

# 2016 Progress Report



**Friends** of the  
**Forest Preserve District**  
OF WILL COUNTY



# Mission...Vision...Values

The Friends of the Forest Preserve District of Will County is a volunteer organization committed to raising and administering funds in support of the Forest Preserve District of Will County's education, recreation and conservation efforts. The Friends is guided by a volunteer board made up of individuals from throughout Will County; individuals that are leaders in their respective communities and are passionate about the Forest Preserve, its mission, and furthering the goals of the Friends.

## Mission

The Friends works to create a legacy of giving that supports and celebrates the preservation, conservation, education and recreation priorities of the Forest Preserve District of Will County in perpetuity.

## Vision

We envision a vital, dynamic and self-sustaining foundation that is committed to cultivating relationships and partnerships within our community that directly benefit the Forest Preserve District's ability to protect our environment and deliver programs and services to its constituents.

## Values

We believe in:

- Supporting and investing in high quality, mission-focused projects and programs
- Fiscal responsibility, transparency and accountability in all endeavors
- Cultivating and maintaining positive, sustainable relationships with our donors and supporters

## Board of Directors

Ralph Bias  
Timothy Brennan  
Marcella DeMauro  
Ann Dralle  
Mike Fricilone  
Ed Garner  
Donald Gould  
Sean Krause  
Laurie McPhillips  
Ralph Schultz  
Penny Wakeland  
Denise Winfrey

Cynthia Harn,  
Executive Director



# Building Capacity

## 2016 Initiatives

With continued and focused effort to build capacity, to operate effectively, and to establish long term sustainability, the Friends made significant advancements in many areas of governance and program development.

### ***Board Member Recruitment***

With three vacant board seats, the Board Development Committee set out this year to search for prospective board members. Their efforts were successful. New, incoming Directors will be seated in January and March of 2017, thus filling all board seats.

### ***Board Development***

Effective governance, fundraising, and donor relations are critical to the long term sustainability of the Friends. As such, Board members and the Executive Director took part in professional development activities geared to build leadership and foster best practices in non-profit governance.

### ***Community Outreach***

This year, the Friends attended each of the Forest Preserve's facility-based events including Musher Mania, the Earth, Wind and Fire Festival, Island Rendezvous, Art & Nature on the River, and the Goodenow Grove Fall Festival in an effort to expand awareness and build relationships.

### ***Social Media & Website Development***

In 2016, the Friends launched its presence on Facebook. The Friends also continued to enhance its website and on-line donation capabilities through its unique partnership with Flipcause, a non-profit fundraising technology provider.



## Strategic Goals

### Goal 1

Take action to ensure that the Friend's becomes operational.

### Goal 2

Take action to create organizational sustainability.

# Building Capacity

## 2016 Initiatives

### ***Bringing Nature Home Native Plant Sale and Pre-Sale Event***

A huge success, 700 visitors came to the the Native Plant Sale and Pre-Sale event and purchased over 5,000 native plants! For the first time ever, the Pre-Sale Event was a ticketed, fundraising event that drew almost 100 attendees.

### ***Help Keep Nature Education Programs Free***

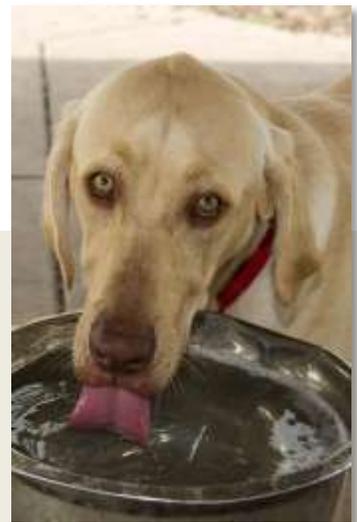
Launched in December 2015, this initiative marked the Friends' first ever fundraising campaign. The campaign which raised funds for the Forest Preserve to purchase equipment, supplies and materials for nature study continued into 2016 and the \$5,000 fundraising goal was met by individual donations and proceeds from the Native Plant Sale.

### ***Restore Will County***

This new initiative seeks to provide small grants to the Forest Preserve's Volunteer Stewards to help them purchase the supplies, materials and equipment they need to conduct much needed natural area restoration work in many forest preserves. The campaign launched in November and the Friends successfully reached and exceeded its goal of \$7,000 by the end of the year!

### ***On the Horizon in 2017...***

- Unveiling of a New Name and Logo
- Donor Appreciation Events
- Launch of a New Capital Campaign for Preserve & Dog Park Improvements



### **Strategic Goals**

#### **Goal 1**

Take action to ensure that the Friend's becomes operational.

#### **Goal 2**

Take action to create organizational sustainability.

# IN FOCUS

## Bringing Nature Home Native Plant Sale

Held in May at the Sugar Creek Administration Center in Joliet, this year's event featured two major improvements. First, the event was moved from the parking lot to the plaza at the front of the administration center's main entrance and featured a connected tunnel of tents that spanned the plaza and paved trail. Second, the Friday night Pre-Sale Event and Reception was a ticketed, fundraising event with music, boutique wine, craft beer, a selection of artisan cheeses and sausages, as well as gourmet desserts, and the opportunity to purchase native plants early. Tickets were sold for \$20 each and 85 people purchased tickets. Proceeds from this event helped the Friends meet its \$5,000 goal in support of the "Help Keep Nature Education Programs Free" campaign.

Restoring native plant habitat is vital to preserving biodiversity. By creating a native plant garden, each patch of habitat becomes part of a collective effort to nurture and sustain the living landscape for birds and other animals. That is why this event is so much more than a sale. In addition to purchasing native plants, visitors learn about more about native landscaping, talk with native plant experts about landscape and garden design and plant selection, learn about conservation efforts for the Monarch and other pollinators of concern, and meet others who share their passion for sound conservation practices and gardening.

This year's presentations included "Conservation@ Home" with Jim Kleinwachter of The Conservation Foundation, "Nuances of the Monarch" with Nancy Kuhajda of Illinois Master Gardeners, and "From the Ground Up!! and Native Plant Q&A" with Connor Shaw of Possibility Place Nursery.

Exhibitors included Friends of the Forest Preserve District of Will County, Forest Preserve District of Will County, The Conservation Foundation, Land Conservancy of Will County, Garden Clubs of Illinois – Milkweed for Monarchs Campaign, Illinois Native Plant Society, Wild Ones of Will County, Will County Audubon Society, University of Illinois Extension – Illinois Master Gardeners, Illinois Natural History Survey – Traveling Science Center, and Mike MacDonald Photography.



700	Attendance
5,247	Native Plants Sold
\$28,731	Total Sales of Native Plants
\$4,900	Donations & Other Cash Support
\$8,497	Net Proceeds

*THANK YOU! - This event could not be possible without all of our shoppers and the generous support of:*

- The Forest Preserve District of Will County
- Possibility Place Nursery
- The Conservation Foundation
- Christopher B. Burke Engineering
- Over 50 volunteers from our partner organizations!

# IN FOCUS

## Help Keep Nature Education Programs Free!

Each year the Forest Preserve District of Will County provides nature education programs to more than 15,000 public school students. However, due to participation costs, there are still many students who are unable to take part in these programs. In an effort to reduce barriers and increase participation, the Forest Preserve District's Board of Commissioners eliminated field trip fees in 2016 for students; these fees helped to offset the District's costs of materials and equipment for its nature education programs.

In December 2015, the Friends launched its first-ever fundraising campaign, the "Help Keep Nature Education Programs Free!" campaign with the hopes of raising \$5,000 to assist the District in purchasing the necessary equipment, supplies and materials to help students discover local ponds and streams, learn about forest ecology, participate in direct experiences with nature, and become better stewards of our natural areas while keeping programs free.

With the help of individual donors and native plant enthusiasts, the Friends reached its campaign goal of \$5,000 following its Bringing Nature Home Native Plant Sale and Friday Night Pre-Sale Reception in May 2016.

The Friends presented the Forest Preserve District with a \$5,000 check at its September Board meeting in time for the upcoming school year and the Forest Preserve's 2017 budget planning.

Also in September, the Friends received a generous donation from Ducere, LLC in support of two Friends initiatives: nature education for children and a new land stewardship initiative that was to launch in November. Half of the \$6,000 donation will be used for the Help Keep Nature Programs Free initiative in 2017.



Dave Nelson of Ducere, LLC presents a check for \$6,000 to the Friends Board of Directors in support of nature education and land stewardship programs.



\$5,000

Goal

December 2015

Campaign Launch

September 2016

Check Presentation to Forest Preserve

*"We are so fortunate to have the Forest Preserve District of Will County provide unparalleled teaching opportunities to the children of our county. The Friends did not want recent budget cuts to be the reason students had fewer chances to learn about nature. That is why we were so pleased to award the Forest Preserve District of Will County a check today for \$5,000 to keep our nature programs free for our school children!"*

*Tim Brennan, Friends Chairperson*

# IN FOCUS

## Restore Will County Land Stewardship Small Grants Program

Restore Will County is a small grants program that supports Forest Preserve District volunteers and their commitment to land stewardship. Passionate and purposeful in their work, volunteer stewards adopt a forest preserve, often within their own community, and set out to collect and distribute seed from native plants, cut brush, and control non-native weeds so that our native plants and animals have a chance to thrive. They work to restore the land and re-establish the natural ecological relationships.

The Restore Will County Small Grants Program provides financial assistance to stewards to help them purchase what they need. Whether it be in the form of plant material, seed, personal protective equipment, herbicide, small tools or supplies to aid in monitoring activities, or organizing a community workday; these small grants can have a lasting impact on volunteers and our natural areas.

With a goal of \$7,000, the Restore Will County campaign officially launched on #GivingTuesday, November 29, 2016. The Friends kicked off the campaign by announcing two significant donations it had already received: \$3,000 from Ducere, LLC (with the other \$3,000 for nature education programs) and \$2,000 from an anonymous donor with a match challenge to raise an additional \$2,000 through individual donations by December 31, 2016. By the end of the campaign the Friends had met the match challenge and raised over \$2,000 from individual donors making the grand total just over \$7,600 for the Restore Will County Small Grants Program!



*Dave Nelson of Ducere, LLC presents a check for \$6,000 to the Friends Board of Directors in support of nature education and land stewardship programs.*



In 2016, a dedicated group of 13 volunteer stewards donated over 3,200 hours taking care of the natural landscapes and plants and animals we all enjoy.

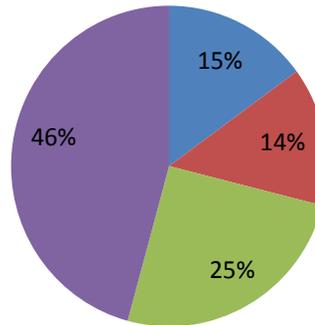
Not only do they provide their time and talents, they often pay for their own supplies, equipment, protective gear, native seeds and plant plugs, and even herbicide to control weeds and non-native shrubs.

These volunteers clearly show how a small group of dedicated and passionate people can, and do, make a difference; how each of us working towards a common goal can have a so much more of an impact than any of us could have on our own.

To highlight their work and raise awareness of the Restore Will County Campaign, the Friends interviewed seven stewards and produced videos of their personal stories. These can be viewed at [www.friendsofwillcountyforests.org](http://www.friendsofwillcountyforests.org).

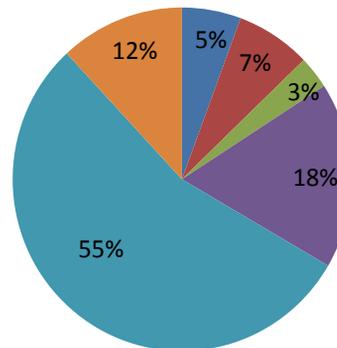
# 2016 FINANCIALS

Revenue	
Donations – Restricted	\$8,870
Donations - Unrestricted	\$8,313
Partner Support	\$15,000
Native Plant Sale Event	\$27,164
<b>2016 Total Revenue*</b>	<b>\$59,347</b>



- Donations-Restricted
- Donations-Unrestricted
- Partner Support
- Native Plant Sale Event

Expense	
Financial Services	\$2,368
Legal Services	\$3,000
Contractual Services	\$7,361
Misc. Commodities	\$1,290
Native Plant Sale	\$22,957
Help Keep Nature Programs Free	\$5,000
<b>2016 Total Expense*</b>	<b>\$41,976</b>



- Financial Services
- Legal Services
- Misc. Commodities
- Contractual
- Native Plant Sale
- HKNP Free

\*Financial information presented in this report is pre-audit.

# DONORS & SUPPORTERS

It goes without saying that we can't do our work without our donors and supporters! Your gift helps us enrich visitor experiences, enhance the Forest Preserve District's programs and services, and provide more opportunities for youth and families to learn about the natural world. We truly appreciate your contributions. Thank you !

## ***Philanthropist - \$1,000 level and above***

Anonymous  
A.J. Dralle, Inc.  
Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd  
Ducere, Inc.

## ***Diamond - \$500 level and above***

Anonymous  
Timothy Brennan  
Cynthia Harn

## ***Platinum - \$250 and above***

Anonymous  
Robert Applegate  
Carroll Bruton  
Randy Clark  
Wendy Covelli  
Marcy DeMauro-Roth  
Ralph Schultz  
Leonard Tamburro  
Denise Winfrey  
Joliet Tent Company  
Werner Excavating, Inc

## ***Gold - \$100 and above***

Anonymous  
Mike Anania  
Eric & Judith Bridge  
Maggie Capettini – Capettini Fine Arts  
Norm & Charlotte Codo  
Gust Flodstrom  
Mike Fricilone  
Patrick Kelly  
Sean Krause  
Maureen Peterson  
Anita & Mark Schneidewind  
James Sinadsinos  
Warren & Dawn Wagner  
Penelope Wakeland  
Russ & Laurie Weglarz

## ***Silver - \$50 and above***

Anonymous  
Kristal Belt  
Andrew Blackburn  
William & Sherry Crater  
Darlene Coffey  
Gayle Crompton  
Karen Fonte  
Ed Garner  
August & Andrea Garritano  
Donald Gould  
Howard Hansen  
Usa Klein  
James & Georgia Kulpa  
Lee & Marge Marek  
William & Nancy Morse  
Robert Moses  
Sheldon & Marjorie Nicol  
Jean Nolan  
Linda Roy  
Phyllis Schulte  
Linda Stanislawski  
Therese Stellato  
Alan & Barb Sturges  
Mary Trowbridge  
Nancy Walsh  
Women's for Families  
Farm Group

## ***Bronze – \$10 and above***

Anonymous  
Phillip Blanchette  
Paul Boetto (in Memorium)  
Mervin Castle  
Jo Chenell  
Robert & Laura Deodoes  
Sharon DeVault  
James Dolega  
Robert Keith Fosnaugh  
Gerald & Carolyn Funk

## ***Bronze, Continued***

Lori Ann Green  
John A. Gustafson  
Jackie Harn  
David & Janet Knol  
Ronald Kuhlman  
Jack & Sherrill Lehman  
Mary Anne McLean  
Vitor Oliveira  
James Proffitt  
Gerald & Virginia Pasteris  
Adelaide Powers  
Marilyn Quas  
Darlene Stipe  
Jane & Jerry Weber  
James Wind  
John Zandstra



*Includes cash donations and in-kind support.*



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[www.facebook.com/willcoforestfriends/](https://www.facebook.com/willcoforestfriends/)