



LAKE KATHERINE

NATURE CENTER & BOTANIC GARDENS

2015 ANNUAL REPORT



The mission of Lake Katherine Nature Center and Botanic Gardens is
to connect people with nature.

By engaging the public with Lake Katherine and by applying current stewardship practices to this reclaimed land, we strive to create places that:

- invite human interaction with natural spaces
- offer opportunities to learn about nature
- expand participation in and knowledge of good ecological practices
- welcome recreation and reflection

2015 in a Nutshell

-  **Come & Visit:** Visitors to the Nature Center exceeded 30,000 in 2015 with scores more enjoying the beauty of the gardens and wildlife as they hiked, jogged, cycled, snowshoed or walked their dog in the midst of our urban retreat.
-  **Media Upgrades:** We've had an enthusiastic response to our social media pages this year with 2,150 new followers across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Our monthly newsletter reaches an audience of 2,080.
-  **Boating Boost:** A deal on living-social.com made a real splash to our canoeing and kayaking rentals, bringing new visitors onboard to explore the lake. Our \$12,383.60 revenue for boat rentals is up by \$1,232 from the previous year.
-  **Grants:** In 2015 three grants were awarded to LKNCBG valued at almost \$13,000 - \$1,000 from Target, \$8,000 from NiCOR and \$3,949 from the Clean Energy Foundation.
-  **Love at the Lake:** In 2015 we saw an increase in wedding ceremonies at Lake Katherine with revenues for marriage permits up \$2,800. Festival Ground rentals also increased in 2015 with revenues up \$8,500 from the previous year.
-  **Fundraiser Success:** Our end of year financial appeal raised \$4,385 which will support Lake Katherine's 2016 Conservation Plan to plant oak trees throughout the grounds as well as helping to fund the day-to-day running of the nature center and park.
-  **Play Paradise:** A new nature-themed play area within the Children's Forest was completed in July and was met with enthusiasm with children and adults alike.

2015 Lake Katherine Operating Budget

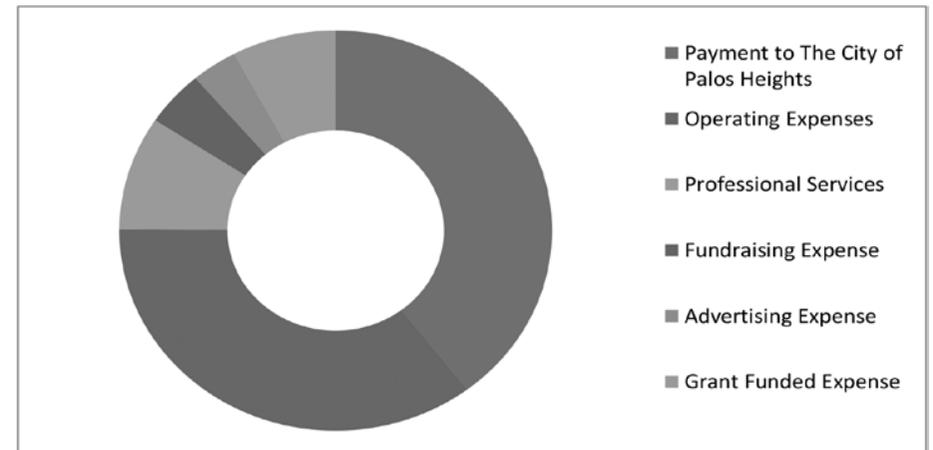
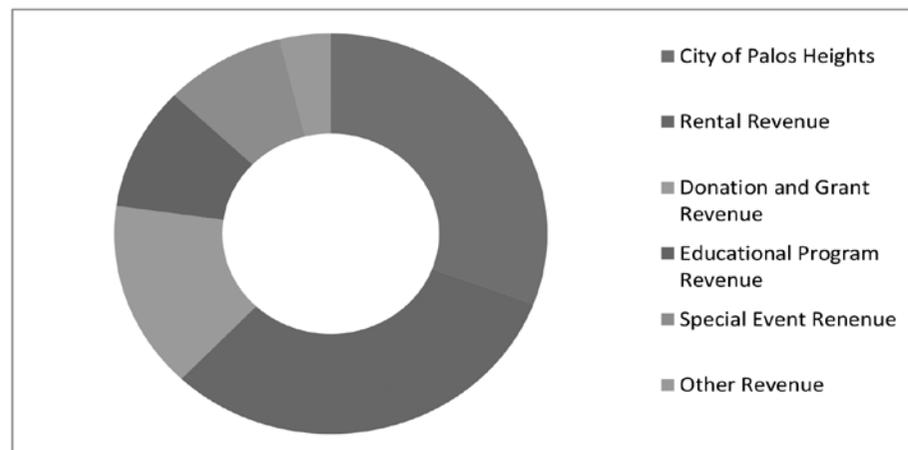
Income

City of Palos Heights	\$128,024.00
Rental Revenue	\$130,696.00
Donation and Grant Revenue	\$62,934.00
Educational Program Revenue	\$41,383.00
Special Event Revenue	\$37,660.00
Other Revenue	\$15,844.00
	\$416,541.00

Expenses

Payment to The City of Palos Heights	\$170,000.00
Operating Expenses	\$152,736.00
Professional Services	\$39,350.00
Fundraising Expense	\$19,270.00
Advertising Expense	\$14,783.00
Grant Funded Expense	\$33,406.00
	\$429,545.00

NOTE: In 2015 expense exceeds income as we received a number of grants in 2014 that had to be expended in 2015.



Meet the Team



Operations Manager Gareth Blakesley: gareth.blakesley@lakekatherine.org

Business Operations Coordinator Bridget Provost: bridget.provost@lakekatherine.org

Educator/Naturalist Marian Sinkus: marian.sinkus@lakekatherine.org

Volunteer Coordinator & Exhibits Shamim Graff: volunteerlk@lakekatherine.org

Marketing Coordinator Charlotte Ward: LK.marketing@lakekatherine.org

Development Coordinator Kate Coughlin: lake.development@lakekatherine.org

Lake Katherine is also supported by 19 part-time and seasonal staff members.

Board Of Directors

Lake Katherine has benefited greatly from our dedicated team of board members - **Matt Hunt, Walter Bernard, Jean Gnap, Terry Horvath, Frank Oswald, Bill Poore, Diana Rosich and Somali Tomczak** - who continually volunteer their time, effort and knowledge.

In 2015 Matt Hunt became chairman of the board and his enthusiasm and skills have benefited the park greatly as we celebrate our 25th year.



Thank You To Our Volunteers

Each year, we rely on the service of our incredible volunteers to greet visitors, lead education programs, tend to our gardens, perform maintenance, restore habitat, take care of our animals, collect data, and help with special events. This dedicated team, made up of more than one hundred volunteers, collectively donates thousands of hours of their time each year. In 2015, those service hours were valued at \$101,455, based on the estimated value of \$24.74 per volunteer hour (as calculated by the Independent Sector). We cannot thank our volunteers enough for their generosity and devotion to making Lake Katherine the best it can be.

We would like to recognize those volunteers who contributed more than 20 hours at Lake Katherine in 2015:

GOLD – Over 200 Hours

Walter Bernard

SILVER – 100-200 Hours

Barb Carberry

Jim Carberry

Catherine Ference

Robert Honkisz

Terry Horvath

Barb Marlin

Alice Polcaster

Jim Rusin

Gloria Tolley

Karen Valesares

BRONZE – 20-99 Hours

Jim Agnos

Lenore Barnes

Kiersten Bergquist

Susan Blattner

Edward Borkhuis

Linda Bosold

Robert Brann

Lorraine Bujan

Carla Burton

Ginny Carpenter

Karrie Chapman

Bill Czajkowski

Janet Czajkowski

Gerald Dolan

Cory Doot

Melissa Drozd

Lois Duran

Jean Gnap

Magdeline Gniadecki

Karen Grefe

Elaine Hess

Stephanie Hoffmann

Matt Hunt

Jake Hynes

Therese Janus

Celeste Kappel

Barbara Killelea

Jan Kocek

Nancy Kreith

Mike Littmann

Amy March

Dorothy McCloskey

Joe McCloskey

Tammy McGee

Eileen Moran

Corny Morgan

Janet Neal

Frank Oswald

Jeri Pellegrino

Annette Pletcher

Daniel Pletcher

Bill Poore

Sandra Quinn

Jim Reichel

Marianne Reiner

Brian Rohde

Diana Roscich

Abbie Schrottenboer

Mary Schoenheider

Nicole Snyder

Fern Stasiak

Christa Stojanovic

Vlasta Stribny

Somali Tomczak

Ray Ulrich

Jean Vevers

Myra Zenke

Heather Valderrama

Do you enjoy sharing your love of nature? Or being part of a team in making great things happen?

Consider giving the gift of time – become a Lake Katherine volunteer.

We are looking for enthusiastic, dedicated individuals to join our team of volunteers in a variety of roles:

Citizen Science | Ecological Restoration | Education | Gardening | Guest Relations | Maintenance

Lake Katherine Events

All year round Lake Katherine strives to provide fun and educational special events for Palos Heights and the surrounding communities. Proceeds from events help fund ecological restoration, children's programs and animal care at the park.

Our highlights in 2015 include:

Winterfest: Our annual winter festival attracted 463 paying guests with scores of children aged 3 and under also admitted for free.

St Patrick's Day: The mild weather and an enthusiastic response to the event via social media brought hundreds of spectators to the park as we dyed the waterfall emerald green .

Break For The Lake 5K: Almost 100 runners competed in our 2015 race despite rainy conditions. Overall winner was Jan Myrda, 44, from Palos Park. Jan also cheered on his three children as they finished in first or second place in their age category.

Fishing Classics: Three catch-and-release fishing events raised \$6,359 in 2015.

Monarch Butterfly Festival: Around 3000 festival goers turned out to enjoy Lake Katherine's fall festival in 2015. A new butterfly tent situated in the Buzz 'n' Bloom prairie allowed children and adults to get up close to the much loved Monarch butterfly. Pleasant temperatures and sunshine brought out the crowds to Palos Heights with the festival attracting around 500 more people than the previous year.

Check out this year's schedule of events on the back page.



Education

Each year Lake Katherine's education staff create fun and engaging youth programs that follow Illinois State Learning Standards and coordinate with the principles of *No Child Left Inside*. In 2015:

- 5,000 children participated in educational programs at Lake Katherine.
- The lower level of the Nature Center was repainted and updated to become a Wildlife Discovery Center.
- A variety of homeschool programs were created ready for introduction in 2016.
- Twenty-seven people enrolled in adult education classes such as canoeing and birding.
- A new education tent unveiled at the Monarch Butterfly Festival taught festivalgoers about the habitat of the butterfly and provided tips on how to create a pollinator project.

School Field Trips | Summer Day Camps | Scouting Achievements

Little Explorers | After-School Programs | Homeschool Groups

Discover our 2016 educational programs at www.lakekatherine.org



Ecological Restoration

- In 2015 volunteers and staff continued a habitat pollinator restoration project made possible by a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The project has concentrated on ecologically restoring an area to the west of the lake.
- Volunteers have cleared buckthorn and other woody invasive species and native trees, bushes, prairie and wetland plants have been planted to attract butterflies and other wildlife. Staff and volunteers will be monitoring the site in years to come to see how the biodiversity increases.
- In 2015 approximately 100 native trees, plants and bushes were planted.
- Many of our public programs throughout the year focused on the conservation goal of how to help the declining Monarch Butterfly.
- A team from Trinity Christian College continued to work on Lake Katherine's Eastern trails removing invasive species.



Did you know?

Did you know Lake Katherine Nature Center & Botanic Gardens is a non-profit organization?

Community donations not only help to fund things such as the ground maintenance that ensures Lake Katherine looks beautiful all year round but also children's education programs, animal care and ecological restoration.

DONATE TODAY! You can support Lake Katherine in a variety of ways:

- An individual or family donation via www.lakekatherine.org.
- Market your business to the community through one of the sponsorship packages on our website.
- Honor or memorialize a loved one through the donation of a tree or bench.
- Join the Friends of Lake Katherine (FOLK) through a five year, \$500 annual commitment; Contact Kate Coughlin, development coordinator, at 708-761-3055 for more information about FOLK membership.

FOLK MEMBERS: Thank you to the following Friends of Lake Katherine (FOLK) for your five-year, \$2,500 commitment to Lake Katherine:

Terry Horvath • Barb and Lou Marlin

Recreation

In 2015 scores of walkers, cyclists, runners, dog owners and nature lovers flocked to the Lake Katherine to enjoy recreation:

- Cyclists were keen to try out the new Cal-Sag Bike Trail, which spans the length of the park with the chance to pedal past water, prairie and forest.
- Kayak and canoe rentals gave nature-lovers the opportunity to paddle alongside muskrats, beavers, herons and turtles.
- Walkers were out in force to enjoy the mile loop walk around the lake, the peace and quiet of the eastern trails and the beauty of the herb, butterfly, conifer and waterfall gardens.
- Amateur photographers and artists got creative at the park capturing special moments and memories from the lake. We were thrilled to have some of this creativity shared with us via Lake Katherine's Facebook page!
- The new nature themed play area was an instant hit with children. The area was made possible thanks to the enthusiasm and generosity of the local community who donated \$10,000 to match a \$15,000 KaBOOM! Let's Play Grant and bring the project to life.



Give a green gift this year... Honor a Loved One with a Dedication

Consider creating a lasting tribute in honor or memory of someone you love within the natural beauty of Lake Katherine. Tree and bench dedications are a special way to build a legacy. Each tribute is marked with a personalized plaque and can be dedicated in the location of your choice: the Arboretum, the Children's Forest, or the Northern Shoreline. With an array of options and locations, you can choose the perfect tribute for your loved one that will be visited and cherished for years to come.

Bench dedications range from \$1,000 to \$2,000

Tree/shrub dedications range from \$250 to \$600

The dedication form can be found at www.lakekatherine.org/tree-bench-dedications.cfm. For details, please contact Gareth Blakesley at gareth.blakesley@lakekatherine.org or 708-361-1873.



2015 Honor Roll of Donors

Thank you to the following individuals, corporations and organizations for your generous contributions to LKNCBG.

Grants

IL Clean Energy Community Foundation
Kaboom
Nicor Gas, An AGL Resources Company
Target Corporation

\$1,000.00 or more

Barbara Marlin

\$500.00-\$999.00

Theresa Horvath
MMBS & ASSOCIATES, LTD.
Palos Heights Woman's Club
Gene and Beth Paschall
Peace Village
Skender Foundation
The Private Bank and Trust Company

\$200.00-\$499.00

Chiro One Wellness Centers, Access Physical Therapy
Betty L Anderson
Donald Aulwurm
Harold Berg
Beverly Area Strength and Conditioning LLC
Connor Crotty
Gary DiGarza
Mark Follenweider
S.F. Galaskiewicz Family
John and Jean Gnap

Golden Shoes
Hawking Financial Group
Horton Real Estate, Inc.
Hunt Insurance Group
Robert and Roberta Jankowski
Edward Jones
Frank and Barbara Oswald
Curt S Pazdro
Joe Priori
Republic Services
Jerome Ritz
Anthony and Diana Roscich
Mr. and Mrs. Trzcinski
David Wisniowicz

\$100.00-\$199.00

Frank Arellano
Associates In Professional Counseling
Beverly and Larry Bayless
Donald Bender
William and Lorraine Bonk
Marilyn Breen
John and Sharon Cole
Luke Coppola
Lynn Doyle
Lois Duran
Jeanne Edeer
Carole Engberg
Tim and Anna Evoy
Charles Febel
Robert and Margaret Fuesel
Joseph and Mary-Ann Furlong
Silvana Gentile

Anne Girzadas
John and Suzann Gorham
Dennis Hyker
Mike and Judy Hynek
George and Kathy Jasinski
Aukse Kane
Matt Kolter
James and Eileen Legg
John Lentz
Charles and Marita Librizzi
Nick McDonald
Gary Meyer
Gary and Beverly Meyer
Cornelius and Elizabeth Morgan
Nick's BBQ
Tom Notermann and Carol McDonough
Oak Lawn Garden Club
Charles and Mary Diane O'Brien
Daniel and Kristine O'Reilly
Robert Osterberg
John Paulausky
William Poore
R.L. Hendrickson
Robertas Radzevicius
Rightway Masonry
Betty Riley
Lois and Howell Risinger
Running Excels
Jeff Schiappa
Marian Sinkus
M/R Plumbing Mart, Inc

Timothy Smith and Lynne Taylor
Leonard and Dione Stolarski
Clifford and Anna Sullivan
Robert Sundenmier
Bill and Marilyn Sutley
Jack and Gloria Tolley
Vince Tuminello
Robert Walsh
Helen R Wann
Gary P. Weiler
Bernadine Zarecki
Thomas and Paulette Zarecki
Brian Zelinski

Tree & Bench Dedication

Michael Adaminski, Jr.
Katie Alex
William Allpow
Mrs. Beverly Atseff
Cassandra Brillman
Chiro One Wellness Centers
Kathleen Davey
Friends of Valerie Cunningham
In Memory of Barbara Galazkiewicz
Mr. and Mrs. Walter Guyer
Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton Reichel
Jutta Hayes
High Tech Medical Park
Mrs. Cheryl Hill
Dr. Curt and Diana Horvath
Jeffery Horvath
Paul Horvath

In Memory of Beverly Mahaffay Proffitt
Palos Heights Woman's Club
Patrick Profitt
Karen Seppa
The Spezia Family
Mr. & Mrs. Martin Strubin
James and David Polensky
Mary Woods
Mrs. Lynn Yazbec
Paul Yelton



Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of our records, but we can make mistakes. If you do happen to find an error in your listing, please accept our apologies and contact us with corrections.

What's happening in 2016?

 **25 years of nature!** This year Lake Katherine Nature Center & Botanic Gardens is proud to celebrate its 25th anniversary year.

Much has been achieved since mayor Eugene G Simpson first had the vision to create a nature center in the heart of a neglected wasteland in Palos Heights. To mark this important birthday Lake Katherine will host a special celebration fundraiser on August 13th with a picnic, music and entertainment included.

We'll keep you posted with more news about our 25th anniversary year on our Facebook page and website!

 **Hope for the oak!** In 2016 we will highlight how oak trees provide habitat and shelter for up to 600 species but are currently in decline in northern Illinois.

 **Get social!** Keep up to speed with Lake Katherine Nature Center & Botanic Gardens by following us on *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *Instagram*!

 **All the news!** Find out everything you need to know about Lake Katherine children's programs & events by signing up to our monthly newsletter at www.lakekatherine.org

Our Conservation Goal...

The Chicago region has only 17% of its original oak ecosystems - this has almost halved from 30% in the 1930s.

Not only do oaks shelter up to 600 species, they also store 1,000lbs of carbon dioxide a year from the atmosphere. Our national and state tree is very deserving of our help and attention!

In 2016 we will help Chicago Oak ecosystems by:

- *Planting a variety of oak species*
- *Reducing invasive competition*
- *Providing oak saplings and acorns at the native plant sale*
- *Collecting and planting acorns*
- *Educating about the importance of the oak tree*



Plan your own event for the upcoming year!

Lake Katherine offers both indoor and outdoor settings for ceremonies, parties, showers, meetings, photo shoots and more. Visit our website for seasonal offers if you book for November through to February: www.lakekatherine.org



Please Support Lake Katherine's Mission

The mission of Lake Katherine Nature Center and Botanic Gardens is to connect people with nature.

Proceeds from ***Picnic at the Lake, Lake Katherine's 25th anniversary fundraiser***, will fund the continuing development of our Festival Grounds into an open-air community gathering space used to expand nature programming, and host cultural events and festivals.

Please consider financially supporting Lake Katherine for the upcoming year. Your contribution, at any level, will support the area you choose:

Our **Capital Fund** supports project development and enables us to match grants we apply for.

The **Endowment Fund** maintains our long-term financial sustainability as we move into the future.

The **Operations Fund** enriches our educational programs, grounds restoration, and Nature Center services.

SPECIAL EVENTS – 2016

Spring Fishing Classic	April 9, 2016	7:00 am to 12:00 pm
Wine & Nature Evening	April 20, 2016	6:30 pm to 8:30 pm
Break for the Lake 5K	May 15, 2016	Race starts at 8:00 am
Family Fishing Day	June 4, 2016	8:00 am to 3:00 pm
July 3rd Bash	July 3, 2016	7:00 pm to 10:00 pm
Picnic at the Lake	August 13, 2016	5:00 pm to 10:00 pm
Monarch Butterfly Festival	September 18, 2016	11:00 am to 4:30 pm
Fall Fishing Classic	October 8, 2016	7:00 am to 12:00 pm
Fall Hayride	October 21, 2016	7:00 pm to 9.30pm
Winter Holiday Hayride	December 9, 2016	6.30pm & 7.30pm

Your generosity does not go unnoticed. Thank you so much and we hope to see you in 2016!



Lake Katherine Nature Center & Botanic Gardens

7402 West Lake Katherine Drive, Palos Heights, IL 60463 | ph. 708-361-1873

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

_____ I am pleased to make a tax deductible contribution to Lake Katherine. Enclosed is my check made payable to *Lake Katherine Nature Center and Botanic Gardens*.

\$50 \$100 \$500 \$1,000 Other _____

I would like to support Lake Katherine's:

Capital Fund Endowment Fund
 Operations Fund Where it's most needed

All gifts of \$100 or more will be recognized in our annual report.

Credit card payments are accepted online at www.lakekatherine.org/donate.cfm