



# RANCH Reporter

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## August 2017

“Great things are done when men and mountains meet.” William Blake

We were happy that the rain held off to help make the last Third Thursdays concert such a great event for everyone. For those unable to attend, School of Rock performed an awesome set of current and classic hits, Lifeway provided drinks, and Amato's Pizza provided food for the crowd. Thank you to all who came out to enjoy the music; thank you to those who support this event, including the Adams Park Advisory Council, Lifeway Kefir, Amato's Pizza, the Adams Park staff; and a special thanks to Randy Steinmeyer, RANCH's Park Committee Chair, who does so much to make this fun neighborhood event possible.

- Reatha Kay, President, RANCH Triangle Community Conservation Association



## The Grass Is Always Greener Everywhere They Go

Do you ever wonder how some stretches along our expressways came to be beautiful prairies? While some credit belongs to Mother Nature, much of it is the result of the work of Chicago Gateway Green. More than a version of the “adopt-a-highway” program, laudable as that is, Chicago Gateway Green’s mission extends beyond keeping area expressways clean and debris-free; its mission is “dedicated to the greening and beautification of Chicago’s gateways, expressways, and neighborhoods through landscape enhancement, litter and graffiti removal and the installation of public art.”<sup>1</sup> The results of their efforts are not limited to beautifying the landscape, and include several environmental benefits as well, in the form of reduced noise pollution, cooler air, and water

<sup>1</sup> Chicago Gateway Green website [www.gatewaygreen.org](http://www.gatewaygreen.org).

conservation.<sup>2</sup> And while the work of Chicago Gateway Green spans and benefits the entire city, it has a long connection with the RANCH Triangle neighborhood.

Chicago Gateway Green was started in 1986 by Donald J. Deporter.<sup>3</sup> You may know of Chicago Gateway Green’s annual fundraiser, the Green Tie Ball, which was first held in 1992.<sup>4</sup> But did you know that for many years the Green Tie Ball was held at Finkl’s in the North Branch Corridor? For over thirteen years, up until last year, Finkl provided the venue for the Green Tie Ball. In addition to providing the venue, Finkl and several other neighboring businesses in the North Branch Corridor closed their businesses the Thursday before the event to facilitate its preparation. Additionally, long-time RANCH resident and RANCH Triangle board member David Lissner is on the board of Chicago Gateway Green. Also known as The Food Dude©, David Lissner has served on the board of Chicago Gateway Green for several years, helping to bring in the culinary talent that participates in its annual fundraiser. Each year, the culinary talent at the Green Tie Ball is one of the highlights of the event. This year, 30 popular Chicago restaurants will be participating, including Ill Forks, STK Steakhouse, Taco Joint, Texas De Brazil, Katana Chicago, and Harry Caray’s Italian Steakhouse.<sup>5</sup> This year’s Green Tie Ball will be held on September 15th at Artifact Events, 4325 N. Ravenswood. The event’s theme will be *Devil in the Green City*, a take on Erik Larson’s book, “Devil in the White City.”<sup>6</sup> The theme will also celebrate the City’s green space with creative use of the venue’s unique indoor/outdoor space.<sup>7</sup>

We are thankful for organizations like Chicago Gateway Green, which not only recognize the importance and benefits of green space in urban areas, but which also work to help support Chicago’s motto of *Urbs in Horto* - “City in a Garden.”

To learn more about Chicago Gateway Green or the Green Tie Ball, please visit its website at [www.gatewaygreen.org](http://www.gatewaygreen.org).

## **The Next Steps in the North Branch Corridor**

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With the approval of the North Branch Corridor framework plan and zoning ordinance by the City Council, what happens next? The approval of the sale of the City-owned Fleet Management site (located in the North Branch Corridor) to Sterling Bay is scheduled for City Council approval on September 6, 2017. We anticipate that the plan development approval

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<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> Chicago Gateway Green’s Press Release for the 26th Annual “Green Tie Ball.”

<sup>6</sup> *See Id.*

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

process will follow shortly thereafter. Recently, a few RANCH Board members met with Alderman Hopkins and his staff to try to understand the process for this next step. While no plans have been presented yet, Alderman Hopkins stated that community input is essential, and that he will lay out the process as soon as any development plans are presented. Alderman Hopkins stated that he is very interested in listening to the community and making it as transparent a process as possible. RANCH will provide updates on any information as they become available, so that the community can stay engaged.

### **No Parks, No Deal – Join the Fight**

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Our goals as a community are clear: responsible development that thoughtfully transitions from Lincoln Park to the river with major traffic improvements, and at least 15 contiguous acres of open space for a much-needed park. Along with many other organizations, RANCH has helped circulate a petition calling for meaningful parkland with recreational facilities. You can join your neighbors in this once-in-a-generation opportunity and sign the petition at [this link](#). You can also download a copy of the petition at our website at [www.ward43.org](http://www.ward43.org).

In just a few days well over 2,000 signatures have been collected and momentum keeps growing in this worthy effort on behalf of residents now and in the future.

Sincerely,

Alderman Michele Smith

### **Oscar Mayer Magnet School's New Principal Search**

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The long-time Principal of Oscar Mayer Magnet School, Katherine Konieczny, recently announced that she will be leaving to take a position at another school. The school's Principal Selection Advisory Committee, which consists of the members of the local school council, the President of Friends of Mayer, and certain teachers and staff of the school, has begun its search for a new principal.

The Principal Selection Advisory Committee is accepting input from parents and community members regarding the skills and experience the Principal Selection Advisory Committee should be looking for in a new principal. They have set up an online survey where you may submit comments. The survey will remain open during the search. You can also attend open LSC meetings, the next one is scheduled for September 16, at 6:00 pm, to learn more about the process. LSC meetings are held at the school library. During the search process, Oscar Mayer's interim principal will be Danielle Drayton, who has spent the past year at Mayer

as its Resident Principal. You can find a link to the survey and more information on the school's website (<http://mayermagnet.org/2017/08/20/mayer-principal-search-update/>).

### Community Groups Help Build Community for All

In previous issues of the *RANCH Reporter*, we have highlighted some of RANCH's recent contributions to the community, including the renovation of the basketball court at Clybourn Park, and some of its sponsored events – like the Third-Thursdays Concert Series. While these efforts help RANCH to fulfill its mission – to improve the physical and social conditions of the RANCH Triangle community neighborhood – we recognize that these efforts benefit more than just the residents of RANCH. All of Lincoln Park and the surrounding area benefit from improvement to our parks, and all are welcome to participate in the RANCH-sponsored events. Similarly, we recognize that the work of other Lincoln Park community groups<sup>8</sup> – from improvements to parks, to support of our local schools, to name a few – benefit all of Lincoln Park. Therefore, we would like to take the opportunity to thank the other Lincoln Park community groups for all that they do to improve our neighborhood while adding to the feeling of community.

We have highlighted some of the works and events of four of the six other community groups: Old Town Triangle Association, Sheffield Neighborhood Association, Lincoln Central Association, and Wrightwood Neighbors Association. To find out more about each of these neighborhood groups and their projects and events, please visit their respective websites.

**Old Town Triangle Association (“OTTA”):** In addition to hosting the Old Town Art Fair, each year OTTA also issues grants with a major focus on the Menomonee Club for Boys & Girls. Below is the complete list of OTTA's 2017 awards: Art on Sedgwick; Boy Scout Troop 79; Chicago Sculpture Exhibit; Deborah's Place; Franklin Fine Arts (public school); Green City Market; Edgar Miller Legacy; LaSalle Language Academy, Fine Arts Department; LaSalle Language Academy (travel program); Lincoln Elementary; Lincoln Park Community Research Initiative; Lincoln Park HS Athletic Booster Club; Lincoln Park HS Instrumental Music Program; Lincoln Park Village; Lincoln Park Zoo; Midwest Buddhist Temple; and Near North Library Friends Association.

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<sup>8</sup> The following is a list of the community groups within Lincoln Park: Lincoln Central Association, Mid-North Association ([www.midnorthassociation.org](http://www.midnorthassociation.org)), Old Town Triangle Association, Park West Community Association ([www.parkwest.us](http://www.parkwest.us)), Ranch Triangle Community Conservation Association, Sheffield Neighborhood Association, and Wrightwood Neighbors Association.

The OTTA also sponsors events to help build community, including Dog-A-Rama and Oktoberfest. The OTTA also sponsored a Red Cross Babysitter Training course so that the local youth could be certified. OTTA maintains the pocket parks in their boundaries, including at Wisconsin & Clark Streets, Ella Jenkins Park, Wells & Menomonee, Wells and Willow, and the old Ogden Avenue plazas. Finally, the OTTA works with residents to replace trees and brick parkways – for which it pays a portion of the cost, and has been involved with a parkway tree program in which it pays for the yearly upkeep and replacement of all park and parkway trees. (See the OTTA’s website [here](#))

**Sheffield Neighbors Association (“SNA”):** In addition to the Sheffield Music Festival & Garden Walk, SNA donates money to local schools and charities, provides financial support to Trebes Park (including providing money for additional plantings in the Trebes Park butterfly garden), sponsors concerts and movies in the park at Trebes Park, and maintains the 58 wrought iron planters located throughout the Sheffield neighborhood. (See SNA’s website [here](#))

**Lincoln Central Association (“LCA”):** LCA supports its local parks, including Bauler Park, Fire Station Park, and Lincoln Central Park, and recently contributed to the renovation of the tennis courts at Oz Park. LCA also sponsors several community events, including Spring Zing, Sunday Summer Sippers, and Howler at Bauler. (See LCA’s website [here](#))

**Wrightwood Neighbors Association (“WNA”):** In addition to the Taste of Lincoln, WNA uses money from the Taste of Lincoln to fund grants given out to neighborhood public schools, local charities, neighborhood parks and neighborhood improvements. (See WNA’s website [here](#)).

### Upcoming Events and Other Information

- **People’s Gas will be replacing a large gas main under North Avenue and Kingsbury Street starting this week.**

North Avenue (at Kingsbury Street): Partial lane closures through September 18th, 2017 (weather permitting)

Kingsbury Street to Willow Street: Limited Access and lane closures through November 2017

- **Pumkin Patch at Lincoln – Saturday, October 7, 2017 from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm.** Lincoln Park Cultural Center, 2045 N. Lincoln Park West. The Chicago Park District’s pumpkin patch – pick your personal favorite from a field filled with pumpkins of all shapes and sizes, and personalize it at the pumpkin decorating station. Enjoy Halloween-themed carnival games, petting zoo,

pony rides, and tattoos to complete a day's worth of fall fun. Fees range per activity from 2-4 tickets; \$1.00 per ticket, cash only.

- **AFS is looking for Chicago families to host foreign exchange high school students for the 2017/18 school year.**

Hosting an AFS Exchange Student will:

- Enrich your family by sharing your daily lives with a young person from another culture and country.
- Introduce a better understanding of other cultures to your children.
- Show your part of America to an outstanding young person from another country.

As a host family, you will open your home and heart to a student who will become a member of your family. Students arrive with their own spending money and excellent medical coverage, and are looking forward to participating as active members of their host families, schools and community. There is no typical host family. Couples, with or without children (any ages), single parents, or single adults - you are all welcome to open your hearts and homes to a student!

For more Information or questions, contact:

Linda P. Mellis, Volunteer, AFS Chicago Coordinator, 773-327-9123, [afs.mellis@gmail.com](mailto:afs.mellis@gmail.com), or Kristi Svec, AFS, (646) 381-3333 [ksvec@afsusa.org](mailto:ksvec@afsusa.org).

Please remember to support your local businesses, because they support your community.

Stay in touch with community meetings and happenings by becoming a member of RANCH. Sign up on [www.RANCHtriangle.org](http://www.RANCHtriangle.org), and follow RANCH on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/RANCH-Triangle-Community-Conservation-Association-108461592543401/>

