



FOREST PRESERVE
FOUNDATION



2012 -2014
ANNUAL REPORT



Dear Friend,

We are pleased to present the Forest Preserve Foundation's first annual report, which reflects our first two years of grant making, from 2012 through 2014. In this short time, we have experienced a sharp increase in grant-making, organizational capacity and donor base, demonstrating that the Foundation's vision resonates with a wide variety of Cook County residents.

Because of an increase in donor support, our grant making capacity has increased from \$3,500 to over \$160,000 in 2014. This year's grant making represents a 100% increase from last year in support nature education and access programs in the Forest Preserves of Cook County. Grants supported programs like Citizen Scientists in Action!, which continues to expand its reach through partnerships with community organizations and schools that share common goals. Nature Express and the Camp Gear Library programs break down barriers for families to experience the outdoors together by providing them with the transportation, gear and know-how they need. These programs are at the heart of the Foundation's mission and exemplify the types of partnerships and activities we support.

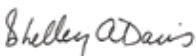
Childhood memories of fishing with a grandparent, of building makeshift forts with a friend, or of seeing wildlife for the first time inspire many of our donors to support the Foundation's signature programs. They know, from personal experience, that childhood experiences in nature achieve so much: they nurture mental and physical health, create connections that foster a lifetime of environmental stewardship, and deepen understanding of scientific concepts learned in school.

The swell of support for these programs was exhibited at our special events. The Third Annual Conservation Cup raised nearly \$160,000, exceeding fundraising goals and strengthening partnerships with individual and corporate sponsors. The event brought together a wonderful diversity of constituents who enjoyed a great day on the course while further supporting the Foundation's mission with silent auction bids and 'cheat for charity' packages.

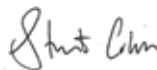
One of our most exciting achievements this year was the establishment of a Young Professionals Association. This committee hit the ground running by expanding its core membership base, establishing an organizational structure and leading two major events. The summer and fall social events introduced over 150 people to the Foundation's work and raised over \$7,500. The Young Professionals Association is dedicated to raising awareness about the benefits and opportunities offered by the Forest Preserves of Cook County, supporting the Foundation with its own grant-making fund.

The Foundation has grown its Board of Directors and staff, enhancing our ability to build strategic relationships. Our leadership has been strengthened with the addition of four new members on our Board of Directors. The diversity of experiences and expertise they bring will help lead the organization through its transformation from a new entity to an established partner in the community. In 2015, The Directors will develop a strategic plan for the Foundation's future as an integral partner of the Forest Preserves of Cook County.

Sincerely,



Shelley A. Davis
Executive Director



Stuart A. Cohn
Chair, Board of Directors

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The Foundation administers several programs to expand the connection between the community and our natural resources. Highlights from three of our 2014 programs are included here. For complete details, visit www.forestpreservefoundation.org.



CITIZEN SCIENTISTS IN ACTION!

Citizen Scientists in Action! is an outreach program conducted by the Forest Preserves that introduces youth from underserved communities, ages 13 through 18, to environmental stewardship activities and to potential careers in science and conservation. Led by knowledgeable and engaging staff, teens participate in plant monitoring studies, learning the skills needed to conduct field research and deepening their understanding of important ecological concepts through hands on application. Participants identify, monitor, and remove invasive species, and collect data to share with scientists. They also gain valuable insight and training on how to engage in stewardship activities in their own neighborhoods.



Forest Preserve Foundation support has expanded the program from 90 participants from two community organizations in 2012 to over 540 participants and 21 organizations in 2014.

ENVIRONMENTORS

The Forest Preserve Foundation served as fiscal agent for the EnvironMENTORS Chicago Outreach program, which received funding from Outdoor Nation to connect middle school students with college-aged mentors through environmental education and stewardship activities.

The program partnered with Albany Park Multicultural Academy, engaging 34 middle school students, 4 teachers, and 8 adult mentors in this pilot phase. Each session included an in-class lesson and a fun outdoor application of the concepts discussed. In partnership with the Forest Preserves of Cook County, students and mentors engaged in stewardship activities together, such as identifying and pulling invasive garlic mustard plants and cleaning up litter.



MEMORIAL GIVING PROGRAM

This year, the Foundation launched its Memorial Giving Program, offering residents the opportunity to dedicate a tree or a bench in the Forest Preserves of Cook County to honor the memory of someone special or celebrate an auspicious occasion.

The Foundation helped its first bench donor honor her father by installing a new bench at Trailside Nature Center. The Forest Preserves have more than 340 miles of trails for hiking and biking. Along these trails, a bench offers a place to rest, reflect, and take in the surroundings. Donating a bench helps to beautify the trails and creates a special place to celebrate a loved one or an important event.

Tree donors will work with Forest Preserve staff to choose the right spot and species of native tree to honor their loved one or special occasion. The nearly 69,000 acres of the Forest Preserves of Cook County are home to a magnificent variety of trees. Over 70 species of native trees provide countless benefits, including habitat for wildlife, improved air and water quality, and a beautiful and vibrant landscape that can be enjoyed by all. A Tree Dedication Ceremony will be held every year on Arbor Day (the last Friday in April), and all tree donors will be invited to attend.

2014 EVENTS

CONSERVATION CUP

The third Annual Conservation Cup was held on September 18 at the George W. Dunne National Golf Course in Oak Forest. Guests enjoyed the spectacular day in great company, helping to raise over \$160,000 in support of the Forest Preserve Foundation mission.



YOUNG PROFESSIONALS ASSOCIATION

The Young Professionals Association hosted two events in their inaugural year, raising over \$7,500. Its first event celebrated World Environment Day in June, bringing together over 150 people at Moe's Cantina in Chicago. The group then invited friends out to Schiller Woods for a chilly, yet fun Oktoberfest celebration complete with a bonfire, nature walk, beer and bratwurst.



GRANTS

The Foundation's grant making capacity has grown from \$3,500 in 2012 to over \$160,000 in 2014. Foundation financial audit information may be accessed on our website, www.forestpreservefoundation.org.

Year	Program	Purpose	Amount
2014	Camp Gear Library	To provide equipment and training for youth groups and families who do not have the history or the resources to try camping on their own.	\$50,000
2014	Citizen Scientists in Action!	To introduce youth, ages 13-18, from underserved communities to environmental stewardship activities and to potential careers in science and conservation.	\$45,000
2014	Community Mini Grants Program (pending)	To support the participation of community organizations in the gear library program or special events at Forest Preserve Nature Centers.	\$7,500 (estimated)
2014	EnvironMENTORS Chicago Outreach (ECO)	To develop a mentorship program between University students and underserved middle school students, facilitating meaningful connections with nature and with one another.	\$900
2014	Explore the Forest Activity Guide	To provide children with fun activities that enhance their educational experience in the Preserves.	\$10,000
2014	FPDCC Conservation and Experiential Learning Program	To help youth explore STEAM related topics in the context of the Forest Preserves, including conservation, scientific research, and environmental experiential programming	\$20,000 (estimated)
2014	Memorial Bench Dedication	To create a special place for donors to celebrate a loved one or an important event.	\$2,700
2014	Moving Forward Together to Engage Youth in a Meaningful Nature Experience	To bring together representatives from 30 agencies to provide an in-depth evaluation of Citizen Scientists and It's Cooler in the Forest programs.	\$4,500

Year	Program	Purpose	Amount
2014	Nature Express Transportation Program	To provide community organizations with transportation to the Forest Preserves, helping more children access healthy and stimulating outdoor activities.	\$20,000
2013	Citizen Scientists in Action!	To introduce youth, ages 13-18, from underserved communities to environmental stewardship activities and to potential careers in science and conservation.	\$40,000
2013	Forest Preserve District of Cook County	To support organizational development efforts (staff retreats, facilitators, etc.)	\$30,000
2013	It's Cooler in the Forest	To offer local day camps a free field trip for youth, ages 6-12, to Preserve Nature Centers, helping them feel comfortable and have fun in natural environments.	\$5,600
2013	Nature Express Transportation Program	To provide community organizations with transportation to the Forest Preserves, helping more children access healthy and stimulating outdoor activities.	\$1,395
2012	Forest Preserve District of Cook County	To support organizational development efforts (staff retreats, facilitators, etc.)	\$3,500



2014 DONORS

Thank you to our generous donors. This list reflects gifts given or pledged from January 1 through December 10, 2014.



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