it comes to delivering core services. So, where there is no duplication, any cost “savings” that are projected from consolidation would very likely come from eliminating services altogether or by reducing quality.

Unfortunately, history suggests that parks, recreation and conservation are often the first things that bigger bureaucratic governments cut during economic downturns or when faced with other fiscal challenges. In fact, one need look no further than what has happened to State funding for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources during the past decade to see what happens when times get tough for multi-purpose governments. Municipal park and recreation departments have experienced much of the same. Such shortsighted budget decisions end up costing taxpayers more in future years to address the consequences of the failure to fund these essential services that ultimately save taxpayer money in other areas over the long-term (see above).

So, in the interest of transparency and to protect taxpayers, each consolidation proposal should contain a careful analysis that measures all claimed savings against the long term financial impact that would result from losses in service and the loss of local control.

Of course, park districts, forest preserves and conservation districts know the real key to efficiency in delivering local services. Through partnerships with neighboring park districts, school districts, other units of government and private organizations, park districts have saved taxpayer dollars by sharing services through facility use arrangements, police protection services, and stormwater management to name just a few of the hundreds of examples. At the same time, locally elected and uncompensated park district commissioners are able to exercise local control over the manner in which services are delivered.

Some also attempt to argue that park and recreation services could easily be delivered by the private sector. However, these proponents ignore another key principle of partnerships: collaboration saves money and reduces cost.

Private sector providers are proprietary and are ultimately driven by profit. This means they must compete with others and protect their business interests rather than operate in the public interest. Consequently, there is a disincentive to collaborate and share best practices with their competitors. Park districts do not compete against each other, which allows their professionals and their volunteer park commissioners to freely share best practices. While private sector providers offer services to only those who can afford them, park districts ensure affordable access to entire communities.

Intergovernmental agreements and public-private partnerships are the key to efficiently delivering essential services.

### Partnerships with our Communities Result in a High Level of Trust and Citizen Satisfaction

For the past several years, local government revenues have been threatened by legislative proposals to freeze local property taxes. While no one likes to pay taxes, the primary problem with a state mandated freeze is that it takes decision-making out of the hands of local officials who were elected by their citizens to make these important fiscal decisions.

Locally elected and uncompensated park commissioners recognize the importance of keeping property taxes as low as possible. For years, they have worked with their professional employees to develop partnerships, programs and other innovative solutions in order to keep property taxes as low as possible. This is likely one of the reasons that research shows that the vast majority of Illinoisans believe that park districts are good stewards of their tax dollars and that most also feel their park district spends their tax dollars wisely with little waste.<sup>iv</sup> A state-imposed property tax freeze would tie the hands of these locally elected officials with which citizens are so highly satisfied.

It is important to recognize that the minimal CPI-adjustment permitted by PTELL only allows local government to cover inflationary increases in expenses such as fuel and labor. This modest amount does not increase net revenues after expenses are paid, so local government would be forced to cut services demanded by residents if the modest CPI-adjustment were eliminated.

While freezing property taxes might sound appealing, it is not good for taxpayers when it ends up costing them more down the road. For example, as my own family knows from firsthand experience, finding summer school and after-school programming to keep kids busy during those times when they are not in school can be difficult and expensive. Park districts provide affordable summer and after-school programming that saves taxpayers dollars versus expensive private sector programs while our public parks and trails also provide places for Illinois families to exercise, recreate and get outdoors at no additional cost.

Although a significant 83% of Illinois families report using a park district facility within the last year,<sup>v</sup> even the small percentage of taxpayers who do not directly use park district services benefit greatly from the relatively small portion of their property tax bill that goes to park districts. As discussed elsewhere in this article, park districts save State and local communities money in terms of reducing Medicaid and other health care costs, and they help reduce crime and local law enforcement expenses. Park districts also help generate local sales tax revenue and create jobs locally through tourism, which helps fund other State and municipal services. They also help attract business and improve property values. In fact, **nine out of ten** Illinoisans believe that parks and open space improve property values.<sup>vi</sup>

For all of these reasons, the strong partnership between park districts and their citizens results in a high level of trust and citizen satisfaction.

### Share Your Experiences

We are likely to face challenges such as local government consolidation, property tax freeze proposals, threats to local revenues and attacks on local control for the foreseeable future. We must play an active role in these discussions. As we tell our story, it is imperative to share our personal experiences. Through partnerships, we can continue to improve the quality of life within our communities and make Illinois an even better place to work and live.

<sup>i</sup> *Illinois Needs Assessment and Return on Investment in Land Conservation*, The Trust for Public Land, January 2015

<sup>ii</sup> *Local Government Consolidation: Assessing the Evidence for Cost Savings and Economic Improvement* by Eric Scorson, Senior Economist. (Michigan 2010)

<sup>iii</sup> *Evaluation Report: Consolidation of Units of Local Government*. Office of the Legislative Auditor of the State of Minnesota (April 2012)

<sup>iv</sup> Statewide Survey of Illinois Residents conducted by Market Probe, Inc., September 2013.

<sup>v</sup> *Id.*

<sup>vi</sup> *Id.*



## CREATING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

Jessica Cannaday, Marketing Manager, Oak Brook Park District

In 2010, Laure Kosey, Oak Brook Park District's new executive director had a vision: To bring the value of parks and recreation to local organizations and gain financial support from those who believed in the park district's mission and goals. During the first year of this initiative, the Oak Brook Park District generated over \$41,500 in alternative revenue including in-kind product donations, cash donations and advertising dollars—a \$35,000 increase from the prior year. Initial goals were small and included offsetting the cost of special events and improving existing services. In just five short years, the Oak Brook Park District's corporate and community relations strategy has grown to generate approximately \$130,000 in additional revenue per year and allowed our agency to accomplish significant capital improvements while increasing the services available to our community.



**In the past four years, Choose to Lose has helped our community lose over 2,968 pounds and the Pink 5K has raised over \$27,000. The park district has donated the proceeds back to Open Arms-Adventist Hinsdale Hospital Foundation's Breast Cancer Outreach Fund.**

**Bringing the value of parks and recreation to local organizations**

The first step in Oak Brook Park District's corporate and community relations strategy was to increase access to fitness and wellness opportunities for corporate residents instead of simply approaching companies with a sales pitch and asking them what they could do for the Oak Brook Park District. The staff and board worked with the Village of Oak Brook and the Oak Brook Chamber of Commerce to advertise discounted group memberships to local businesses. To further promote the services the Oak Brook Park District has available, our staff now regularly attends corporate wellness fairs to inform employees that because they work in Oak Brook, they are entitled to resident rates on all our programs, services and rentals. To encourage those who work in Oak Brook to participate in our wellness programs and events, we have also developed unique team registration opportunities for Choose to Lose and the Pink 5k.

Choose to Lose and the Pink 5K are sponsored by Evergreen Bank Group and Adventist Hinsdale and LaGrange Memorial Hospital's and have had a huge impact on our community. In the past four years, Choose to Lose has helped our community lose over 2,968 pounds and the Pink 5K has raised over \$27,000. The park district has donated the proceeds back to Open Arms-Adventist Hinsdale Hospital Foundation's Breast Cancer Outreach Fund.

**Gaining support from those who believed in the park district mission**

Prior to 2010, the Oak Brook Park District had developed fledgling relationships with Evergreen Bank Group and Adventist Hinsdale Hospital through advertising and small event sponsorships. Both companies felt that their visions aligned well with Oak Brook Park District's mission to provide the very best opportunities for our community. From there, our dedicated corporate and community relations staff, Mary Tansey, was able to create a customized partnership program with each company that helped fulfill their goals and expectations.

**Keeping you Well. Keeping you Active. Adventist Hinsdale and LaGrange Memorial Hospitals and the Oak Brook Park District** This unique partnership has helped position the Oak Brook Park District as a leader in wellness initiatives in our community. Adventist Hinsdale and LaGrange Memorial Hospital's annual agreement helps finance Choose to Lose, ABC Preschool, PeeWee Summer Camp, Playground Summer Camp and provides our residents with access to multiple free health and wellness seminars and screenings each year.

**Keeping Oak Brook Green: Evergreen Bank Group and Oak Brook Park District** The Oak Brook Park District and Evergreen Bank Group work together to support green initiatives in Oak Brook. Each year, the park district provides support staff and marketing for the bank's annual Electronic Recycling and Paper Shredding event. Evergreen Bank Group helps to finance Oak Brook Park District's electronic newsletter in addition to providing sponsorship funding for our annual outdoor summer concert series and A Walk in the Park Wine Tour.

**Offsetting the cost of special events**

Smaller sponsorships, vendor agreements and in kind donations are solicited from local companies to help offset the cost of our special events and create added value for our participants. Multiple small agreements and donations save the Oak Brook Park District thousands of dollars each year in staff costs alone and provide smaller businesses with customized opportunities to place their name or product in front of a diverse audience.



## “We don't dictate the terms of our partnerships... We leverage the value of our mission and develop positive relationships with those who are inspired by it.”

**Adventist Hinsdale and LaGrange Memorial Hospital:** Title sponsor of The Pink 5K and Choose to Lose

**Cori Sikich Foundation:** Title sponsor of Cori's Triathlon

**Corner Bakery Café:** Donates product and small food items for the Underwater Egg Hunt and Pink 5K

**Crunchmasters:** Donates sample packs of product for the Pink 5K, Cori's Triathlon, and Indoor Sprint Triathlon

**Evergreen Bank Group:** Title sponsor for The Pink 5K, Choose to Lose, Summer Concerts and A Walk in the Park Wine Tour

**Gibson's Oak Brook:** Premiere sponsor of Oak Brook Park District's Gold Leaf Gala (our sponsor recognition event)

**Giordano's:** Sponsors Co-Ed 16" Summer Softball and Stars Swim Team

**Hagg Press:** Donates banners for Winterfest

**Kramer Foods:** Donates fruit for Indoor Sprint Triathlon

**Pinstripes Oak Brook:** Preferred caterer and supporter of staff appreciation events, The Pink 5K, Cori's Triathlon and staff team building events

**Rosati's Pizza:** Preferred pizza vendor for our pool and theme parties

**Sweet Baby Ray's:** Oktoberfest Sponsor and premiere food vendor

**The Private Bank:** Oktoberfest Sponsor

**Two Brothers Brewing Co:** Sponsor and preferred beer vendor of Oak Brook Park District's Oktoberfest

**Weber Grill:** Summer Concert Series & Walk in the Park Wine Tour preferred food vendor

### Capital Improvements

Funding from partnerships has helped the Oak Brook Park District complete several capital improvement projects over the last four years. The park district considers the value of naming rights, signage and usage when negotiating capital project sponsorship agreements.

### Evergreen Bank Group Athletic Field

A \$135,000 investment above and beyond their annual sponsorship by Evergreen Bank Group allowed the Oak Brook park district to open the Evergreen Bank Group Athletic field in 2012. The new synthetic turf field provides three times the playable hours and has greatly extended seasonal play. This not only provides increased recreational opportunities for the residents of Oak Brook, but has also increased field usage revenue for the park district. In exchange for their investment, Evergreen Bank Group retains exclusive naming rights to the field for ten years.

### Cori's Way

In 2013, a \$35,000 donation from the Cori Sikich Memorial Foundation allowed the Oak Brook Park District to add increased security and updated technology to the preschool wing of the Family Recreation Center. Our inclusive preschool program now provides state-of-the-art accessible programming in a safer environment. The preschool wing is now referred to as *Cori's Way* and our early childhood curriculum includes focused wellness and well-being programming.

### Oak Brook Disc Golf Course

Multiple businesses and community organizations were integral to the redesign and development of Oak Brook Park District's innovative disc golf course. Oak Brook Park District staff leveraged hundreds of volunteer hours from local disc golf enthusiasts to clear acres of Buckthorne from the new course layout and build tee pads. The following companies donated funding to offset the cost of signage and construction: Uni-Lock & 3D Design, Oak Brook Little League, Giordano's in Oakbrook Terrace, Dr. Marcos Lopez, Oak Brook Disc Golf Doubles League, Oak Brook Park District Foundation, Pinstripes, PNC Capital Advisors, LLC, and Play It Again Sports in Westmont.

### Improving and increasing existing services

In an effort to continue to provide the very best in park and recreational opportunities for our community, the Oak Brook Park District always looks for ways to improve upon the programs and services that are already offered.

In 2012, the Oak Brook Park District took on the organization of Oak Brook's Winterfest, a tradition that is almost as old as the city of Oak Brook itself. Residents had suggested that adding ice skating would greatly improve the appeal of the event. However, since admission to Winterfest was free, funding was incredibly limited. Park district staff solicited donations from Oak Brook Homeowner's Association. As a result, the construction and maintenance of Oak Brook's Outdoor Community Ice Rink has been fully funded through the generosity of these groups.

Each year, Asif Yusuf, a resident of Oak Brook, donates hay bales, cornstalks and hundreds of pumpkins from his family farm to support Haunted Forest. These donations improve the aesthetics of the event and allow the Oak Brook Park District to offer a pumpkin patch for younger participants to enjoy.

Oak Brook Park District members have communicated to staff that they would enjoy access to spa services as part of their membership. Having tried to offer these services in-house in years past, the Oak Brook Park District found them to be cost prohibitive and discontinued the program. In speaking with Le Meridian, a new hotel that opened in Oak Brook in 2014, the Oak Brook Park District is now able to offer high-end spa services to our members through an agreement with Le Meridian.

The Oak Brook Park District corporate and community relations strategy is not a one-size-fits-all program or a predetermined set of menu items potential partners can choose from. The continued success of the program is contributed largely to having a dedicated corporate community relations professional available to listen to the needs of potential partners, create unique and individualized programs, and ensure that the investments are beneficial for them. “We don't dictate the terms of our partnerships,” says Laure Kosey. “We leverage the value of our mission and develop positive relationships with those who are inspired by it.”

# Partnerships Matter



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Adventist  
Glen Oaks Hospital

# Partnering for Success

By Josh Hendricks, Director of Marketing and Communications,  
Bloomington Park District

Every agency has unique challenges. Many times these challenges can be addressed through partnerships. Finding a partner that shares your values and culture can bring even greater success.

Many times networking, or "net worlding," can bring about the most amazing connections that eventually become solid, productive relationships. What starts as a small initial sponsorship can grow to become a major partnership as trust and mutual respect build.





### Stratford Square Mall

One such example is Bloomingdale's unique partnership with Stratford Square Mall. The relationship advanced from the Bloomingdale Park District (BPD) exhibiting at the mall's expos and trade shows when the Bloomingdale Parks Foundation, the not-for-profit organization dedicated to helping BPD, began regularly offering gift wrapping to shoppers over the holiday season in 2009. Not only did the mall not charge for the space provided, but it also supplied all of the wrapping paper, boxes, tape, tags and more for FREE! Several mall staff even stepped in to help when volunteers got extra busy. The Holiday Gift Wrap enters its seventh year in 2015 and has evolved into the foundation's largest fundraiser.

The foundation advanced the relationship further in 2012 and 2013 when it held its annual 5K at the mall to accommodate the title sponsor at the time, Ballydoyle Irish Pub & Restaurant. Again, the mall was more than gracious, and opened its doors and restrooms to runners and walkers at 7 a.m. on a Sunday morning. Mall security staff was also provided to help with crowd control and course management. Runners received over \$100 in coupons from mall stores in their runner goodie bags thanks to solicitation by the mall's marketing team.

Bloomingdale Park District began regular programming at the mall in the summer of 2013 when it offered free crafts and giveaways every third Saturday of the month. Also that summer, the mall faced a growing number of employees needing on-site daycare. BPD was contacted about providing such a service. What ensued was a relationship unparalleled in parks and recreation.

Stratford completely renovated and updated one of its empty stores to accommodate Bloomingdale Park District, picking up a significant tab in the process. The 3,000-square feet of additional programming space for BPD includes a bathroom, check-in desk and security gate. The Bloomingdale Park District has expanded beyond the camp and now offers a variety of programs and classes in the space.

Stratford has also left a legacy in Bloomingdale's park system, contributing the resources necessary to pay for an accessible drinking fountain at BPD's Sunnyside Park.

It should also be noted that Stratford Square Mall has served as a sponsor for a number of Bloomingdale Park District's special events and programs. Of particular note, the mall is a platinum sponsor for the park district's Festival of Lights event, which includes an abundance of lighted structures and festival programming in Old Town Park. Most recently, the mall has signed on to become Bloomingdale Park District's brochure partner, appearing on the back cover of its seasonal program catalog. It also recently, agreed to sponsor the park district's summer concert series.

"Our partnership with Stratford Square Mall allows the park district to extend its reach into the community and support Bloomingdale's economic engine," said BPD Executive Director, Carrie Fullerton. "We have been able to support mall management in their mission to attract and retain our residents, and they have supported us in our goal to extend our agency into our community beyond our recreation center and parks."

"Stratford Square Mall is trying to reposition itself with high quality entertainment options and Bloomingdale Park District, with its excellent reputation in the community, is a perfect partner for our mission," said Stratford Square Mall General Manager, Doug Kiehn. "It's a group of high energy people that get things done. From our perspective, it's one of the key resources of the community. All of its programs are so well received and have a very positive impact. That's why we do everything we can to support the Bloomingdale Park District."

Stratford Square Mall was honored as Best Friend of Illinois Parks – Large Business by the Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD) in 2014.

Other Bloomingdale Park District corporate partner success stories include:

### Adventist GlenOaks Hospital

The similarity in core values and beliefs power this partnership. The official motto of the park district is "Where Recreation Revolves Around You." The welcome message from Chief Executive Officer, Bruce Christian, on the Adventist GlenOaks (AGH) website begins with, "At Adventist GlenOaks Hospital, we are Always Here For You."



The hospital has provided health screenings, seminars and educational programs covering issues such as smoking cessation, childhood obesity, heart health and more to park district residents – all at no cost. It serves as a major sponsor for several special events. The last two summers, AGH employees have been treated to a free day of “splashtastic” fun at the district's Oasis Water Park. Residents benefit as well, as AGH employees pass out lip balm and suntan lotion. In 2013, Adventist GlenOaks Hospital was honored as Best Friend of Illinois Parks - Large Business by the IAPD.

### **Bloomington Bank and Trust**

The park district's longest-tenured partner was honored as IAPD Best Friend of Illinois Parks in 2009. Bloomington Bank & Trust has partnered with the park district over the past eight-plus years; exhibiting leadership and dedication to all who reside and work in the community.

The annual Coin Dive is a highly-popular community event created just for the bank. Bank representatives disperse coins of all shapes and sizes into The Oasis Water Park's two pools. Children dive for coins and several of these coins can be redeemed for special prizes.

The bank also is host to the district's annual outdoor movie. Seeking to show off its building and get potential customers on site, the inflatable movie screen was moved from a nearby park to the bank's parking lot. In addition to bank representatives operating on their home turf, the movie attracts additional drive-by attention as it's located near a major street.

Bloomington Bank & Trust also sets up an inflatable money machine in the shape of an ATM at the district's annual Bunny Bash. The machine dispenses play money, which can be redeemed by the bank for opening a new account by game participants.

### **Associated Dental Care**

This local business is essential to the community's health. They help residents keep teeth functional and healthy, find and treat dental problems before they become major, and stay informed on the latest

cosmetic dentistry to allow everyone to smile brightly. In addition to sponsorship of multiple events, the dental practice also visits preschool, kindergarten, before-school and after-school programs to demonstrate proper dental care.

### **Sports Authority**

The sporting goods chain works closely with the park district's youth athletic organizations by supplying coaching kits including water bottles, balls, coupons and more while serving as a registration site several times a year. It also sponsors several special events and is the t-shirt sponsor for summer camps.

### **Bloomington School of Music**

A major sponsor for Bloomington's Got Talent, the local music school not only helps encourage entry into the competition, but supplies judges as well. Bloomington School of Music also offers programs in the park district's program catalog.

In addition to all of the private business partnerships above, the Bloomington Park District also partners with local restaurants, chambers of commerce, surrounding park districts and school districts, the Village of Bloomington, the Bloomington Public Library, the Bloomington-Roselle Rotary Club, the Bloomington Fire Protection District, the Bloomington Police Department and Western DuPage Special Recreation Association.

As you grow this area of your agency, it's important to remember that “partnership” is synonymous with “relationship.” All parties must benefit – it cannot be one-sided. Important skills for staff seeking partnerships include listening, communication, follow-through, follow-up, analysis, patience, likeability and flexibility. These are indeed the “tickets” to creating and maintaining solid partnerships.

Going down the path of partnering with others to advance your agency is not a trend – it's a function of a successful agency that is here to stay. The better you get at creating and maintaining partnerships, the more people you'll serve – and isn't that why we're here in the first place?

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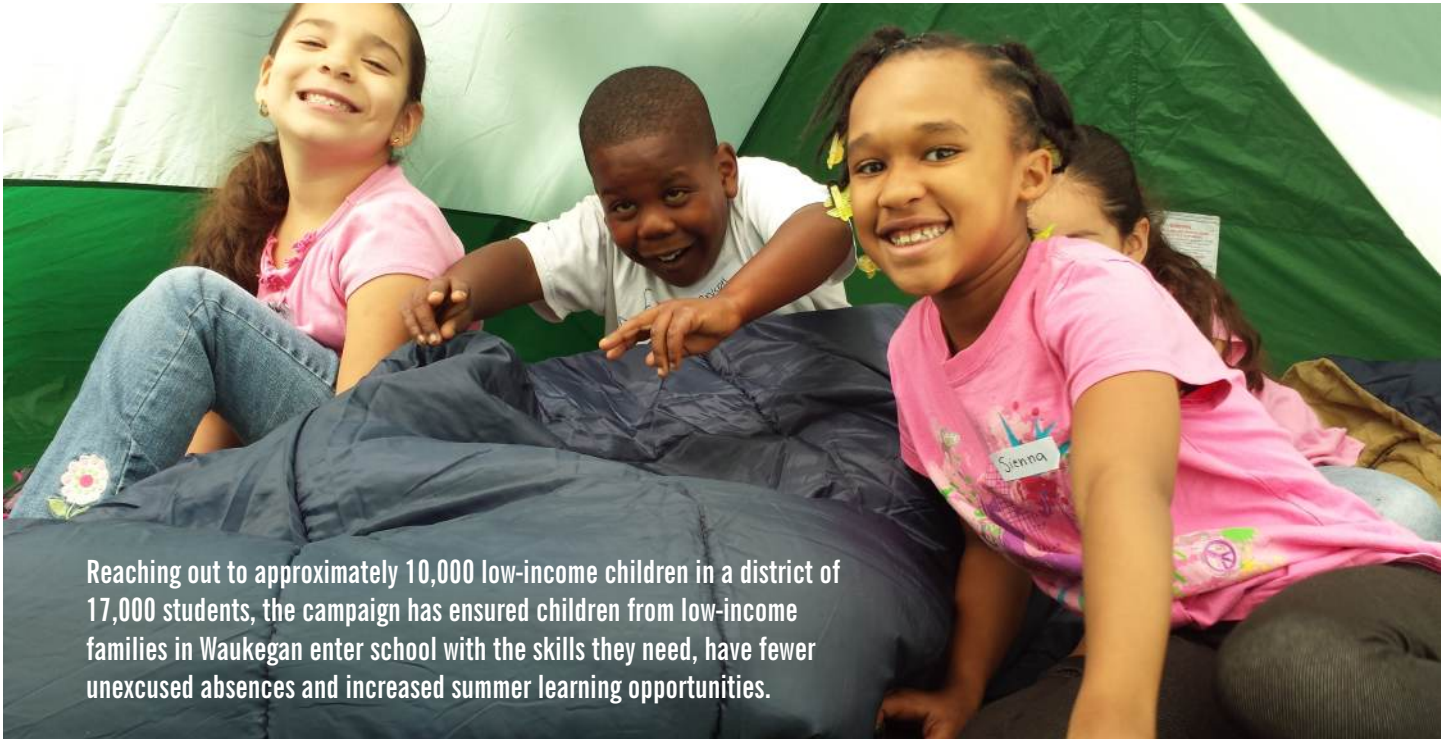
By Greg Petry, CPRE, Executive Director, Waukegan Park District



# UNIQUE PARTNERSHIPS- UNIQUE RESULTS

The Waukegan Park District (WPD) has embraced partnerships as a way to deliver and enhance programs and services. From the top to the bottom of the organization, internally and externally, WPD has embraced forming unique partnerships as a strategy.

The strategic plan goal of community engagement is supported by the initiative to develop and maintain partnerships. The Board of Commissioners and staff constantly seek mutually beneficial partners and relationships in the community for several reasons.



Reaching out to approximately 10,000 low-income children in a district of 17,000 students, the campaign has ensured children from low-income families in Waukegan enter school with the skills they need, have fewer unexcused absences and increased summer learning opportunities.

- The park district does not always have to be the lead provider of programs and services.
- The park district does not have the resources alone to meet the needs and desires of the community.
- As a strategic plan value of organizational sustainability: *The board and staff will use a collaborative and cooperative team based approach that results in the best decisions for the long term greater good of the entire community.*
- The park district can add value and credibility to partner initiatives, and vice versa.
- Volunteers, patrons, future leaders and program participants are generated.
- Partnerships stretch funds, generate revenue and enhance cost recovery.
- Creates community engagement and makes the park district more relevant.

The Waukegan Park District has approximately forty active partnerships. Some of the more unique ones of interest include:

### Faith Community

*First Presbyterian Church of Waukegan and First Methodist Church of Waukegan*

These churches provide rehearsal and performance space to the Waukegan Concert Chorus. The annual Messiah at Christmas is also held in a church. No rental fees are levied. These churches also allow the use of their musical instruments and equipment.

### *St. Anastasia Catholic Church*

St. Anastasia School is landlocked and does not have any open space for classes, events or after-school activities. WPD utilizes space at the church for cultural performances. The Jack Benny Center for the Arts provides exhibit space for the student art show.

### Nonprofits

#### *United Way*

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, led by the United Way of Lake County in partnership with Waukegan School District #60, Waukegan Park District, Waukegan Public Library and Kohl Children's Museum, has helped eliminate the achievement gap for third grade reading between Waukegan schools and the state of Illinois. Reaching out to approximately 10,000 low-income children in a district of 17,000 students, the campaign has ensured children from low-income families in Waukegan enter school with the skills they need, have fewer unexcused absences and increased summer learning opportunities.

#### *Gang Outreach*

Supporting the mission of Jane Addams Hull House, WPD provides space to a faith-based group and the Waukegan Police Department to assist young people transitioning out of gangs. Opportunities for tattoo removal were available, as well as new clothes that were not associated with gang colors or symbols.

#### *Bowen Country Club Committee*

The Bowen Country Club Reunion Committee works with the district to preserve the history of Jane Addams and the Hull House as the summer program was housed at Bowen Park from 1912 to 1962. Thousands of Chicago inner city youth were brought to the property for leisure education. The committee has raised approximately \$75,000 to build a memorial arbor, a brick walkway and benches in Bowen Park in memory of past directors. The group also built the Bowen Country Club Memorabilia display. The Waukegan Park District provides the group space for annual picnics, an annual reunion and clerical assistance. Their efforts helped in designating Bowen Park to the National Register of Historic Places in 1978.



*Waukegan Arts Council (WAC)*

The WAC is a grassroots organization that works to promote the arts in Waukegan and acts as an economic and tourism driver. The district has provided the organization with an annual \$1,500 grant, mailing support and meeting space. The district's executive director sits on the Honorary Board and two staff members are on the Executive Board. In turn, WAC places the cultural arts department banner on the council's website once a year, promotes programs and activities on the council's website calendar and social media page.

*Waukegan Harbor Citizens Advisory Group (CAG)*

CAG is a grassroots citizen's group interested in the cleanup of environmentally distressed properties and environmental education. It is comprised of governments, nonprofits, environmental advocacy groups and businesses. CAG has secured millions of dollars of grants through state and federal programs. The group has assisted with the inventory of the botanical, reptile and bird populations in several of the district's parks. CAG has provided opportunities for summer camps to participate in W.G. Jackson research vessel tours on Lake Michigan. The group has acted as a resource for WPD's *Dandelion Wine* Fine Arts Festival and Live Green special events, as well as the Citizen Scientist and For Earth's Sake programs. CAG sponsored the Geosphere (also known as the Earth Balloon) at the Field House for school children and the general public to experience.

*Boys and Girls Club of Lake County (BGCLC)*

A partnership with the BGCLC to lease the Community Recreation Center for \$1 a year has enabled more than 300 high risk children to be better served with the leveraged increase of nonprofit grant funding. There is an annual savings to the district of \$90,000, with greater staffing, resources and programs realized at the facility.

**Government**

*Waukegan Township*

The Park Place Senior Center was constructed on park district property as an addition to the Belvidere Recreation Center. The Waukegan Park District staff assisted with the construction

management. Shared space is utilized for programming in respective buildings. The district provides limited indoor building maintenance and all outdoor landscaping maintenance and snowplowing. Support is given for special events such as the Jazz Fest and Walk for Seniors.

*Solid Waste Agency of Lake County (SWALCO)*

SWALCO has collaborated with the WPD Green Team to plan community recycling programs and events. The agency offers resources and coordination of recycling collection events and programs. The district promotes SWALCO's Reuse-A-Shoe program at recreation centers and holds community recycling events. Annually, 30,000 pounds of electronic products, 3,500 pounds of paper and 800 pairs of shoes were collected. The program was recently expanded to collect textiles and bicycles.

*Lake County Health Department*

In cooperation with the Lake County Health Department, the BeWell fitness program was implemented for people who are battling diabetes. The BeWell program is available for underserved community members with Type 2 diabetes and the program provides these patients with a free monthly fitness center membership and group exercise classes while being counseled about healthy living options.

**Business Community**

*Comcast*

Comcast has provided funding to the Cultural Arts Division to start the Comcast Literary Arts and Digital Photography Lab at the Jack Benny Center for the Arts. The purpose of the lab is for children to expand their imagination through playing with words and exploring the world through nature photography. The children in the creative writing classes have learned to create pictures through their words and the photography students tell stories through their pictures.

*Vista Health System*

Vista and the park district have committed to initiatives that enhance health and wellness within the local community. These include participating in numerous events and activities throughout the year

including the annual Field House Fitness expo, free bimonthly health screenings at the fitness center, Vista Healthy Woman Zumba Parties, the Vista Healthy Woman Expo and health and wellness lectures by Vista physicians.

**Beach Park Animal Hospital (BPAH)**

The district and BPAH work cooperatively to educate the community on healthy pet owning practices while providing affordable pet services to the community. Together, a special event called K9 Trace and Pace was created to raise funds for the development of a dog agility playground at the Callahan Franklin Dog Exercise Area and the Beach Park Animals' Pet Rescue Fund. The event also provided a wellness aspect for people as they walked around a pond with their dog, tested out dog agility equipment (Pace) and a discounted pet microchipping opportunity (Trace). BPAH also worked in collaboration with the district to offer a discounted vaccination program in which 65 dogs and cats received vaccinations.

**North Shore Gas (NSG)**

Programs developed during this partnership include the Wise Kids Outdoors, We Can, and The OrganWise Guys. NSG funded a Nature Navigator position that enhanced environmental learning for summer campers and they helped create an Environmental School Outreach program. The park district provides NSG employees and their families a *Kid's Exploration Day*. Children of employees enjoy nature activities at one of the district's local parks. This has been a great way for NSG families to experience the programs they have supported.

**Media**

Waukegan Association for Youth Soccer (W.A.Y.S.) is a sports affiliate of the Waukegan Park District. The park district advertises soccer in the brochure with a full page ad. In turn, W.A.Y.S. distributes a free, biweekly, mostly Spanish written newspaper named Goolpe to its participants and the community, a circulation of 10,000. The district is provided a full page color ad at no charge.

**Board and Staff**

**Volunteers/Patrons**

In February of each year, the WPD recognizes 615 volunteers and 170 patrons at a reception.

**Partners in Parks**

Groups can partner to make park improvements through Corporate Work Days or ongoing commitments. Ongoing commitments are recognized permanently on the park name sign.

**Polar Bear Plunge**

Held on New Year's Day, Commissioner Terry Duffy created and annually promotes a fundraising campaign. It is a competition among local bars to raise money to support special recreation services.

With partnerships, we can engage the community to creatively solve problems and deliver beneficial programs and services in unique ways that we cannot necessarily do alone. The number of potential collaborations and resources available are endless to meet our mission, strategy and values.



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# WebXtra



## The Partnerships that “Just Get It!”

by Jim Reuter, Executive Director, Carol Stream Park District

### Community Affiliations

When I think of partnerships from a park district angle, I think of cooperative classes or the shared use of facilities, equipment and vehicles with neighboring park districts. The sharing of resources is a typical partnership among districts and enables us to introduce and/or offer our programs and services to a broader community without the added expense to do so. In addition, park district partnerships are cultivated with towns, school districts, local colleges, hospitals, retirement living centers and organizations such as the YMCA or the Boys and Girls Clubs of America – to name a few...

### Family and Friends

With all that said, there is a significant, atypical partnership in park districts; and it may be the most important in our industry. This partnership does not deal with shared park district resources in the way of facilities, vehicles, equipment; nor does it deal directly with community or business partners. The partnership I'm referring to involves every single person in the parks and recreation field – the partnership of family and friends.

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## Partnerships: The Never Ending Resource

by Mary Stallings, Senior Center Supervisor, Dundee Township Park District and  
Teresa Grodsky, Active Adult Coordinator, Addison Park District

There are many benefits in working in the field of the active older adults. We are popular! Partnerships are easy to form and a successful partnership can be beneficial to all parties involved. Some partnerships we look for, and other good ones seem to happen by accident. But, however they come about, it is very important to be sure that the partnership is what we want. If it is, we do our best to make it a long-term relationship.

### Why Use Partnerships

First on the list are certainly the financial benefits we can gain. Sponsorships allow us to do more with our programs.

We can provide additional benefits for our participants, many times at a more reasonable cost. Partnerships are also excellent for our community exposure. It gets our name out with businesses and other organizations and gives us visibility. Many partners can provide volunteer assistance. Schools and community service organizations can give us help with special events, fundraising projects and much more. Many partners have certain areas of expertise and programs that they can offer us that we can't do ourselves. An example might be assisted living facilities that can give us programs on memory improvement. They offer the program and our participants benefit with little or no cost to us. Most importantly, partnerships allow us to provide better service to our participants.

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by Jim Randall, Executive Director of Frankfort Square Park District

### Growing Seeds of Goodness through Community Partnerships

by Erin Maassen, Marketing & Communications Manager, Glencoe Park District

### Partnerships Help People Enjoy Life

by Laura Gibbs-Green, Public Relations and Social Media Manager, Rockford Park District

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## PEOPLE & PLACES



### The Illinois Chapter, ASLA Honors Peter M. Murphy for his Dedication, Leadership, and Outstanding Contributions to the Illinois Landscape

Each year, ILASLA recognized projects, legislation, articles, organizations, or individuals that have significantly enhanced the Illinois Landscape or promoted the profession of landscape architecture in our state. This year, the Chapter bestowed the award to the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD), **Peter M. Murphy**.

As a fearless advocate for parks and open space throughout the State of Illinois, Peter's leadership has shown us all what it means to organize, educate and support landscape architects and our allied professions to the importance of our precious resources.

ILASLA recognized Peter Murphy for his relentless support of Illinois' natural resources. Our land, water and air continues to be compromised by legislation, budget cuts and irresponsible development. Peter has continued to champion parks and the protection of open space through his strategic and passionate efforts.



### Glenview Park District Names Michael McCarty as New Executive Director

**Michael McCarty** is the new executive director of the Glenview Park District. Michael has more than 20 years of experience in the field of parks and recreation and his leadership has brought national recognition to other park districts he has led. Michael comes to Glenview from his position as director of parks and recreation for the City of Fairfax, VA. During his nine year tenure, Fairfax was

awarded the National Gold Medal for Excellence in Parks and Recreation. Prior to his role at Fairfax, Michael served as the executive director of parks and recreation for Longmeadow, MA.

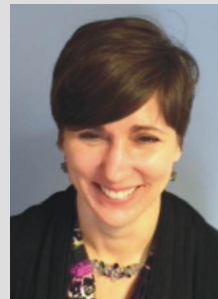
Michael has been responsible for managing new park developments and large-scale renovations, numerous open space purchases and successful campaigns encouraging charitable donations to park and recreation foundations.

Michael received his bachelor's degree in recreation management from Springfield College. In addition to his most recent experience, Michael has been a trainer for the Total Quality Management program, received regional accolades as an outstanding professional in parks and recreation, and served as chairman of the Board of Regents for the National Recreation and Park Association's Revenue Management and Development School in Wheeling, WV.

### Mundelein Park & Recreation District Announces Retirement and New Hires



**LaVonne Wandschneider** has retired as business manager with the Mundelein Park & Recreation District. She served as the district's first business manager for six years, bringing all financial functions in-house. LaVonne helped the district earn the prestigious Award of Excellence from the Government Finance Officers Association three years in a row. Prior to working in Mundelein, she spent 21 years working in municipal finance. LaVonne has been very active in IPRA's Administration & Finance Section, working on the annual golf outing and participating in the Business Manager group.



**Christa Lawrence** has been hired as marketing specialist for the Mundelein Park & Recreation District. She has over 20 years of graphic design experience including logo design and branding campaigns for several mid-sized businesses in a variety of industries. Christa is the creator and chair of the Mundelein Fine Arts Festival. This festival includes professional artists from across the country who promotes the arts, while bringing the community together and showcasing the talents of art students at local high schools. She will be responsible for marketing the district and its many facilities and programs.



**Linda Miller** recently accepted the business manager position with the Mundelein Park & Recreation District. Most recently, she worked for the Village of Buffalo Grove's finance department. She has over 20 years of accounting and finance experience in both the public and private sector. Her responsibilities will include overseeing the district's finances, information technology and human resource areas.

### Want to Read More?

Keep up with the latest milestones, new hires, promotions and award winners in the Illinois park and recreation industry online. Visit our website, [www.ILparks.org](http://www.ILparks.org), and click on the Publications tab on the left. Select IP&R Magazine and then People and Places.

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For more information, contact an IPARKS Representative at 800-748-0554.

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