

THE PACT:

THE PARK ADVISORY COUNCIL TRIBUTE NEWSLETTER



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LA VILLITA: CREATIVELY TAKING ACTION



Photo credit: www.chicagoparkdistrict.com

La Villita Park, 2800 S. Sacramento. After the Little Village community, along with the Little Village Environmental Justice Organization (LVEJO), organized for over 15 years for a new and much needed park in the predominantly Mexican, immigrant, Latinx, and Chicano Chicago neighborhood, La Villita Park finally opened on December 14, 2014.

The former Celotex site was highly contaminated and had been physically harming adjacent community members due to its storm water runoff traveling to neighbors' yards and basements causing skin rashes. Now the one year old park – the former Celotex superfund site – has been cleaned-up, capped and transformed into a 22-acre park with numerous amenities.

To ensure that they were following on the same dedicated steps of community members that organized for this necessary green space, La Villita PAC was established in February of 2015 in order for community members to continue to influence the growth and development on this new park through participatory and active stewardship. La Villita

PAC is a predominantly Spanish speaking PAC that has successfully organized clean-up events at the park and has engaged park

visitors in educational practices of safety, youth stewardship of green spaces and community building.

In order to keep the park clean and safe, they've been having conversations about what safety means in the community, and came to the conclusion that harm and conflict reduction practices would benefit the community and park users in the long run. Restorative Justice techniques are used as one of the tools to accomplish this goal. They hope that by maintaining these practices, they'll see less violent interactions with police, less drugs and less alcohol at La Villita Park. In order for this focus on communication to work, they are dedicated to including youth, parents, children, and Park District personnel in the conversation. La Villita PAC works to redefine what safety looks like, focusing

on building relationships with parents, coaches, Elders, youth, and children to build a smoke, drug, and weapon free environment.

La Villita PAC has also integrated Mi Parque into their work. Mi Parque is a bilingual participatory placemaking application, or app, that helps the Little Village community ensure that their new park is a maintained, safe, open and healthy green space. Mi Parque and La Villita PAC work in a framework where they honor every community member as essential to the growth of the park.

In addition to working to maintain a healthy environment for the park, La Villita PAC and LVEJO are organizing for a fieldhouse at the park. Because of Chicago's long winter season, the Little Village community still needs access to physical, educational, and cultural activities for families during the winter months. They hope that in the upcoming years they can see an increase in support for their Fieldhouse campaign, and a healthier and more active Little Village.



Above: La Villita PAC Meeting

Want your PAC featured in the PAC Highlights section? Please give us a little history about your PAC and the great work your PAC has done. Why did you start? Was there a hurdle that you overcame? Was there a great project you'd like to share? Please include 1-2 pictures and no more than 300 words please. Submit to machucan@fotp.org.

PARK NEWS: WORK ORDERS

It had come to the attention of Friends of the Parks that there are PACS across the city who have been given varying pieces of information about work orders. After bringing up the issue to Pat Levar, the Chief Operating Officer (COO) for the Chicago Park District, he set the record straight for us:

Community members can absolutely be given work order numbers and information by park staff!

Thanks for clarifying, Pat!

He asks that you keep a few items in mind:

- 1) Work orders are prioritized into three categories, and therefore it takes 7 days, 3 months or 6 months to complete a work order depending on the request.
- 2) Some work orders start as capital requests and will not immediately fall under the 7 day, 3 month or 6 month categories, e.g. cracked basketball. Once the capital improvement funding has been identified, then a work order is created for the repair.
- 3) The Chicago Park District is in the process of changing their work order technology. They are taking steps that will make the process more clear, transparent and helpful in the coming years for both CPD staff and park users.

If you are having problems acquiring this information from your Park Supervisor, please contact Nicole Machuca at Friends of the Parks: machucan@fotp.org or (312) 857-2757 ext. 7.

FOTP ARCHIVES: EARTH DAY



On April 25th, more than 6,000 people volunteered in our 1992 Earth Day stewardship event at 250 park and beach locations.

Join Friends of the Parks on April 23rd for our 27th annual Earth Day, in partnership with the Chicago Park District, Cook County Forest Preserve District and Openlands.

Find out how your Park Kids, teens groups, or story time participants can help us design our 2016 Earth Day T-shirts or how you can become an Earth Day site captain for your park here: www.fotp.org/earth-day-2016. Contact Kim Klein at (312) 857-2757 ext. 5 or at kleink@fotp.org for registration assistance or Earth Day questions.

NOTEWORTHY DATES

February 4th: FOTP's Annual Luncheon

February 5th: FOTP's Seed Grant application deadline

February 5th: Parks Foundation Park Advisory Council Grant application deadline

February 8th: Park Advisory Council reports to Chicago Park District

February 9th: PACLA Meeting

March 5th: Park Advisory Council Conference

March 10th: FOTP's Netsch Lecture Series: "Shifting Sands" & the Indiana Dunes

April 16th: City of Chicago's Clean & Green, contact your ward for more info.

April 23rd: FOTP's Earth Day Cleanup

THE
FOTP
TREE
SAYS...



February marks an important time for Park Advisory Councils and park partnering organizations, as two micro-grant deadlines are due this month for park supporters. The following is a list of basic best-practices when completing grant applications for any funder:

Make sure your project is feasible. Propose a project that can be completed within the funder's timeframe. Be mindful of project approval needs when the project is happening on a space you do not own.

Write in simple, clear, concise language. Make sure that you are using language that the funder would understand. Don't use jargon or acronyms they might not be familiar with.

Make sure that the budget is one that fits the guidelines. Be sure to read the guidelines beforehand. Seek to ensure that you do not include items in your budget that have been explicitly listed as ineligible by the funder.

Cultivate a relationship with the funder. Take up an opportunity to speak with a funder. If they have the option for one-on-one grant meetings or are available to answer questions...definitely do so. BUT, make sure you've read the grant requirements and guidelines BEFORE speaking with them.

Demonstrate the commitment of your partners. Partnerships can make your application stand out. Letters of Support or Commitment can be useful if the funder has the capacity to accept them.

Good luck everyone!