

Great things are happening at Chandler Park through the Chandler Park Conservancy (CPC)! CPC is helping to improve the quality of life for youth, seniors, families and visitors from Detroit's East Side and across the region. By providing memorable experiences focusing on **Conservation, Health, Recreation, and Urban Agriculture, CPC works closely with the City of Detroit** to install great amenities and make great places for people to gather, learn and play.

The CPC is a non-profit tax exempt corporation, formed in 2014 by the Eastside Community Network. The mission of the Conservancy is to develop exceptional educational, recreational and conservation opportunities at Chandler Park.

To achieve these ambitious goals, the Conservancy has narrowed its focus to the following opportunity areas:

#1 – Greening the Community through Conservation and Environmental Stewardship

CPC uses environmental education as a tool to support the redevelopment of Detroit's East Side. CPC has been a key leader in expanding support for the environmental/stormwater movement and create healthier and more civically-engaged communities. Environmental/water conservation education has the power to transform lives and society. It informs and inspires. It influences attitudes. It motivates communities. When organizations are empowered with practical information on the importance of conservation and its impact on the environment of our neighborhoods, communities change for the better. Residents and visitors can learn how they can address local challenges and reap the benefits of a healthy community.

CPC is coordinating the investment of over \$5 million to create a comprehensive, innovative stormwater management campus - the first of its kind in Detroit - which includes a marshland, a series of bio-swales and rain gardens and an expanded tree canopy, all connecting walking paths, active sport fields, gardens and passive activities. The restored, "naturalized" Park will attract song birds, turtles, snakes and frogs; and be home to trees, shrubs, flowers and water-based plantings. CPC will use the park's ecosystem to provide environmental education to students, residents and visitors. CPC will use the stormwater management system to teach conservation and the benefits of managing stormwater naturally to attract and support native plants and animals.

#2 - Improving Community Health through a Health Hub

CPC has committed to use the park to develop space, programs and education to address the chronic diseases known to plague our community. This includes recreational sports leagues, yoga classes, and walking clubs. Amenities like walking paths, tennis courts and a skate park are currently in various stages of completion. Also, residents and visitors will be guided to set and measure health goals.

The Chandler Park community has some of the highest rates of hypertension, diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular disease in the southeast Michigan. By providing a well-maintained green space in a convenient location, people will be more inspired to utilize the park to be more physically active and engage in running, walking, and playing individual and team sports.

According to a report produce by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation "*6 Reason Why Parks Matter for Health,*" research has shown that there are several health benefits to having a clean and safe park in your neighborhood. Parks encourage more physical activity that could lead to improved health outcomes.



#3 - Building Community Through Sports and Recreation

CPC is partnering with the Detroit Recreation Department and General Services Department to create a unique blend of recreation experiences in an urban park setting: spaces where children and families can connect, gathering places for families and social groups, and people of all ages and economic status. Recreation provides the opportunity to build community, get fit, and create memorable experience. Across the region and downtown, there are parks that feature athletic fields, nature centers, sculpted paths and recreation opportunities – *but these are simply too far away for regular use by many Eastside residents.*

Chandler Park offers Detroit's only "water park", only eastside golf course, and will soon offer a walking path! Because of the partnership between CPC and the City of Detroit, Chandler Park offers these great amenities plus accessible "state-of-the-art" facilities that are well maintained and programmed. CPC also works with the Wayne County Family Aquatic Center and Chandler Park Golf Course Management to create an environment that is clean and user friendly with outstanding customer service.

#4 – Sustaining the Community through Urban Gardening and Healthy Food Access

CPC is establishing a community-based Urban Garden in Chandler Park to both educate and provide access to affordable, healthy food. This allows CPC to provide food security and health & nutrition education to one of the lowest income community in the region with some of the poorest health outcomes.

CPC will adopt charitable models to support communities in need through direct donation or by providing either discounted or free produce. Additionally, CPC will provide plots to young entrepreneurs committed to growing, for sale, healthy organic vegetables. The experiences at other Detroit Urban gardens – notably the Brightmoor Community Gardens – show that once a young gardener is shown the financial rewards of growing and selling healthy foods, he/she are more likely to make a similar commitment year after year. CPC will also provide gardening education to children and adults so they can learn how to start gardens near their homes.

And....Exercising Leadership for a Citywide Detroit Park Coalition

Chandler Park, and all Detroit Parks have had to rely on innovation to provide the services – and resources- needed by their residents. The establishment of the Chandler Park Conservancy and the successes to date have followed, and inspired, similar locally-grown park support efforts. Securing resources to support these growing efforts is challenging.

But by building on our combined successes, CPC believes that Detroit can become a leader in these efforts. CPC has provided leadership to establish a Detroit park alliance that includes Belle Isle Park (Belle Isle Conservancy), Chandler Park (Chandler Park Conservancy), Clark Park (Clark Park Coalition), Palmer Park (People for Palmer Park) and Rouge Park (Friends of Rouge Park). However, challenges remain. The goal of a Detroit Park Coalition is to establish a citywide parks organization that would enable all stakeholders to better coordinate projects, fundraising, programs and volunteers; share operational resources, manage relationships with the City, and thus improve all five of these great parks.