



RANCH Reporter

Volume 2 | Issue 1

December 2017

“If you want creative workers, give them enough time to play.”
John Cleese

It was another great Tricks and Treat on Armitage Street event! It was a beautiful, sunny and brisk October day, with a wonderful turnout of children, families and dogs dressed in great costumes, with plenty of food and fun for all. We would like to thank all of our sponsors - Bridgeview Bank, RANCH Triangle, Gepperth's Meat Market, Via Strozzi, Chicago Bagel Authority, Laudi Vidni, Armitage Direct, Second Child, Starbucks, and Glazed and Infused, as well as all of the volunteers who helped make this such wonderful day. We also want to thank all of the neighborhood businesses that opened their doors to trick-or-treaters to round out the Halloween event fun.

- Reatha Kay, President, RANCH Triangle Community Conservation Association



Where Do They Fit In? Teens Need Their Space Too

I have two children in elementary school. My oldest child attends A.N. Pritzker Elementary School in Wicker Park. Last year, another parent and I implemented the school's Health Week and Walkathon to raise awareness of healthy lifestyle choices among the students and to raise money to renovate the school's playground. If you have seen Pritzker's playground, you know there's not much to it: a large, undulating asphalt surface with four basketball hoops and a small playground structure for the younger students. We sought to renovate the playground not for our children and their peers (they are still young enough that they can use the small play structure on the playground) but for the current and future older children - those in 5th grade and up, who are too big for the playground equipment. Yes, they can run and play games on the asphalt surface, but how many falls, scrapes and other injuries must occur before we insist on something better? And even though Wicker Park is right across street, the

school has had to compete with other users for limited space for after-school sports.¹

As I thought about these goals for Pritzker Elementary School, I came to realize how similar the needs are in our neighborhood. Lincoln Park High School, located just south of Oz Park, didn't have a home field and had to enlist the community and a few Aldermen to help secure playfields outside of Lincoln Park and outside of the 43rd Ward.² Why, when Oz Park is right next door? Because Oz Park, like Wicker Park, is oversaturated with users competing for limited open space. Oscar Mayer, located just north of Trebes Park, competes for use of this park with after-school activities, Oz Park baseball, and school sports. Within RANCH, only Adams Park has a clubhouse – and the clubhouse at Adams Park only is big enough to address essentially preschool programming. Although some programming is available for older ages, the maximum age is 7, and Wrightwood Park, which also has a fieldhouse, the vast majority of its programming is provided to children under the age of 13.³ So where do teens and young adults go for park district programming in Lincoln Park? Where can they play, hang out, and gather – especially in the winter, when outside programming is not a practical option? A search of the Park District website⁴ for fall programming shows that, in Lincoln Park, only four activities are provided by the Park District for teenagers,⁵ two of which are provided at area schools because neither of the parks with which they are associated (Oz and Trebes) has a fieldhouse; the other two are provided at the Lincoln Park Cultural Center. A search of winter programming includes these same four programs plus an additional one,⁶ for a total of five. Therefore, the same reasons that motivated me to support the renovation of the Pritzker playground are the same ones that should motivate the city to provide a park with a field house in the North Branch Corridor – teens need park space too.

Why is it important to provide parks for teens?⁷ Consider the following:

¹ Some schools, including Pritzker Elementary, now offer its after-school sports program through CPS Score (a partnership between CPS and the Chicago Park District) in which games are held on weekends at area high schools. Other schools, including Oscar Mayer, provide their after-school sports program through *We Got Game*, so that games can be held on-site at the participating schools and on weekdays after school, rather than offsite on Saturdays.

² See Mina Bloom, “Former Near North H.S. Field to Become Lincoln Park H.S. Home Field,” DNAinfo (Chicago) (Jan. 6, 2016). Click [here](#) for link to article.

³ A search of the Chicago Park District's website for programming showed that there was one program, Leadership at Wrightwood, for children ages 13 through 15, provided from June 26 – August 4, 2017.

⁴ A search was conducted on November 19, and November 20, 2017.

⁵ Basketball at Trebes (Fridays – boys only), Seasonal Sports at Oz (Fridays), Teen Club at Lincoln (Tuesdays), and Woodcraft at Lincoln (Thursdays).

⁶ Teen Leadership Club at Lincoln (Monday – Friday).

⁷ A recent study from the University of Southern California found that “urban adolescents who grow up in neighborhoods with more greenery are less likely to

- Teenagers are at a unique stage in life where they are usually given more independence and freedom to make decisions. If there is no place for them to go and only limited things for them to do, what happens? Often times, however, the choices and availability of playgrounds, park programming and recreational spaces available to teenagers and young adults is very limited.⁸ “Young people, in particular, are less tolerated in public spaces [internal citation omitted] and can be marginalized in public processes for these spaces. [Internal citation omitted] Teen girls, in particular, are isolated from public space. [internal citation omitted]”⁹ Research disputes the common misconception that “teens want to be separated from the rest of society...[rather they] want to be integrated into public spaces, and they want to see public spaces designed for everyone [internal citation omitted].”¹⁰ “[isolating] teenagers from other age groups and parts of society, [increases] teen alienation, indifference, dysfunction, and antagonism in the younger generation. [Internal citation omitted]”¹¹
- Other cities in the United States recognize and are trying to address the need for public spaces for teens. The City of Boulder Colorado has a Youth Opportunities Advisory Board which includes teens in the planning process for public spaces.¹² Arlington Virginia’s Parks & Recreation solicited input from teenagers to help ensure that, in creating a master plan for its parks and open spaces, that it met the needs of this age group as well.¹³ In New York City, the planning of the Hudson Yards development included providing a space where teens were welcome and could play.¹⁴

engage in aggressive behavior.” Tom Jacobs, “Teenagers Surrounded by Green are Less Aggressive,” *Pacific Standard* (June 30, 2016). Click [here](#) for link to article. (“Importantly, this association could not be explained by sociodemographic factors or neighborhood quality...[and] applied to both boys and girls, and teens of all races and ethnicities.” [internal citation omitted] *Id.*)

⁸ An article on the Playground Professionals website provides a discussion regarding teenagers and their need for public space. See Kwame Brown, “Teenagers Need Active Play, Too!” *Playground Professionals* (Sept. 30, 2014). Click [here](#) for link to article.

⁹ Victoria Derr, “Parks for teens: 10 features teens want to see,” *Child in the City Foundation*, (Feb. 2, 2015). Click [here](#) for link to article.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Id.* One of the ten things consistently sought by Boulder teens in a public space was play places for both children and adults. *Id.*

¹³ See information on Arlington Virginia’s website regarding Parks and Public Spaces Focus Group for Teens – click [here](#) for link to website.

¹⁴ Matthew Katz, *Hudson Yards Will Have Playground for Teenagers*, *DNAinfo* (New York) (July 31, 2013). Click [here](#) for link. “[I]t’s really important because teens, a lot of the time, don’t have spaces to go,” said Erica Baptiste, community planner for Community Board 4, which requested the dedicated space for teenagers based on feedback from local residents.” *Id.*

- Not limited to the United States, the idea of cities and public spaces working for all members of the community is reflected in work of the Child in the City Foundation. The main objectives of this international organization are “to strengthen the position of children in cities, promote and protect their rights and give them space and opportunities to play and enjoy their own social and cultural lives.”¹⁵
- The concept that one of the goals of urban planning should be to serve residents of all ages is also reflected in the work of 8 80 Cities. 8 80 Cities believes that “[w]hether you’re 8 or 80 years old, cities should work for everyone.”¹⁶

The foregoing notwithstanding, according to information from the Lincoln Park Chamber of Commerce, it is estimated that, since 2000, the population of children in Lincoln Park under the age of 18 has increased by 6%. Other former commercial spaces, such as the old Children’s Hospital, have been rezoned to permit high-density, mixed-use development, with little in the way of corresponding public greenspace. Lincoln Park Elementary School built additional classroom space to address an overcrowding issue, significantly cutting down the size of its playground space. Schools, along with their playgrounds, have been rented out to private camps for the summer months, to the exclusion of the general public. These are only some of reasons why the open recreational space needs of our community have grown. Therefore, for all of the foregoing reasons, in addition to serving the goals of making any development in the North Branch Corridor sustainable and attractive to a knowledge workforce, the type and quality of park space created is important.¹⁷

The North Branch Industrial Corridor Framework Plan provides for at least 10 acres of public open space, in addition to any public open space created by the river walk. However, the need for space and programming for people of all ages, interests and abilities, especially teens, is why an aggregate 10 acres of piecemeal small playgrounds, pocket parks, and seating areas would be completely inadequate to serve this purpose. Even large open recreational fields, although necessary to address the existing public open recreational space deficit, are not usable year-round – especially during the cold winter months – and cannot serve the needs for all interests and types of programming. What is required, in addition to recreational fields, is a fieldhouse with facilities adequate to provide programming for people of all ages, interests and abilities. A

¹⁵See the Child in the City Foundation website under ‘About Us.’ Click [here](#) for link to website.

¹⁶See 8 80 Cities website under ‘About 8 80 Cities.’ Click [here](#) for link to website.

¹⁷Parks and recreational spaces that improve quality of life are important considerations in attracting knowledge workers. See “How Cities Use Parks for Economic Development,” by Megan Lewis, AICP - part of the American Planning Association’s City Parks Forum Briefing Papers. Click [here](#) for a link to this paper.

conversation with Juanita Irizarry, Executive Director of the Friends of the Parks, revealed that early Chicago had a revolutionary concept of including fieldhouses with its parks. “The park field house is a building type conceived and developed in Chicago.... From their origins at the turn of the twentieth century, the field houses were adopted by neighborhood residents as important institutions that provided for year-round recreation and fostered community.”¹⁸ Indeed, these smaller, neighborhood parks with field houses were built to serve the city’s growing population because they could not be served by the large parks alone.¹⁹ These parks and field houses “continue to serve as important community resources for the residents of the neighborhoods in which they are located.”²⁰

The addition of a fieldhouse in any open space plan developed in the North Branch Corridor would not only revive, continue and celebrate Chicago’s innovative era of providing parks and park facilities for its neighborhoods, but also help fill the need of space and programming for teens. Moreover, such a fieldhouse could be provided in coordination with the city’s plan to provide increased access to the river – perhaps a boat house or rowing facility with space for creative or technical arts programming as well. Whether or not provided in this precise form, a lasting and usable space for residents of all ages, interests and abilities will not happen without a determined call by the community.²¹

- Reatha Kay. Reatha is a resident of RANCH Triangle and is the current president of the RANCH Triangle Community Conservation Association.

¹⁸ “Chicago’s Small Parks and Field Houses of the West Parks Commission,” Lisa Napoles from *Out of the Loop – Chicago, Vernacular Architecture Forum*, Edited by Virginia B. Price, Spatz, D. A., and Hunt, B. D. , p. 123 (2015).

¹⁹ *Id.* at 124-125. *See also*, the Chicago Park District’s website regarding Davis Square Park - “Davis Square was one of ten innovative parks which opened in 1905 to provide social services as well as breathing spaces to Chicago’s congested tenement districts.... [t]hese innovative parks included a new type of building, the fieldhouse, inspired by Chicago’s renowned settlement houses.” Click [here](#) for link to site.

²⁰ *Id.* at 127.

²¹ The history surrounding the development of Chicago’s parks includes the work of committed citizens who called for them. *See* The history of the Chicago Park District available on its website. (“In the early 1850s, a park movement emerged in Chicago, when visionary citizens began to rally for the creation of the nation’s first comprehensive park and boulevard system. A physician, Dr. John Rauch led a successful protest to set aside a 60-acre section of a public cemetery as parkland, marking the beginnings of Lincoln Park. This inspired citizens to press for three separate acts of state legislation establishing the Lincoln, South, and West Park Commissions in 1869. Although the three park commissions operated independently, the overall goal was to create a unified ribbon of green that would encircle Chicago.” *Id.* Click [here](#) for link to site.

Renovated and Restored: A prime example of a Victorian-era worker's cottage is in your neighborhood

With its deep red brick façade and pitched roof, the home at 1925 N. Fremont Street is notable for more than these features that distinguish it from other homes along this stretch of Fremont – it represents an “exceptional example of a ‘worker’s cottage’ ... developed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.”²² With its original doors and original stain glass windows, some of the other features which make this building so unique are the multiple materials used in its construction – from “pressed brick, brownstone and limestone, ... [to] materials newly available in the late nineteenth century such as architectural terracotta and galvanized metal used for cornices.”²³ “Belying its relatively small scale, the building is lavishly ornamented and crafted with a large and visually-impressive variety of decoration in a wide variety of materials....all executed with excellent craftsmanship.”²⁴ The quality and variety of material used contributes to a “visual complexity and richness that is characterized by much of the Victorian-era architecture in Chicago.”²⁵

Built in 1891,²⁶ this home has experienced several interior renovations, but, only until recently, have extensive efforts been undertaken to restore and preserve this building’s architecturally significant exterior. Purchased by Taki and Jackelyn Kastanis in 2016, restoration began shortly thereafter. The idea of taking on a renovation and preservation project was not the motivating factor for the purchase of the property. Having experience with rehabbing other residential properties and managing the buildout of commercial spaces, Mr. Kastanis understood that undertaking a project such as this would likely involve expenses and exasperations not usually encountered with new construction. However, the uniqueness and beauty of the house, in addition to its location, made it the perfect choice for him and his family. As predicted, the preservation efforts would involve unforeseen issues and expenses. However, in the end, they were very happy with the final results, and his family was able to move in in time to celebrate Halloween on Fremont Street.

Recently, the owners of the Mulligan School on Sheffield were deservedly recognized by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks for their contribution to our city for their extensive efforts to repurpose and preserve this landmarked building.²⁷ The restoration and preservation of a

²² Final Landmark Recommendation adopted by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, October 4, 2012 on the Martin Schnitzius Cottage (1925 N. Fremont St.) at p. 3.

²³ *Id.* at 9.

²⁴ *Id.* at 24.

²⁵ *Id.* at 3

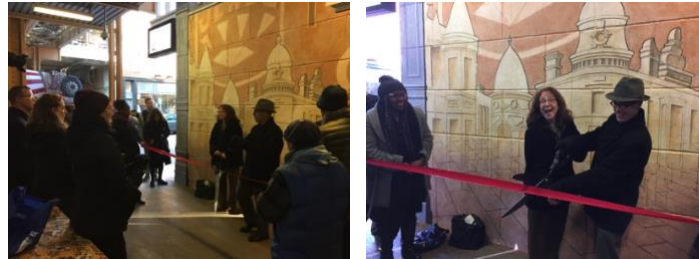
²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ On October 24, 2017, Svigos Development, Inc. was honored at the 2017 Preservation Excellence Awards for Adaptive Reuse. Click [here](#) for more information on this award.

building recognized as a “distinguished and exceptional” example of its type of architecture would seem worthy of appreciation as well.

New Mural on Armitage

A dedication of the new mural at the Armitage ‘L’ stop (939 W. Armitage Avenue) was held on November 9, 2017. The mural, created by artist Steve Carrelli, was made possible through the Year of Public Art program. As described by Mr. Carrelli, the mural was inspired by the history of Armitage Street and the neighborhood’s history of landmark preservation - this is reflected in the Armitage skyline depicted in the mural as well as through the reference to the wood blocks once used to pave Armitage street. Many were on hand to celebrate this wonderful addition to our neighborhood including Alderman Michele Smith, artist Steve Carrelli, Kyle Glascott of Glascotts (owner of the building on which the mural was painted), and representatives from the CTA, the city’s Year of Public Art program, the Armitage-Halsted Landmark District Committee, and various Lincoln Park community groups, including RANCH Triangle. The mural brightens and beautifies the area under the Armitage ‘L’ station while honoring the beauty and history of our neighborhood.



Clarification Regarding Extended Street Sweeping Schedule

To clarify the street sweeping information from our ward newsletter:

Street sweeping will officially continue until December 8. After that date, our Ward Superintendent will continue to sweep areas weather permitting. This includes as much of the RANCH Triangle area that can be swept due to the weather.

- Alderman Michele Smith

Upcoming Community Events

First Official Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony in Oz Park. Saturday, December 2, at 5:00 pm (just south of the Tin Man statute). Come join Lincoln Central Association and the Oz Park Advisory Council as they light up the neighborhood at the first annual holiday tree lighting ceremony in Oz Park. Enjoy the magical moment surrounded by the sounds of the holiday performed by singers from Lincoln Park High School.

Adams Park is a “Toys For Tots” donation drop off site. From now until December 18th, you can share the joy of the season by dropping off a new, unwrapped toy at the “Toys for Tots” bin located at Adams Park. Last donations will be picked up on Monday, December 18th.

Other

Donate your books, CDs, DVDs, and vinyl records to Turning the Page. Turning the Page is a literacy and education based non-profit partnering with six CPS elementary schools in North Lawndale. Our mission of engaging families for student success is able to continue and expand in part because of book donations. If you are moving, downsizing, or generally have no more room in your house(!) donate your gently used books, CDs, DVDs, and vinyl records to Turning the Page! Every donation counts because the proceeds go right back into fulfilling our mission. We are able to pick up your materials generally within a week of you contacting us. To schedule a pickup, contact Jacob Dimuzio at jdimuzio@turningthepage.org or call (773) 362-8598, ext. 207. Thank you for making a difference! Click [here](#) for more information on Turning the Page.

Volunteers Needed! Tutoring Chicago is a non-profit organization focused on providing 1-on-1 tutoring services to economically disadvantaged elementary school children. Volunteers are needed at three of their locations: Lincoln Park, Logan Square, and Near West. For more information please visit their website by clicking [here](#).

It’s Bridgeview Bank Lincoln Park’s 20th Anniversary and they are celebrating with a Money Market Special – 1.25% for 20 months. Click [here](#) for more details.

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, and follow RANCH on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/RANCH-Triangle-Community-Conservation-Association-108461592543401/>

