



HISTORY AND MISSION OF FOREST PARK FOREVER

Forest Park Forever, a private, nonprofit organization, was founded in 1986 to work in partnership with the City of St. Louis and the Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry to make Forest Park a premier urban park. Over the past decade, more than \$94 million has been invested in the restoration of this community treasure.

In the Beginning. Initial efforts by Forest Park Forever raised money to make improvements to existing facilities within the park.

The Master Plan. In 1995, the City of St. Louis adopted a master plan for the Park that would conserve its size, beauty, and quality while satisfying the needs of its users. A public/private partnership was formed. Forest Park Forever and the City embarked on an effort to raise a combined total of \$94 million in public and private funds for sweeping improvements to the Park's infrastructure, environment, landscapes, athletic facilities, and historic buildings. This first phase of Park improvements was largely completed in 2003, and the success of the public/private restoration of Forest Park has become a national model for urban park renewal.

The Future. Forest Park Forever is committed to the Park's ongoing maintenance. Strategic efforts are under way to increase annual fundraising from Friends of **Forest Park Forever**. A maintenance and management plan estimates that in the near future approximately \$4.5 million must be raised each year for adequate maintenance to occur.

Visitor Services. After an extensive renovation, in November 2003 the historic Lindell Railway Pavilion reopened as the **Dennis & Judith Jones Visitor and Education Center**, the first such facility in the Park's history.

Managed by Forest Park Forever, the Visitor Center has quickly become a hub for multi-generational activities. A new Naturalist Series has drawn Park users who want to know more about the Park's flora and fauna so that they can act as Park ambassadors and Park docents. New volunteer-led **walking tours** offer active recreation coupled with Park history and folklore, and audio tours of the Park are available for a self-guided experience.

OASIS (www.oasisnet.org). The Older Adults Services and Information Systems, now offers programs in Forest Park at the Visitor Center such as Tai Chi, Active Living Every Day, Painting, and Discovering the 1904 World's Fair. Several OASIS members have emerged to volunteer for Forest Park Forever as Visitor Center representatives.

At the invitation of Forest Park Forever, the **Missouri Department of Conservation** (www.mdc.mo.gov) moved its city field office to Forest Park. Through its office in the Visitor Center it provides educational opportunities for teachers, children, and others interested in conserving and managing the Park and the City's natural resources. Resources include:

1. Urban and therapeutic fishing programs
2. Environmental education exhibits

3. Discovery trunks for schools

The Visitor Center is also home to the Forest Park Forever "Voyage of Learning" **Teacher's Academy**. Now in its fifth year, the Voyage of Learning provides teachers with the skills and knowledge that they need to use Forest Park as an outdoor classroom for experiential, multidisciplinary learning.

Forest Park is an active participant in the St. Louis community and a unique cultural institution that is vitally important to the entire region, regardless of age, race, or economic background. 130 years after its official opening, the Park has undergone a renaissance. The goal is to ensure that Forest Park remains an extraordinary resource for future generations.

SPEAKER'S BUREAU

The Forest Park Forever Speakers Bureau takes Forest Park out into the community, with an average of three presentations a week to service clubs, social groups, small businesses, corporate employees, and schoolchildren. To schedule a speaker, call (314) 367-7275, ext. 17 or e-mail lagood@forestparkforever.org.

