

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Issued April 2020
Friends of the Oak Park Conservatory
615 Garfield, Oak Park, IL 60304



FRIENDS
OF THE
OAK PARK
CONSERVATORY

Due to COVID-19, please note that program and event dates in upcoming weeks are subject to change based on restrictions for social distancing and gathering. Please visit www.fopcon.org for updates.

938

Visitors at the
Plant Sale

7,057

Volunteer
Hours
Donated

\$23,158

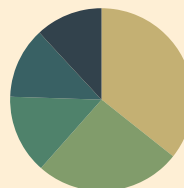
in grants to the
Park District of Oak Park

45,000

visitors to Conservatory

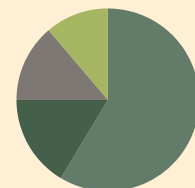
Fiscal Year: Oct. 1, 2018 - Sept. 30, 2019

Revenue



Revenue	
Plant Sale	\$51,000
Donations	\$37,200
Fundraising	\$20,200
Membership	\$18,300
Other Funding	\$17,800
Total	\$144,500
Net Revenue	\$26,600

Expenses



Expenses	
Programs & Program Support, including wages	\$68,300
Plant Sale	\$19,600
Administration	\$16,900
Fundraising	\$13,100
Total	\$117,900

7,900

visitors attended
Friends programs/events

Our mission is to offer educational and recreational opportunities, promoting community interest in the Oak Park Conservatory, and support projects that benefit the Conservatory.



PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER

by Heather Guido, President and Judy Klem, Executive Director

Friends of the Oak Park Conservatory



*The Oak Park Conservatory is a historic
property of the Park District of Oak Park.*

Dear Friends,

As we reflect on the past year, we consider the impact we have made in our community and we look to the future for ways to do more. In 2019, our board approved a new 5-year strategic plan, solidifying our purpose to deepen and enrich the visitor experience for diverse populations at the Oak Park Conservatory.

Our trained docents led over 1,000 people on in-depth tours of the showrooms. From students to seniors, visitors learned about different climates and how different plants thrive in each, inspiring curiosity about horticulture and nature. We hosted over 186 separate programs and events and our incredible volunteers gave over 7,000 hours of time.

Our standout program was the Discovery Garden Exploration Time, DGET (pronounced, Dig It!). We hosted almost 1,140 participants last summer - almost double 2018 participants. We are excited to announce plans to add new music and sensory elements to the Elsie Jacobsen Discovery Garden where children will have opportunities to explore nature through movement and music. Much of this is thanks to a generous gift made to us in late 2019.

Last year, we supported the Oak Park Conservatory with a generous grant of over \$25,000. We made the last of three equal grants of \$20,000 to help with an emergency heating pipe project, we granted \$1,000 to support the purchase of new plant labels, and \$4,000 to support the park district's Fall Fest activities at the Conservatory in September.

We are delighted to announce we are now part of the American Horticultural Society's Reciprocal Admissions Program, which offers free admission and additional benefits at over 330 gardens throughout North America. Your local support of membership with The Friends now takes you beyond Oak Park.

Our board and staff are enthusiastic about the future of The Friends as we think about how we can engage you with the Conservatory. Without you, our work promoting community interest in the Oak Park Conservatory, offering educational and recreational programs, and supporting projects that benefit the Conservatory would not be possible. Thank you for all you do!

Please continue to join us as a member, volunteer, and supporter and share our love of the Oak Park Conservatory.

Sincerely,

Heather Guido

Heather Guido
President

Judy Klem

Judy Klem
Executive Director



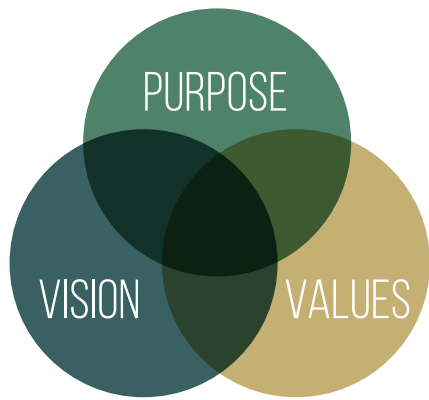
Friends Virtual Annual Meeting and Member Lecture, June 11th at 7 pm

Lecture: Wildly Beneficial: Native Plants
with Stephanie Walquist of West Cook Wild Ones

A decision was made to hold a virtual meeting format.

Board member voting will take place electronically.

Please check www.fopcon.org for details on virtual access.



FRIENDS PURPOSE, VISION & VALUES

Purpose

Our purpose is to deepen and enrich the visitor experience for diverse populations at the Oak Park Conservatory.

Vision Statement

Our vision is to connect people with nature and horticulture through the Oak Park Conservatory for personal enrichment and to inspire environmental stewardship.

Values

- **COMMUNITY** – We build community. We welcome all visitors as guests and treat them with respect. We strive to include a diverse range of backgrounds in our educational and recreational events and programming. We strive to build relationships with other related community groups.
- **EDUCATION** – We provide tools and guide participants to learn through exploration and discovery. We strive to craft memorable experiences through education and interpretive programs.
- **VOLUNTEERISM** – We value volunteerism and people. We strive to be a premier volunteer organization in our community. Our volunteers make a difference in the world. We are committed to shaping a better future through positive educational experiences with nature.
- **RESOURCES** – We strive for sustainable means and methods in all aspects of our organization. Through fiscal accountability and sharing research-based information with visitors, we maximize our limited resources to use them wisely and responsibly.

5-Year Strategic Plan 2020 - 2024

Initiative #1: Broaden & Develop Program Strategy
Initiative #2: Improve Volunteer Program
Initiative #3: Develop a Plan for Fiscal Resilience
Initiative #4: Strengthen Relationship with the Oak Park Conservatory

31st Annual Plant Sale moves ONLINE ONLY

Due to rapidly changing circumstances of COVID-19, please check our website at fopcon.org for plant sale updates. This year the sale will be pre-sale (online) only. There will be NO in-person shopping. Those who prefer to print an order form and mail it in may do so.

Purchase plants online at fopcon-plant-sale.myshopify.com. Plant orders will be available for curbside pick-up only and you will choose a timeslot to collect your order. In the event our volunteers are restricted from working at the Conservatory and the pick-ups are cancelled, patrons will receive a full refund.

The plants are growing well and are being cared for by Conservatory staff in the greenhouses with great hope we will be able to get them into your yards to help make your garden colorful and bountiful this summer! Thank you for supporting our annual plant sale, our biggest fundraiser.



Perennial & Garden Tool Exchange

Saturday, May 16

Drop off houseplants, perennials and tools between 9:30 am – 11:30 am. Pick from the bounty from 12 pm - 12:30 pm. What a great way to expand your garden or add to your tool collection. *Note: we cannot accept plain hosta or orange daylilies. Everyone seems to have too many of these!*



MEMBERSHIP

by **Kayla Chase, Membership Committee Chair**

Thank you to our Members for your support of The Friends and the Oak Park Conservatory. This year brought exciting changes, including the addition of the Reciprocal Admissions Program, which gives members free admission and/or reciprocal privileges to over 300 gardens, arboreta and conservatories nationwide. We conducted a member survey and are actively working to incorporate the feedback, starting with our new membership levels. All members at the Premier level now receive a free tote!



Member Lectures

June 11, 7 pm - 8:30 pm, Annual Member Meeting and Wildly Beneficial: Native Plants with Stephanie Walquist, West Cook Wild Ones

September 24, 7 pm - 8 pm, Compost 101 with Sandy Lentz, Master Gardener

November 5, 7 pm - 8 pm, House Plants & Succulents with Emilia Arellano, Greenhouse Coordinator of Garfield Park Conservatory

Looking ahead to 2021

February 24, Seed Starting with Dwayne Anderson, Master Gardener

FOPCON Members: Visit our local partners and save 10%!

Clover's Garden Center

7401 West 25th Street
North Riverside, Illinois 60546
708-788-0243
www.cloversgardencenter.com
Note: seasonal

Good Earth Greenhouse & Café

7900 West Madison Street
River Forest, Illinois 60305
708-366-9500
www.goodearthgreenhouse.com

McAdam Landscaping, Inc.

2001 Des Plaines Avenue
Forest Park, Illinois 60130
708-771-2299
www.mcadamlandscape.com
Note: Discount only in the retail store

Westgate Flowers & Plant Shop

841 South Oak Park Avenue
Oak Park, Illinois 60304
708-386-0072
www.westgateflowers.com
Full service florist

VOLUNTEERS

by **Nancy Silver, Volunteer and Program Coordinator**

Volunteers are the lifeblood of The Friends. Without your time and talents, this organization wouldn't, couldn't be what it is today. With only three part time staff members, there is hardly an aspect of anything we do at The Friends that you as volunteers do not touch, impact and improve. We thank you for all that you do to support The Friends mission and all the ways in which you continue to help our beloved Conservatory thrive.

2019 was a year of extraordinary volunteer involvement. Not only did you give more hours than in the previous year but we also saw more of you get involved. Collectively, you stepped in and stepped up. You crafted with toddlers at TET, welcomed diverse learners on tours throughout our showrooms, helped patrons with gardening advice at our Plant Sale and kept our gardens,

indoors and out, looking their best. And this isn't even scratching the surface on all that you do. In 2019 we were struck by how many of you eagerly took on new leadership roles and thus gave voice and vision to programs new and old. You helped design and institute new opportunities at the Friends including a successful Farmers Market bake sale fundraiser and a revised and updated tour program.

Where there is growth, there is a need for new and renewed volunteer engagement. If you are a member and not yet a volunteer, please consider joining us. And to those of you who are already a part of our volunteer team, we look forward to the continued growth we are already seeing with you in 2020.

147
Active Volunteers
in 2019

7,057
Volunteer
Hours

\$179,460
Value of
Volunteer Hours



EDUCATION PROGRAM

by *Linda Smith, Education Committee Chair*

The Education Committee continues to develop new and exciting programs to enhance visitors experiences as they explore and discover the Conservatory. Our programs include Exploration Station, Toddler Exploration Time, Discovery Garden Exploration Time, Exploration Backpacks, KidsFest, Exploration Kits, and Tours. Visitor participation has grown and sometimes doubled. We have also participated in the Early Childhood Symposium, Earth Fest and Arbor Day.

We are currently updating our Adult/High School Tour and making changes to the Discovery Garden by adding interactive areas that will create a multisensory art and music experience. We are very excited about the programs and events the Education Committee creates and supports. Please come and see for yourself how fun and exciting the Conservatory is!

Toddler Exploration Time

FREE; registration required
September-November, January-May
3rd Friday 9:30 am -10:15 am or
10:30 am - 11:15 am

Discovery Garden Exploration Time (DGET)

FREE drop-in
June-August
Wednesdays 10:30 am - 12:30 pm and
Thursdays 4 pm - 6 pm

Exploration Station

FREE drop-in
September-May
Saturdays 10:30-12:30, Sundays 1:30-3:30

Conservatory Tours

FREE for District 97 classes, others pay fee per person
By appointment through Volunteer & Program Coordinator

Exploration Kit 'Plant Super-Powers'

FREE to District 97 teachers
September-June
Reservation required through Volunteer & Program Coordinator

KidsFest

FREE; registration required
1st Sunday in March 10 am -2 pm



563

visitors during
KidsFest 2019

1386

visitors to the
Exploration Station



244

participants in Toddler
Exploration Time (TET)



1137

visitors during
Exploration Time in
the Discovery Garden
(DGET)

9

Exploration Kits
borrowed

1042

participants on 56
docent-led tours





EVENTS

Upcoming Events at the Oak Park Conservatory

27th Annual Garden Walk: Sunday, June 28

The 27th Annual Oak Park and River Forest Garden Walk will be held on Sunday, June 28th, from 10 am to 4 pm rain or shine. Tickets will be available May 1st online at www.gcopr.org and June 1st at the Conservatory. Prior to the event, tickets are \$15 for the general public and at a reduced fee for FOPCON members (see www.fopcon.org for details). All tickets are \$20 the day of the event.

This is a joint venture of the Garden Club of Oak Park River Forest and the Friends of the Oak Park Conservatory. If you wish to volunteer during the Walk contact: Sue Milojevic, smilojevic@yahoo.com



Participants in the
Garden Walk in 2019

the OAK PARK CONSERVATORY

UNCORKED

FOURTH FRIDAYS, JUNE - SEPTEMBER, 6-8PM



Attendees at Uncorked
events in 2019

June 26
Aug 28

July 24
Sept 25

We hope to see you at Uncorked this year. What a great way to relax early on a Friday evening – music, appetizers, wine or beer and much more.

This year's dates are June 26th, July 24th, August 28th and September 25th. The time is always 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm.

Advance tickets are available online for a reduced price. Advance tickets are \$15. Go to www.pdop.org to purchase tickets. Tickets will be \$18 at the door. For more information email uncorked@fopcon.org or phone 708-725-2400.



Special Events in 2020

Annual Plant Sale

Online Only, visit fopcon.org for details
*Shop for vegetables and flowers
grown in our conservatory.*

Spring Perennial and Tool Exchange • Saturday, May 16

*Share your perennials, houseplants
and tools with fellow gardeners.*

Annual Garden Walk

Sunday, June 28

*Tour inspirational gardens in
your community.*

Uncorked • Fridays, June 26,
July 24, August 28, September 25
*Enjoy live music on the patio and
food and drinks from local vendors.*

**Fall Perennial and Tool
Exchange •** Saturday, Sept. 12
*Share your perennials, houseplants
and tools with fellow gardeners.*

Fall Harvest Market
opens September 18
*Shop for hardy mums and rare bulbs,
fall pumpkins, straw bales and more.*

Fall Fest • Sunday, September 27
*Free family event! Pumpkin patch,
hayrides, crafts and games.*

Haunted Trolley • Friday, Oct. 2
*Food, drinks and spooky fun
for adults only.*

Fright at Night • Friday, Oct. 16
*Explore the conservatory after
dark—
if you dare! Family-friendly event.*

Winter Greens Market
opens November 13
*Shop for fresh wreaths, greens,
garland and more!*

Candlelight Walk

December 4 and 5

*Celebrate the natural beauty
of the season.*

**Due to COVID-19, events and programming may change.
Please check www.fopcon.org for updates.**

*We are grateful to the following donors who donated March 1, 2019 through February 29, 2020.
Thank you for your generosity!*

\$1,000 AND ABOVE

Ebinger Family Charitable Fund
Bonnie Engel
Good Heart Work Smart Foundation*
Emerson and Martha Lacey*
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Majkrzak
Marc Martinez
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Mary Ellen Warner*

\$500 - \$999

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Ellen and Rick Kuner*
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Linda and Don Smith*
Alice and John Tulley

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Up to \$99

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Douglas and Kathy Truscott
Susan Vonachen
Marietta Walsh
Margaret Walz
Melanie Weiss
Suzanne Wells
Phillis Wilson
Virginia Yarrow

Donations were made in honor of the following:

Beverly Asher Hoffman
Judy Klem
Christina Marciniak
Joan Meister
John Seaton
Jessica Singer

Donations were made in the memory of the following:

Jim Greene
Mike Lofgren
Elsie Jacobsen
Martha Poziombka

** Donors who participated in the 2019 Matching Donor Pool Challenge.*

Board of Directors

Heather Guido*, President
Sue Boyer*, Vice-President
Rebecca Callahan, Treasurer

Kayla Chase*
Carol Dudzik*
Bonnie Engel*
Barbara Hunt*
Ellen Kuner
Mary Kay Minaghan

Mary O'Kiersey
Inga Simitz*
Linda Smith*
Jeff Stewart*
Barb Stratton

*Denotes committee chairperson

Part-time Staff

Executive Director

Judy Klem
director@fopcon.org
(708) 725-2460, ext. 1
office hours: 9-3 Tu/W/Th



Volunteer & Program Coordinator

Nancy Silver
coordinator@fopcon.org
(708) 725-2460, ext. 2
office hours:
9-2:30 Tu/Th, 9-2 W, 9-1 F



Operations Coordinator

Andrea Lofgren
operations@fopcon.org
(708) 725-2460, ext. 3
office hours: 9-3 Tu/W/Th
office hours subject to change



Volunteer Honored!



Don Nekrosius was honored by the Park District of Oak Park for his volunteerism.

He was the recipient of the Illinois Association of Park Districts and the Illinois Park and Recreation Association Community Service Award. Don has been a Friends of the Park volunteer since the late 1980's, is a former Board Member, and has served in many roles helping to make the Oak Park Conservatory a unique gem in the community. If you see Don, please be sure to congratulate him on this high honor and wonderful recognition!

STAFF & VOLUNTEERS



2019 Volunteers

Mary Beth Adduci
Monica Angelo
Gloria Backman
Karole Bair
Mary Pat Bakker
Milanne Bancroft
Deborah Becker
Hilda Birney
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Sue Boyer
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Theo Glaser
Stephen Goethals
Zoe Greco
Andrea Green
Marge Greene
Heather Guido
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