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THE PARK ADVISORY COUNCIL TRIBUTE NEWSLETTER

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FRIENDS OF KILBOURN PARK ORGANIC GREENHOUSE: ADVANCING STEWARDSHIP AND CONNECTING COMMUNITY TO NATURE

Kilbourn Park, 3501 N. Kilbourn. Submitted by Karen Oliver, Secretary/Treasurer, Friends of Kilbourn Park Organic Greenhouse.

Kilbourn Park was designed in 1928 by Chicago architect Clarence Hatzfeld, in collaboration with the famous greenhouse manufacturers Lord and Burnham. Originally built as a small conservatory, in 1934 the Chicago Park District converted it into a production greenhouse using Works Progress Administration



funding. The greenhouse today consists of a main room (the original conservatory) and two additional greenhouses used for plant production. This 12-acre site's recreational features included athletic fields, a running track, horse shoe and tennis courts, an 18-hole putting green, two playgrounds, a children's wading pool, a sand box and penned-in rabbits. In the late 1930s, the Chicago Park District planted a large outdoor



perennial garden in Kilbourn Park.

Although the original garden was not maintained, interest in gardening was renewed in the neighborhood. In 1996, committed community residents were successful in reopening the original conservatory as a teaching space and

began the annual organic plant sale and other programming.

Friends of Kilbourn Park Organic Greenhouse was formed in 2007 as a

sub-committee of the Kilbourn Park Advisory Council. Now an independent organization, the mission of Friends is to advance environmental stewardship in our community by connecting people to nature, teaching sustainable gardening practices, and promoting fresh and healthy food to people of all ages through garden-based educational programs. Our largest project each year is the Organic Plant Sale.

Friends volunteers, working with greenhouse staff, beginning in January and February, plant thousands of seeds and nurture them in preparation for the annual sale.

We have, literally, a small army of volunteers who raise the plants and then work the plant sale giving vast amounts of hours to make this event a success every year – regardless of the weather.

In addition to the (Continued on page 2)

