

Skyline

37th Year

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Lincoln Park group seeks funds to renovate Adams Park



The Adams Park Advisory Council is trying to raise enough money to restore and renovate the park, above, 1919 N. Seminary Ave. in Lincoln Park. (Photo courtesy of Chicago Park District)

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Correspondent

Amy Boyle has been taking her children to Adams Park almost every day for the last eight years. In that time, she has not noticed any major improvements at the park, even though the playground equipment is splintering and cracked and an unsupported slide, she says, is dangerous for the kids.

"Without a back yard of our

own, the park has become our back yard," Boyle says. "As a mom, it's about safety for my children, as well as for all the other kids."

For the past two years, Boyle and a group of 10-15 local volunteers on the Adams Park Advisory Council have been raising money to restore and renovate the park, located in Lincoln Park at 1919 N. Seminary Ave.

As envisioned, the renovations

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would cost an estimated \$600,000, Boyle says, which they need to raise by the end of the year for scheduling. The council hopes to have the renovations completed by late spring 2005.

To date, the group has raised \$130,000, and the Chicago Park District has pledged to provide matching funds of up to \$200,000, according to Maureen Belling, director of Adams Park. If the group doesn't reach \$200,000, Ald. Ted Matak (32nd) has pledged to donate enough money to make up the difference.

At this level, the matching funds would bring the total to \$400,000.

This would mean the community would still have to raise another \$200,000 to reach the full \$600,000.

"Everyone seems to come to it (the park)," Boyle says, "and the neighborhood seems to have a lot of money. But we haven't hit our goal as quickly as we'd anticipated."

Adams Park was established in 1902 on the property of Congressman George Adams. The Chicago Park District acquired it from the city in 1959 and turned it into a site not only for recreation, but for summer camps and classes. The two-thirds-acre piece of land includes playground equipment, a shelter house, a sand court and a playing field. In 1997, the Park District installed an interactive children's water feature on the park grounds. The playground

equipment, however, has not been updated for nearly 20 years.

"The park hasn't been renovated in 18 years," says Debbie Yapp, president of the Adams Park Advisory Council. "It has a lot of equipment that is old and not really working. The bouncy things, for instance, don't bounce."

Among the improvements the Advisory Council hopes to make are new playground equipment and rubber surfacing on which to build it. The playground is currently landscaped with wood chips, which Yapp says splinter and pose a hazard for children who may swallow them or fall down on them.

"It's not unsafe, but there is safer equipment out there," Yapp says. She indicates that once the aging equipment did become dangerous, the Park District would simply remove it, not replace it.

The council has received generous support from the community, including donations from the RANCH Triangle Community Conservation Association, which advocates for the improvement of life within the borders of Racine, Armitage, and North avenues, the Chicago River and Halsted Street.

"I don't think that people realize it's the community that takes care of the park. They just assume our tax dollars take care of it," Yapp says. "They don't, is the bottom line. If the community doesn't renovate the park, no one will."

The community can contribute to the park's restoration by purchasing bricks or raffle tickets. Donations may be sent to the Adams Park Advisory Council at 1919 N. Seminary Ave., Chicago, IL 60614. For more information, call the park at (312) 742-7787.