



RANCH Reporter

Volume 1 | Issue 1

October, 2016

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”
Margaret Mead*

The RANCH Triangle Community and Conservation Association (“RANCH”) is pleased to begin re-issuing its newsletter, the “RANCH Reporter.” Now is a great time to reissue the newsletter, because there have been - and will continue to be - many changes occurring throughout our neighborhood. On the western border of RANCH, you will see the vast vacant land where Finkl once operated, awaiting exciting new development opportunities. Along RANCH’s easternmost border, Halsted Street, you will find several new restaurants that have recently opened, from the three Lettuce Entertain You restaurants to the north (Summer House, Stella Barra, and Oyster Bah) to Willow RM. and Steppenwolf’s Front Bar to the south.

Active involvement of RANCH and the people in our community continue to make a difference in many important ways. For example, the changes along this stretch of Halsted almost included the tear-down of several historic buildings on the corner of Willow and Halsted (“Halsted and Willow Gateway”). However, because of the concern and work of members of our community, Alderman Smith, and Landmarks Illinois, the Halsted and Willow Gateway buildings were put on Landmarks Illinois’s 2014 Ten Most Endangered Historic Places and remain standing. We would like to thank all of the businesses, volunteers, and community members for their support of RANCH and our community. We hope you find this newsletter fun and informative. Please feel free to share your insights and experiences with your community by submitting a picture or story. We would also appreciate your sharing directly with the editors any constructive feedback on this newsletter.

Thanks, and I look forward to seeing you out and about the neighborhood.

Reatha Kay, President, RANCH Triangle Community
Conservation Association

Basketball and Clybourn Park

Clybourn Park was built in 1943 and has a storied history, a story predominantly played out on asphalt. For decades a single basketball court was a place in the community where people came together, friendships cemented, and memories made. Some of our RANCH neighbors have been around long enough to remember that Michael Jordan once even graced its stage – an enduring memory of a constantly-changing community.

The basketball court sat idle a couple years ago, its backboards and rims exhausted, its lines faded by the years, as though the story had come to an end. Thankfully, the Chicago Park District replaced the backboards late last summer, and thanks to Ranch Triangle's partnership with Olivet Nazarene University, which has donated \$30,000 toward this project, the court will be repaved later this year. Olivet, the Chicago Cubs' official educational partners and summer home of the Chicago Bears, has graciously agreed to fund the majority of the costs of the project.¹

If you have ever played basketball at Clybourn Park, then you have seen that this has been a space where there is a convergence of African American, Hispanic and White neighbors. “[While Chicago] remains one of the most segregated large cities in the country,”² there are pockets throughout the city where neighborhoods and people converge, providing an incredible opportunity to build bridges. Clybourn Park is one such pocket. Basketball is a language that crosses barriers, and basketball courts provide children and adults a place to stay active and engaged. In the bustle of urban life, city parks can offer an oasis of community, and rehabbing the Clybourn Park basketball court holds the promise of revitalizing that connection.

Ranch Triangle is excited about this ongoing development and is grateful to Alderman Hopkins and to Olivet Nazarene University for the investment it is making in our community! We look forward to many more pickup games!

Lauren Seaman - Lauren is a resident of RANCH, a member of the RANCH Board and Vice President of RANCH. We are grateful to Lauren for all his work with RANCH, including connecting Olivet Nazarene University with the Clybourn basketball renovation project.

One of Summer's Greatest Hits - The 3rd Thursday Concert Series

The 3rd Thursday Concerts began as a single concert that RANCH put on to show our appreciation to Adams Park. Adams has always been kind enough to allow RANCH to use the field house for our monthly Board of Director's and our Planning Committee Meetings. For more information go to <http://www.ranchtriangle.org/>. The very first concert I produced at Adams Park was in 2006. The band was called Take 5 and featured

¹ We would also like to thank Alderman Brian Hopkins for committing to find the additional funding necessary to paint and finish the court, after the project cost estimates were increased by more than \$6,000 due to additional unforeseen costs.

² Bowean, L. (2016, Jan. 4). “Segregation declines in Chicago, but city still ranks high, census data show,” *Chicago Tribune*, p. 1. Retrieved from <http://chicagotribune.com>.

some Chicago Park District Supervisors who sidelined as musicians. They had an 8-piece band that could really swing. They also played in 2008. In 2007, the band was the Nelson Gill quartet.

As the popularity grew, we began to add more concerts. In 2010, we added a second concert and by 2012, we added a third. That's when we branded the event, the 3rd Thursday Concert Series. Other featured



October, 2016 picture of western corner of Willow and Halsted intersection.

bands include Adams Park favorites: The Dave Rudolf Quartet, Boomshakalaka and School of Rock. The event has grown in size and scope. Now, the 3rd Thursday Concerts are co-produced with Adams Park Advisory Council President Lori Benvenuto and Adam's Park Supervisor Maureen Belling. We've enlisted Lifeway/Kefir as a corporate sponsor. The company President, Julie Smolyansky, is a neighbor, a RANCH member, and an active participant in the community. They underwrite one of the three concerts and provide healthy pro-bug snacks at all of the concerts. For those of you who still attend Lollapalooza (and yes I do), Lifeway is a major sponsor of the Lolla Kid's stage. Amato's Pizza began delivering pizzas for the concerts last year. The concerts begin at 6:30 and end at 8:00 pm because hey, those kids have to get in bed before it gets too late. We've had concerts where the attendance has pushed 300. When we first started, it was maybe 100.

The 3rd Thursday Concert series is a great chance to expose your kids to live music, in an ideal park setting. Adams Park is a gem in RANCH. It's a great joy to produce live music there. My son Conrad saw his first live concert there. His son Liam saw his first live concert there. And that's

what it's all about, providing a little bit of rock and roll for the families in the neighborhood on a hot summer night.

Randy Steinmeyer - Randy is RANCH's Park Committee Chair, a former member of the RANCH Board, and immediate past president of RANCH. We are grateful for all the work Randy does for RANCH and the neighborhood.

Changes Coming to Privet Park

A new playground is coming to Privet Park! In addition to the renovation of the basketball court at Clybourn Park, Privet Park is receiving new playground equipment through the Chicago Plays! program. We would like to thank RANCH, Mayor Emanuel, Alderman Smith, Friends of the Parks and the Chicago Park District for helping to make this renovation happen. The installation is currently under way and should be completed this fall. The renovations will give the park a needed face-lift, and provide children with newer and safer equipment on which to play. The importance of play in child development is well documented,³ and by caring for and renovating our parks and playgrounds, we not only show our care and investment in our community, we also help ensure that children have access to spaces where they can play, explore, socialize, exercise and express their creativity. We are grateful to all who have helped improve our neighborhood, parks and playgrounds, giving us, children and adults alike, more opportunities to play.

Opportunities to Serve

[Congratulations to Anixter Center's Jack Ehrlich Literacy Program on its 25th anniversary!!](#)

Being new to Chicago or new to the neighborhood, volunteer opportunities and rewarding ways to participate in the community are not always apparent. For example, did you know that just north of RANCH Triangle is the only free adult literacy program that serves people with disabilities? Twenty-five years ago, Anixter Center realized that literacy was essential in its efforts to enhance the lives of people with disabilities. To answer that need, Anixter Center created the Jack Ehrlich Literacy Program, the first and only Chicago area literacy program, and possibly the only one in the State of Illinois, that focuses on the unique needs of individuals with disabilities. While Anixter Center offers some small groups in subjects such as computers, basic math, creative writing and reading, through the Literacy Program, adult learners determine the goals

³ Kenneth R. Gisburg, *et al.*, "The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent-Child Bonds," *American Academy of Pediatrics*, vol. 119, no. 1 (Jan. 2007): 182-191.

that are important to their lives and work on accomplishing them with their tutor. Goals can vary from the ability to understand prescription drug instructions, reading a map, gaining computer skills, learning the alphabet, or finding a job. Volunteer tutors commit at least one hour each week for at least three months, although, on average, tutors remain in the program for two years. The tutoring experience can benefit both the learner and the tutor. Anixter Center could not assist so many individuals without the dedication of its volunteers. Despite the success of its program, or, indeed, because of its success, these services are much sought after and there is a long wait list of adult learners eager to be matched with a tutor. If you are interested in being a volunteer tutor, contact the Literacy Coordinator at the 773-928-8200, ext. 239 or email roosey@anixter.org to find out more information. There are also many other volunteer opportunities at Anixter Center.

Congratulations again to Anixter Center's Jack Ehrlich Literacy Program on its 25 years of success and, with your support, its continued success.

Upcoming Events

Halloween Tricks and Treats on Armitage Street – Sunday, October 30, 2016 from 11:00 – 2:00 at the Bridgeview Bank parking lot. Treats, entertainment for the children and costume contests for family (group), children and dogs with prizes to be won! Don't miss it!

Brought to you by Bridgeview Bank, RANCH Triangle, Chicago Bagel Authority, Gepperth's Meat Market, DavidsTea, Willow RM., Barker & Meowsky, Armitage Hardware, and Insomnia Cookies.

Spooktacular 2016 - The Lincoln Park Chamber of Commerce and Clark Street Lincoln Park announce the return of Spooktacular, one of Chicago's best family friendly Halloween celebrations, on Sunday, October 30, 2016 from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. on Clark Street in Lincoln Park between Armitage and Diversey and the south side of Diversey from Orchard to Lakeview.

Leading up to Spooktacular, Clark Street in Lincoln Park hosts its annual Scarecrows on Parade competition beginning Saturday, October 8. The public is encouraged to vote for their favorites at VisitClarkStreet.com. Voters will automatically be entered for a chance to win Spooktacular prizes including gift baskets and certificates from participating Lincoln Park businesses.

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