

Geneva Park Connections

A Geneva Park District Publication - Fall 2013



NEW! Hawks Hollow



Nature Playground

Engaging children in environmental education through hands-on activities and play!

Hawks Hollow, the newest addition to Peck Farm Park, will welcome children and families alike to go outside and play this fall! This unique play area encourages children to explore, touch, play, and learn.

Environmental learning is disguised as play at Hawks Hollow, encouraging children to use their imagination and experience the smells, textures and wonders of the natural world. Natural elements including sand, water, wood and plants are the focus throughout the park. Additionally, the park's eight learning stations have a bird theme utilizing species from the Midwest and Illinois.

According to research shared by Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation, "Children today average just four to seven minutes outside each day in unstructured play such as climbing trees, building forts, catching bugs or playing tag, yet they spend more than seven hours each day in front of a computer or television screen." The Academy of Pediatricians calls lack of outdoor free-play a "national crisis." **Research shows that direct exposure to nature is essential to healthy childhood development as it decreases stress, increases concentration, inspires creativity, and improves self esteem.** In fact, studies find that children with more nature near their home report lower levels of behavioral conduct disorders, fewer ADHD symptoms, and less anxiety and depression.

the power of play ...

Join us in October for the Hawks Hollow

Grand Opening

Visit www.genevaparks.org for Hawks Hollow Grand Opening details.



The Power of Parks & Recreation

This year, **Geneva was ranked the #1 small town to raise children in Illinois by Bloomberg's Businessweek**. This recognition confirmed something our residents already know— Geneva's community is committed to a better future.

With over 700 acres across 50 parks, and countless other assets in the community, such as Stone Creek Mini Golf, the Butterfly House, Sunset Pool, the historic Peck House, Sunset Community Center, Stephen D. Persinger Recreation Center, Community Gardens at Prairie Green, and the newly acquired Playhouse 38, the Park District and its programs provide real benefits to residents. We believe our assets demonstrate the commitment of our staff, board members, and most importantly, the strong support of our community.

we make it happen ...

Economic Benefits

Studies show parks and open space accelerate housing price appreciation. According to the National Recreation and Park Association, properties less than 600 feet from parks show as much as a **20% increase in tax valuation** when compared to similar houses further away from parks.

From May 1, 2012 through April 30, 2013, Geneva Park District awarded over **\$16,000 in scholarships** providing recreational opportunities to individuals in need. Proceeds from the annual Harvest Hustle 5K as well as a donation from Cadence Health makes these funds available. Additionally, we continue to develop and foster countless partnerships with local businesses and governmental agencies to provide our residents with a multitude of recreational outlets while benefiting local commerce.



For the past two years, the Geneva Park District has demonstrated superior fiscal responsibility in being awarded the **Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting** by the Government Finance Officer's Association of United States and Canada. This award recognizes our efforts to prepare a comprehensive annual financial report that goes above and beyond minimum requirements of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles to be transparent in format and easily communicated to the reader.

Geneva Park District's bond rating was upgraded by Standard & Poor's to AA+. This enhanced rating has assisted in the refinancing of current debt, which has **saved the district over \$700,000 over the past four years and is anticipated to save an additional \$400,000 within the next year.**

Environmental Benefits

Over **700 acres of preserved open space** provide safe habitats for a variety of plants, animals, insects and birds, giving our community the opportunity to see bald eagles, sandhill cranes, milkweed plants, brown bats, and red foxes in their own backyard. Nurturing a life-long connection to nature helps ensure the future of our global environment's health.

Trees and plants have the ability to remove air pollutants and improve air quality, helping our residents avoid the costs associated with air pollution. Annually, our horticulturists at the Wheeler Park Greenhouse raise over **15,000 flowers and plants**, used throughout our parks. The district also planted over 75 trees throughout our parks over the past year. According to the American Forestry Association, one tree provides \$273 in environmental benefits each year, meaning **our 75 newly planted trees saved over \$20,475 this year.**



At this year's Earth Day Celebration at Peck Farm Park, participants recycled four tons of paper. According to the EPA, **four tons of recycled paper saves 28,000 gallons of water, 13.2 cubic yards of landfill space, reduces greenhouse gas emissions by four metric tons of carbon equivalent and reserves enough energy to power the average American home for two years!**

Additionally, through the *Kids Around the World* organization, Geneva Park District donated old playground equipment from Deerpath, Lions, and Fargo Parks to underprivileged areas in Africa as an environmentally responsible way to **provide recreation to communities outside our own.**

Community Benefits

Parks create strong communities. University of Illinois research found residents living near parks are more familiar with their neighbors and express greater feelings of safety and community than residents lacking nearby green spaces. "Social capital," like that provided by parks, is a stronger predictor of perceived quality of life than income or education levels. Communities with high "social capital" are likely to have **higher educational achievement, better-performing governmental institutions, faster economic growth, less crime and violence and improved health conditions.**



We can calculate one aspect of social capital in terms of the amount of time residents donate to their parks. We are so thankful for this year's **300+ volunteers**, who committed countless hours to improve experiences in our parks and recreation programs. A few notable volunteer groups include the Geneva and Batavia High School Key Clubs, Geneva Park District Foundation, Boy Scout Troop #37, and City of Geneva Natural Resource Committee.

Additionally, parks and recreation jobs provide valuable work experience to bright and talented individuals as they continue to explore professional careers. Of our part-time and seasonal staff, many are local teenagers and young adults. Geneva Park District employs **approximately 39 full-time, 150 part-time and 250 seasonal employees.**

Parks offer opportunities for people of all ages to communicate, compete, interact, learn and grow. Research by Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation shows students who participate in at least one hour of extracurricular activities per week are 49% less likely to use drugs and 37% less likely to become teen parents. Our recreational programs enroll over **1,700 toddlers, youth and teens** per year, greatly impacting our children's futures.

athletics, cultural arts and more!

With the addition of **new cultural arts programs at Playhouse 38**, we can further increase our impact upon the academic and social development of local children, teens and adults. Cultural arts programs stimulate and develop imagination and critical thinking while refining cognitive and creative skills. Cultural arts also nurture important values including team-building skills, respect for alternative viewpoints, and an appreciation for different cultures and traditions. Whether behind the scenes or on stage, children learn a sense of discipline, craftsmanship and goal setting as they diligently rehearse scenes for a big performance.

According to Americans for the Arts, **young people who participate in the arts for at least three hours on three days each week through at least one year are four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement.** Additionally, the impact of Adult Community Theatre brings business to the area, enriching the lives of those who participate while providing the community with "social capital".

Health Benefits

According to the National Recreation and Park Association's 2010 research report, **the prevalence of depression was 33% less in neighborhoods with the most green space** compared to those with the least green space. Annually, our fitness classes attract over 3,500 participants who reduce stress while burning calories.

Additionally, those residing near parks and open spaces are approximately two to three times more likely to take a walk than those without parks near their homes. Simply walking 10,000 steps per day is shown to **reduce the incidence of heart disease, lower high blood pressure and decrease symptoms of depression.** In our 2013 Mile Club program, we have tracked over **83,000 miles** thus far and we will keep adding miles through December.




The health benefits provided by parks and recreation also hold an economic value. By promoting physical activity, parks are one of the most effective ways to control the approximately \$147 billion direct and indirect costs of the obesity epidemic. One study showed children living within a half mile of a park or playground are five times more likely to be a healthy weight. Research shows that adults who exercise moderately in parks experience an average of **\$351 in healthcare savings each year.** In our fitness facilities over 4,800 members stay active in the pursuit of healthy lifestyles, saving a total of nearly \$1.7 million dollars each year. If you include the 200,000 visitors to Peck Farm Park and the Fox River Trail, **Geneva Parks create \$71.8 million in health care savings each year!**

In Geneva, the impact of Parks and Recreation is powerful. Let's continue to make Geneva the #1 small town in Bloomberg's Businessweek year after year! Take advantage of the parks, facilities and open space within Geneva and **get outside to play!**



Geneva
PARK DISTRICT

710 Western Avenue
Geneva IL 60134

Follow us on:  

Introducing ... **Playhouse 38**

Playhouse 38 provides endless cultural arts opportunities for youth, teens, and adults both on-stage and behind the scenes. Some of the class offerings include singing, acting, improv comedy, live theatre, stage make-up, productions and more.

Playhouse 38 is located in the heart of downtown Geneva at 524 W. State Street, Lower Level, Suite I. For more information, call (630) 232-4542 or visit genevaparks.org.



IT'S SHOWTIME! **Two Exciting Productions this Fall!**

"Comic Book Artist"

Ages 8-18

Auditions:

Friday, September 13 from 6:00 - 8:30 pm
Saturday, September 14 from 9:00 am - Noon

Show Times:

Friday, November 8 at 7:30 pm
Saturday, November 9 at 2:00 and 7:30 pm
Sunday, November 10 at 2:00 pm



"It's A Wonderful Life - A Live Radio Play"

Ages 16+

Auditions:

Thursday, November 7 from 6:00 - 8:30 pm
Saturday, November 9 from 9:00 am - Noon

Show Times:

Friday, December 13 at 7:00 pm
Saturday, December 14 at 2:00 and 7:30 pm
Friday, December 20 at 7:00 pm
Saturday, December 21 at 2:00 and 7:00 pm

Call (630) 232-4542 to schedule your audition time slot.

You are invited to the
Playhouse 38 *Grand Opening*
December 6 from 6:00 - 8:00 pm



Meet our talented instructors, explore the theatre space, enjoy refreshments and learn about upcoming productions

Playhouse 38 is sponsored by: Fagans Graphic Design & Printing Services