

For Immediate Release
April 15, 2008

Innovative Public-Private Collaboration Creates Community Investment Opportunity

What does the Cook County Forest Preserve District, the Oak Park Tennis Center and the Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation have in common? Community Investment!

The Oak Park Tennis Center was recently notified that the Cook County Board of Commissioners approved a designated fund agreement between the Oak Park Tennis Center and the Oak Park- River Forest Community Foundation for the purpose of raising charitable contributions toward the replacement of nine clay Har-Tru courts at the Forest Preserve tennis facility located at 544 N. Harlem Avenue, River Forest. In 2007, the Cook County Board of Commissioners granted a ten year lease, with a 10 yr renewal option to the Oak Park Tennis Center to manage, maintain, and operate the tennis facility for the benefit of the public.

According to Cook County Commissioner Peter N. Silvestri, "The tennis facility is a recreational gem that serves a multi-generational and multi-cultural mix of residents. The private-public cooperative between Cook County Forest Preserve District and private donors is the key variable to making this upgrade happen."

How it started...

Residents of Cook County have enjoyed the recreational benefits of this facility for the past 80 years. The Oak Park Tennis Center identified the need for renovation to the nine courts due to serious drainage and irrigation problems. In order to correct the drainage and irrigation issues, OPTC researched and assessed the renovation costs to be estimated at \$325,000.

"A Good Heart, Work Smart Foundation donor came to us with a proposal to collaborate," said Sophia Lloyd, Executive Director of the Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation. The OPRF Community Foundation's mission is to align the concerns, interests and passions of its donors with the needs of our community. It's a successful formula that provides a vehicle in which philanthropic individuals can invest in the long term sustainability of our communities. Sophia Lloyd, Executive Director of the foundation is very pleased with the collaboration. "Folks want good things to happen in their community. Our job is to connect donors with worthy organizations and community investment opportunities."

The court renovation project is scheduled for the fall of 2008. Between now and then, the Oak Park Tennis Center will be hosting various fund raising events. In addition, the OPRF Community Foundation has begun receiving donations in this designated fund. Jayson Strode, Oak Park Tennis Center Board President is both excited and grateful for the partnership. "Mary Jo Schuler's efforts coupled with the OPRF Foundation opens the door for individuals and businesses to provide charitable donations toward this objective. As a result of this collaboration, the Oak Park Tennis Center is positioned for the next 30 years to be a centerpiece of public tennis excellence in the Western Suburban area. We are truly indebted".

The Oak Park Tennis Center is accepting membership applications for the '08 season and guests are welcome to pay a daily user fee. Weather permitting; the facility is scheduled to open on May 3rd. For more information contact OPTC @ 708-366-9652 or www.oakparktennis.com. Tax deductible charitable donations can be forwarded to the Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation at 1049 Lake Street, Suite 204, Oak Park, IL 60301.