

PARK DISTRICT OF OAK PARK

2008

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS

FEBRUARY 19, 2009



PARK
DISTRICT
OF OAK PARK



WE MAKE A LIVING BY WHAT WE GET;
WE MAKE A LIFE BY WHAT WE GIVE.

- SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL

WELCOME

The Illinois Association of Park Districts and the Illinois Park and Recreation Association annually present Community Service Awards to individuals and organizations in recognition and appreciation of the outstanding contribution and unselfish devotion for the advancement of parks, recreation and leisure in the community and the state of Illinois.



Too often, we are consumed with our day-to-day tasks and forget to recognize the good work of others that helps make our successes possible. Tonight we celebrate our partnerships with businesses, citizens, and governmental bodies that contribute to our mission of providing quality parks and recreation experiences to the residents of Oak Park. Congratulations to all of this year's recipients of the IPRA Community Service Awards.

ALTAMANU, INC.

John Mac Manus, Josephine Bellalta & Julie Erkert Smith

Presented by Gary Balling

Since the fall of 2005 Altamanu, Inc. has been working with the Park District and the community to develop site master plans for Carroll, Field, Maple, Taylor, and Mills Parks. They have also completed the extremely complex and challenging Dogs in Oak Park Plan. During each of the planning processes, John and Josephine have always treated the Park District as if we were their only client and each park as if it was their own. They have been known to wander the parks, studying the most minute details, before actually beginning to design. Once construction begins, they are daily visitors to the site to ensure the project continues to move forward in a timely and quality manner. They view each park not as a separate entity but as part of a whole parks system and each neighborhood as a unique slice of the entire community. Always doing more than expected, John Mac Manus could probably write a thesis on the amount of information he learned when researching the operation of dog parks across the country. He willingly stepped forward to share his expertise on a panel of Board and staff members as part of the IPRA Director Series. Josephine graciously offered her time and talents as a valuable resource to the Greening Advisory Committee and is a regular volunteer at the Oak Park Conservatory. Together, the Altamanu Team, including Julie Erkert Smith, consistently anticipates the needs of the District and provides timely and distinctive planning solutions in collaboration with the Park District Board and staff. For their extraordinary creativity, their sincere concern for the betterment of the community and their willingness and openness to do whatever it takes to develop the best possible parks system for the citizens of Oak Park, the Board and Staff of the Park District of Oak Park present Altamanu with the IPRA Community Service Award.

BETH BURDIN

Presented by Commissioner Jessica Bullock



Beth Burdin joined the Park District Citizen Committee (PDCC) in February of 2007 after serving on the Park District Recreation Center Historical Stewardship Committee (RCHSC) from January to October of 2006. While serving on the PDCC, Beth was asked to lead a “working group” to address tree preservation, recycling, community gardens and natural areas in our parks, which came to be known as the Greening Task Force. Under Beth’s leadership, this group worked diligently for over a year to develop the Park District’s recently accepted comprehensive Environmental Policy. This important policy reflects the District’s commitment to setting an example and assuming a leadership position in the development and use of policies, practices, and environmental opportunities which promote a healthy environment. Beth’s work with the Greening Task Force does not stop with the passing of the Environmental Policy. She has been appointed chairperson of the Greening Advisory Committee, a new Park District Committee, which will oversee the implementation of the Environmental Policy. Thank you Beth for your years of service with the RCHSC and the PDCC. We are so pleased you will be continuing on in your leadership role as the Greening Task Force transitions into an official Park District committee. The implementation of the newly accepted Environmental Policy is no small feat but one that will have a lasting impact on the Park District of Oak Park and our community for many years to come. Thank you for your service and commitment to the Park District of Oak Park.



PATRICK DAHLSTROM

Presented by Commissioner Lise Valentine

During Patrick Dahlstrom’s three-year tenure on the Park District Citizen Committee, he acted as co-chair for the PDCC for one year and was one of two PDCC representatives to monitor the development of the Mills Park Master Plan when the need arose to address sculptures and other art in the park. Patrick also led an eighteen-month-long effort by the PDCC Art in the Park subcommittee to develop the Park District’s first policy regarding the acquisition, placement and maintenance of art in Park District parks. He diligently worked with other PDCC members to develop guidelines to establish the newly-formed Art Advisory Committee, and in December, was appointed chairperson of this new committee. Patrick, as the Co-Chair of the Park District Citizen Committee, we appreciate the instrumental role you played in developing the purpose and guidelines for the Art Advisory Committee and welcome your transition as the leader of this new committee. Art is a vital part of the cultural life of the Oak Park community and we look forward to working with you to integrate art throughout the parks systems. We anticipate that your work, and the work of this Committee, will have a positive impact on the Park District of Oak Park and our community for many years to come. Thank you, Patrick, for your many years of volunteer service to the Park District and your continued dedication to our organization.

GARAPOLO MAYNARD ARCHITECTS, INC.

Don Maynard

Presented by Commissioner Lise Valentine



For the past three years, the architectural firm of Garapolo Maynard has been involved in numerous projects at the Park District of Oak Park, including the Oak Park Conservatory East Growing House Renovation, Cheney Mansion capital improvements, the Core Centers Project, the Longfellow Center elevator project and the upcoming War Memorial Renovation. What sets this firm apart is their “can do” spirit. Garapolo Maynard is a local business that goes above and beyond to consistently exceed our expectations. When the Park District met with challenges during the East Growing House project, Don Maynard used creative problem solving to keep the project on track and saw it through to completion. When asked, Don stepped up to offer his expertise to make an important contribution to the development of the Park District’s Community Development Block Grant Application. Always maintaining a good sense of humor no matter who or what he was dealing with, Don Maynard has demonstrated an exceptional willingness to deliver a quality project, no matter what it takes. Thank you, Don, from the Board and staff, for your extraordinary service to the Park District of Oak Park.

GOOD HEART WORK SMART FOUNDATION

Mary Jo Schuler

Presented by Commissioner Marty Bracco



The phrase “timing is everything” certainly applies to the Park District’s relationship with the Good Heart Work Smart Foundation, whose mission is to inspire people to reach out and make a difference in the lives of others. The Park District was struggling to meet the requirements of the recently awarded Access to Recreation Grant (from the Kellogg Foundation) in the fall of 2007 when David Weindling, formerly of the Community Foundation, sent out a call for help. Mary Jo Schuler of the Good Heart Work Smart Foundation responded within 30 minutes, “just in the nick of time,” as she would describe it. With financial and moral support from the Good Heart Work Smart Foundation, the Park District was able to heighten the level of accessibility in the Longfellow Park playground redevelopment project and move forward with this unique grant opportunity. Mary Jo Schuler and the Foundation did not stop there. They provided significant financial support to make an elevator and foyer area at Longfellow Center become a reality. An elevator at Longfellow Center would not have been possible for many years without this support, and will allow the Park District to significantly expand recreational programming opportunities in our community. The Good Heart Work Smart Foundation has also made a significant impact at the Conservatory and with the West Suburban Special Recreation Association. The Park District extends its sincere appreciation to the Good Heart Work Smart Foundation and Mary Jo Schuler for your support which will positively affect the lives of our residents, from our preschoolers to our active adults, for generations to come.

DICK MCKINLAY

Presented by Board President Mark Gartland

Dick McKinlay's first interaction with the Park District occurred when the District needed to act swiftly to meet the off-leash needs of Oak Park dog owners. Little did we know at the time that we were working with a citizen who would become a major resource to our staff and a dedicated volunteer to our organization. Dick intently followed and contributed to the development of the Dogs in Oak Park Plan while organizing the Friends of the Oak Park Dogs group. At the same time, he volunteered to analyze the data collected from the 2004 community attitude and interest survey and translate it into useful information that he generously shared with the administrative staff as well as the Park District Citizen Committee long before he became a member. Dick McKinlay's survey analysis has equipped the Park District to make informed decisions in the areas of program planning, park master plan development, facility operations and even in the area of communications and marketing. Dick was eventually tapped to serve on the PDCC in early 2007 and since then has followed the Taylor Park, Ridgeland Common and Mills Park planning processes as a PDCC representative. In 2008, when the Park District needed a champion to secure a Community Development Block Grant, Dick stepped up to the plate to put together a solid proposal. This application was well received by the review committee and the Park District is hopeful an elevator is in the future for Stevenson Park. Integrity and compassion are essential ingredients in providing community service. Dick McKinlay exudes these qualities. We are pleased to present this IPRA Community Service Award to Dick McKinlay for his exemplary dedication and service to the Park District of Oak Park.



OAK PARK PUBLIC WORKS

Presented by Superintendent of Buildings & Grounds Mike Grandy

The relationship between the Park District of Oak Park and the Village of Oak Park goes back nearly 90 years. Today's recognition of the Public Works Department of the Village of Oak Park is not meant to be a history lesson; it is to acknowledge the "above and beyond efforts" of the staffs of the Forestry Department, the Fleet Services Division, the Streets and Sanitation Department and the Street Lighting, Engineering, and Water and Sewer Departments.

The number of times the Public Works Department has provided their assistance to the Park District are countless. Here are just a few examples of why they are a valued partner in providing quality parks and recreation in Oak Park. The Village Engineering Division facilitated the Park District's access to Village-contracted rates for the replacement of water and sewer lines at Ridgeland Common and a service drive to the west of the Paul Hruby Ice Arena. A similar extension was made at Carroll Park allowing for the completion of a major park redevelopment project. In all, hundreds of thousands of dollars in labor and material were saved through cooperative efforts of the Engineering Division. The Water and Sewer Department Staff, the Forestry Staff and the Street Lighting Staff have answered numerous calls for help in loaning equipment and providing technical expertise. Fleet Service maintains Park District vehicles and addresses fleet problems with competence and professionalism to make sure vehicles are fixed efficiently and within the budget. Finally, we must thank the Streets and Sanitation Division who regularly assist the Park District with special cleanups and recycling efforts prior to and/or after special events.

It is our pleasure and privilege to acknowledge to our residents the care, thoughtfulness, respect, dedication, and professionalism being manifested by the men and women of the Public Works Department of the Village of Oak Park. With this in mind, we proudly present Oak Park Public Works with the IPRA Community Service Award.



OAK PARK SCHOOL DISTRICT 97

Presented by Commissioner Christine Graves



The Park District of Oak Park is fortunate to have many unique cooperative arrangements with School District 97. We share two school/park sites, one at Carroll Park/Lincoln School and the other at Field Park/Mann School. Both of these park/school sites have been redeveloped recently with amazing results. Without the support of School District 97, these projects would not have come to fruition.

Being a Park District that serves 52,000 residents and does not own a gymnasium, we often struggle with a shortage of programming space which could be a huge detriment to our recreation efforts for the community. We are fortunate for the generosity of School District 97, which provides much needed space for our programs, allowing the District to run numerous sports programs and day camps in their facilities year-round. In that same cooperative spirit, District 97 has also provided the use of their school grounds to Park District affiliate organizations, reducing the use of the Park District's overburdened and overused facilities. Beye School is host to our annual dance recital and was the location for all Ridgeland Common master planning meetings. The Print Shop is a wonderful resource for staff as well. The list goes on and on.

The ability to work together towards a common vision is the true definition of teamwork. The partnership of the Park District and School District 97 certainly fits that definition, acting together for the betterment of our community. The Park District is grateful to School District 97 for being a valuable partner and for supporting the Park District as we carry out our mission of providing quality parks and recreation experiences to the residents of Oak Park. With sincere gratitude we present this IPRA Community Service Award to School District 97.

OIL DRI

Tom Cofsky

Presented by Commissioner Christine Graves



Tom Cofsky, an Oak Park resident and an executive with the Oil Dri Company, has graciously organized the donation of Oil Dri Calcine Clay to the Park District through the Oak Park Baseball Association for the past several years. Each year this material has been applied to all of our 21 baseball infields and several of our soccer fields as part of the Park District's field maintenance program. This donation significantly improves the playability of our fields and contributes to the quality of the programs held at these facilities while providing a considerable cost savings to the Park District. Tom Cofsky and Oil Dri donated approximately 44 tons of material in 2007 and again in 2008. All told, hundreds of teams and thousands of players have benefited from this generous donation. The Park District extends its' sincere thanks for Tom Cofsky's and Oil Dri's most gracious donation and support of our efforts and those of our affiliate organizations. We are very fortunate to have Tom and the Oil Dri Corporation as a giving resource in our community, and gratefully present the IPRA Community Service Award to Tom Cofsky and the Oil Dri Company.



BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

Mark Gartland, President
Marty Bracco, Vice-President
Lise Valentine, Treasurer
Christine Graves, Secretary
Jessica Bullock, Commissioner

2007 COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS RECIPIENTS

Jeanna Grant
Terry Harrison
Tim Kelly
The Infant Welfare Society
The Oak Park River Forest Community Foundation

2006 COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS RECIPIENTS

Jack Barclay
Edith Kause
Sandra Sokol
Wednesday Journal
Village of Oak Park

2005 COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Spannuth Boiler Company
Patrick Boticelli
William Casey
Judy Shepelak

2004 COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Community Bank of Oak Park & River Forest
Dominican University
Michael Block
Hugh Helfer
Albert Love

