

THE PACT:

THE PARK ADVISORY COUNCIL TRIBUTE NEWSLETTER



September 2015

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ELM PAC: TAKING BACK OUR PARK



Elm Park, 5215 S. Woodlawn Ave., used to be quite seedy; it was a run-down park that no one utilized. The park's lights and water fountain did not work. There used to be graffiti all over the benches and gazebo. Rumors of closing Elm Park down and turning it into a parking lot circulated throughout the community. But Hyde Parkers did not want to lose their precious green space. In 2010, the Elm Park Advisory Council was formed and that is when the community began to take back Elm Park.

With the help of the community we have turned Elm Park around. Over the

past few years we have had art exhibits, storytelling, bike safety clinics, a doggie day, community gardening days, and multiple picnics and potlucks.

We have a community garden and during the spring and summer months the park is blooming. It's beautiful. Now, Elm Park has a community of gardeners, local police officers keep an eye on the park, and the Chicago Park District keeps it clean. People feel comfortable to eat their lunch in the park and bring their kids and pets. The entire community helped bring this small park back to life by participating in Elm Park events and volunteering for numerous gardening and park cleanup days.

In 2012, Elm PAC was named best Park Advisory Council in Chicago by the Friends of the Parks. In 2014, we were named one of the 10 Best Pocket Parks in Chicago" by the Chicagoist Magazine and in 2015 we were awarded a Neighborhood Enhancement

Grant for the Elm Park Community Garden from the South East Chicago Commission and the University of Chicago.

We are a small PAC and a small park. But we get a lot done. With help from the community we have turned an eyesore into a neighborhood gem.



Want to know more about the Elm PAC? Find them on Facebook!

Want to be in the PAC Highlights section? Submit to machucan@fotp.org and include a picture!

CPD STAFF SHOUT-OUT:

Is there a CPD staffer you'd like to give a shout-out to? Let us know and we'll also send them a certificate and a copy of the newsletter.

RECRUITING K-8 CLASSROOMS!

For over a decade, Friends of the Parks has been bringing Chicago classrooms to Montrose Point for our **Natura Along the Lake program**. Last year, FOTP brought out 700 students from 13 schools across Chicago — FOR FREE! Please pass on Nicole Machuca's email (machucan@fotp.org) to the amazing teachers and administrators in your life and have them contact her for more information on this wonderful learning opportunity.



UPCOMING PAC EVENTS

August 29: Movie in the Park, Hiawatha @ 8pm

August 30: Logan Square Dog Park Opening event *Party in the Park* @ 2pm

September 1: PAC Quarterly Networking Meeting, FOTP Office @5:30pm

September 11: Back to School Dance, Hiawatha @ 6:30pm

September 17: Bingo, Chicago Women's Park @10am

September 19: PAC Workshop— Fundraising, Mozart Park @9:30am

Repeat Events:
Chicago Women's Park
Free Senior Yoga, Thursdays @ 12:15
Bridge Club, Fridays @1pm

PACs please submit your October & November Park events to be published in the next issue.

CPD ARCHIVES: A STEP BACK IN TIME



McGuane Park, 1904

Do you have any archive photos from your park? Send to: machucan@fotp.org

PAC Q&A—CONTINUED

From our August issue, PAC in Need is still waiting for your answers! **PACs, Please write in your answers for 'PAC in Need' AND submit additional questions for the next newsletter.**

Dear fellow PACs,

"Our PAC banks with a smallish bank with poor customer service. When we sought out banks to open an account, there were a TON of hoops we had to jump through. Even now, we are constantly having to check to make sure they don't charge us for things. Any advice on how to negotiate with a small bank to open a bank account that does not accrue fees?"

Creating an advisory group in itself is a challenging task. Setting goals and engaging your community in accomplishing these goals amplifies the challenge even more. Here's some food for thought when tackling your rewarding endeavors:

- **Goal Setting:** Choose the right goals for your PAC that are meaningful. *Constantly revisit the questions: Are these goals impacting the people of the community? Do the goals need to be changed or new goals added? Are the goals clear?*
- **Engagement:** Don't be discouraged if certain members become inactive. If you have a specific PAC focus, you may draw in specific people to your PAC. *Think about having different objectives and if possible creating committees that can tackle different objectives. Appreciate each member for the strengths they bring to the PAC.*
- **Equity:** Does your PAC fairly include everyone from the community? Publicize meetings via multiple means, e.g. flyers in the park field house, local library, Alderman's office, Facebook, etc., and translate flyers if applicable. Ask yourselves: *Is this a collaborative process? Do we need to find partners? Is the community informed?*

Don't be afraid to step back and reflect on your PAC's direction. Setting meaningful goals, pursuing community equity, and engaging your park's community members may seem like cumbersome efforts, but in the end they will improve the strength and impact of your PAC.

THE
FOTP
TREE
SAYS,

