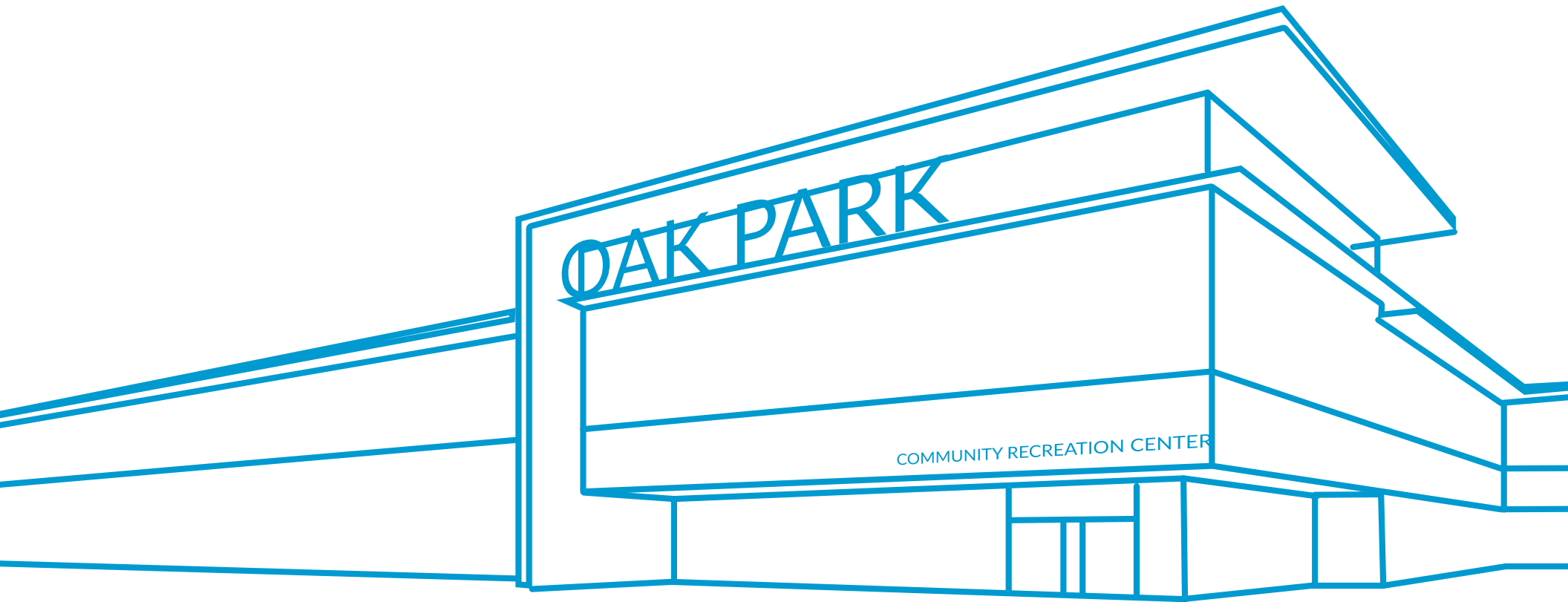




# A PLACE TO BELONG

**SUPPORT FOR AN OAK PARK COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER**





# A VISION FOR INCLUSION AND EQUITY

Oak Park is a place for all to feel welcome: to be safe, to be healthy, and to feel a sense of belonging.

Many decades ago, the Village took action to embrace equity for all and establish our community values of strength in diversity. Ever since then, Oak Park has been committed to its inclusive mission.

Today, the challenge of achieving inclusivity and equity continues. Our diverse collection of families presents different recreation and fitness needs, and although Oak Park enjoys many park district services and amenities—including two outdoor pools, parks, an indoor ice rink, a gymnastics center, tennis courts and nearly 3,000 programs—local residents lack access to a gymnasium, fitness facility, indoor walking track, or a multi-generational community center that serves families and individuals including our growing senior population.

The best way to serve children is by serving families. In Oak Park, studies show that the demand for affordable after-school enrichment programming far exceeds the supply. Further, many seniors seek places to socialize and stay active. We believe this void is intensifying and it impairs our community's ability to achieve inclusivity and equity. In accordance with Oak Park's tradition of trailblazing social progress, a leadership collective of caring people is engaged in an action agenda to make a positive impact in the long-term health and vibrancy of our community.

The Parks Foundation of Oak Park, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization working closely with the Park District of Oak Park, is striving to meet the diverse needs of residents of all ages, abilities, backgrounds, and economic status by constructing a Community Recreation Center that appeals to all demographics. The Parks Foundation believes that a Community Recreation Center will be an engine for social equality and make a significant contribution to the health and wellness of our community.

# OUR COMMUNITY NEEDS

- A safe place for youth of all ages to go immediately after school
- A year-round, indoor walking track that Oak Park residents of all ages can access at no cost
- A place for Oak Park youth to access mental health services and creative social-emotional programming
- Group classes and fitness opportunities for individuals and families
- A place for teen programming on weekends and evenings
- A place to bring our community together and make connections to build and strengthen community bonds



# MORE THAN A SPACE

The growth and development of residents results from a synchronized blend of community-based opportunities to engage in activities and learning. Community-based experiences build social connections among residents and help youth weave a sense of identity and belonging. Consequently, recreation and fitness are important sources of social capital that generate returns for generations. The Park District of Oak Park seeks to serve the recreational needs of more than 52,000 residents, yet it doesn't have the gymnasium space for many health and sports activities or community gatherings that our community needs and desires.

Because all residents can benefit from access to affordable recreation and fitness opportunities, the Parks Foundation of Oak Park aspires to offer options for a fitness center, indoor track, childcare, and community programming space.

## **COMMUNITIES BENEFIT FROM RECREATION CENTERS**

Studies show that having a Community Recreation Center fosters a cohesive sense of community and provides a space for friends, neighbors and family to connect and build multi-generational ties. In a nationally published paper, "The Benefits of a Recreation Centre," Mario Pistone of Parkin Architects Ltd. shares that: "(By building) a great recreation center, a community is building a crèche for tomorrow's leaders. Through inclusion and shared successes, sports venues harness the unifying power of play, which can dissolve perceived differences based on gender, physical ability, sexual orientation, religion and culture. Facilities that foster community programs build leadership skills. Team and group-based activities develop participation and social cohesion. They also build skills for community dialogue."

**FACILITIES THAT  
FOSTER  
COMMUNITY  
PROGRAMS BUILD  
LEADERSHIP SKILLS.**

A COMMUNITY  
RECREATION  
CENTER OFFERS  
SOMETHING FOR  
EVERYONE

- A safe, supervised public space for youth
- Group classes and opportunities for infants and parents
- Sports leagues for all age groups
- Programming and accommodations for individuals with developmental and physical disabilities
- Engaging, low-impact activities for senior citizens

# ANSWERING THE COMMUNITY CALL

## THE VOICE OF OAK PARK

In 2016, a feasibility study was conducted in partnership with six Oak Park government entities (Village, D97, D200, Library, Township, and the Park District) which definitively demonstrated that residents want a community recreation center in Oak Park.

Since 2010, survey results in the Oak Park community have consistently shown that the top five facility requests are:

- An indoor walking/running track
- Indoor gymnasium space
- Fitness facilities
- Indoor Pool
- Arts facilities

## OUR VULNERABLE COMMUNITY

In addition, the Oak Park Township Mental Health Board has repeatedly heard youth expressing a need for non-traditional locations to seek mental health services discreetly and without stigma.

Our ice rink and gymnastics team programs can require a high level of investment in equipment and/or training, which can act as a deterrent to lower-income families.

We're working to make sure that every Oak Park resident can access recreational enrichment opportunities to nurture their mind, body, and spirit through scholarship funding. The Community Recreation Center will offer amenities such as a walking track and basketball court which do not require specialized training or equipment.

**WE'RE WORKING  
TO MAKE SURE  
THAT EVERY OAK  
PARK RESIDENT  
CAN NURTURE  
THEIR MIND, BODY,  
AND SPIRIT.**











# BUILT BY OUR COMMUNITY, NOT A TAX INCREASE

## **BY US, FOR US**

The call for a Community Recreation Center is driven by members of our community, answering a long term request to fill a community need. The Parks Foundation of Oak Park is committed to primarily funding this project with grants and charitable donations. In addition, the operating costs of the facility will be funded by user fees. The Capital Campaign is spearheaded by a group of local residents, donors and volunteers committed to the achievement of this bold, transformative project.

The Park District of Oak Park has spent the last five years expanding program offerings, but only 32 percent of Oak Park households participate in District programs. Through multiple surveys, residents have repeatedly expressed a desire for basketball courts, an indoor walking track, and a fitness center. The Parks Foundation believes if we answer the call for these facility needs, more residents will engage in the many programs and opportunities offered by the Park District.

## **FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Many Oak Park residents are feeling financial pressure from increasing property taxes. The Parks Foundation of Oak Park and the Park District are listening to these community concerns, and are committed to using existing resources in conjunction with a Capital Campaign to build a much-needed Community Recreation Center.

## **HELPING LOCAL ECONOMIES FLOURISH**

The Community Recreation Center will be located on Madison Avenue east of Ridgeland Avenue. The one-acre property site, which was donated to the Parks Foundation, will serve as an anchor to an area of Oak Park that can benefit from revitalization. The neighborhood includes many apartment dwellers for whom the Park District has identified service gaps in our program offerings. In addition, the Community Recreation Center will be located within 1.2 miles of both public middle schools. By bringing residents and program participants to the Center, we will encourage increased use of local businesses, attract new businesses, and have a positive impact on the local economy.

# A PLACE FOR EVERYONE

In Oak Park, many residents have difficulty accessing or using our current programming, because our limited facilities inhibit the delivery of programs and accommodations that connect with their needs. A thoughtfully planned Community Recreation Center will expand our multigenerational audience of users and make a meaningful difference in their lives.

## **AFTER-SCHOOL NEEDS**

According to Little, Wimer, and Weiss from the Harvard Family Research Project, after-school programs make a significant impact on children's lives. Their decade-long research and evaluation studies confirm that positive after-school activities provide academic support, improve social skills, create a sense of belonging, build confidence, provide safety and supervision during at-risk hours, and encourage youth to spend their energies in healthy, productive ways.

Studies indicate that juvenile criminal rates can decrease by up to 25 percent when a community has a recreation center for youth. Oak Park currently has limited safe supervised spaces for youth to congregate and engage, which research shows is associated with experimentation of drugs and alcohol. The Community Recreation Center can help address these challenges by providing spaces and programs that engage youth in positive peer networks under the supervision of caring, mentoring adults who volunteer or work as Park District staff.

## **FAMILY FITNESS**

The Community Recreation Center can help entire families improve their health and fitness. Our residents have diverse individual needs, and facilities such as an indoor walking track and a full-service fitness center can serve a broad range of abilities and experience.

## **AFTER-RETIREMENT NEEDS**

On the other side of the age spectrum, the over-60 population continues to grow in Oak Park. Our active residents seek daytime recreational opportunities, such as an indoor walking track and gymnasium space for fitness activities and the increasingly popular sport of "pickleball."

Retirees often find themselves struggling with social isolation and an increasingly sedentary lifestyle. The senior population requires and deserves opportunities to engage their minds, form new social connections, and keep physically active in healthy, age-appropriate activities.



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# COMMUNITY NEEDS

The need to provide affordable adult fitness opportunities as well as additional space to support team and individual sport endeavors is very real in our community.

Additionally, making community connections at all ages is critical. A Community Recreation Center is an open and inviting public facility that allows for these community connections to be made through an organic process. The amenities of the Community Recreation Center are not duplicated in our parks system. This much-needed facility will allow our Park District to extend services to Oak Park's diverse population, reach underserved residents and help strengthen our community bonds.

**THIS MUCH-NEEDED FACILITY WILL  
ALLOW OUR PARK DISTRICT TO EXTEND  
SERVICES TO OAK PARK'S DIVERSE  
POPULATION, REACH UNDERSERVED  
RESIDENTS AND HELP STRENGTHEN OUR  
COMMUNITY BONDS.**



# Community Recreation Center



Located on Madison Street between Harvey and Highland























# COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER CAMPAIGN MEMBER BIOS

## Campaign Co-Chairs



**Mary Jo Schuler, Ph.D.**, a life-long resident of Oak Park, is a philanthropic leader, businesswoman and mother dedicated to making a difference in her hometown community.

As a former board member of the Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation, she has been engaged as a "hands on" philanthropist helping to elevate the impact and leveraging of endowment funds and public resources on the long-term health and vibrancy of the community.

Schuler also serves on the Communityworks Advisory Board and is a member of Women Leaders in Philanthropy, a group dedicated to supporting the charitable causes of the Foundation through enhancing philanthropy, networking and pathways for the next generation of women leaders.

She and her husband practice what they call "impact philanthropy". They are driven to invest their philanthropic dollars in a manner that positively impacts the delivery of services and the advancement of organizations and people.



**David Ansell, MD, MPH** is the Michael E Kelly Presidential Professor of Internal Medicine and Senior Vice President/Associate Provost for Community Health Equity at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago.

He is a 1978 graduate of SUNY Upstate Medical College. He did his medical training at Cook County Hospital in Chicago. He spent 13 years at Cook County as an attending physician and ultimately was appointed Chief of the Division of General Internal Medicine at Cook County Hospital.

From 1995 to 2005 he was Chairman of Internal Medicine at Mount Sinai Chicago. He was recruited to Rush University Medical Center as its inaugural Chief Medical Officer in 2005, a position he held until 2015.

His research and advocacy has been focused on eliminating health inequities. In 2011 he published a memoir of his times at County Hospital, *County: Life, Death and Politics at Chicago's Public Hospital*. His latest book is *The Death Gap: How Inequality Kills* was published in 2017.



## Oak Park Community Recreation Center

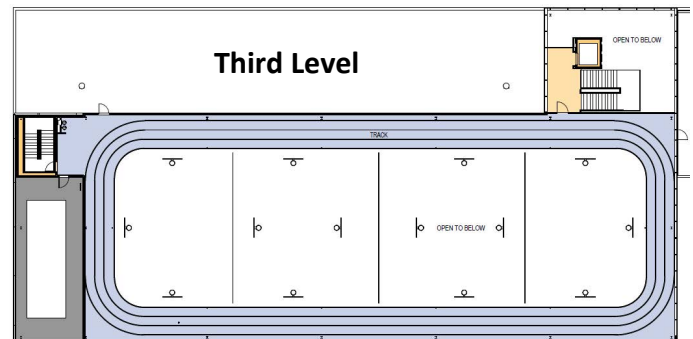
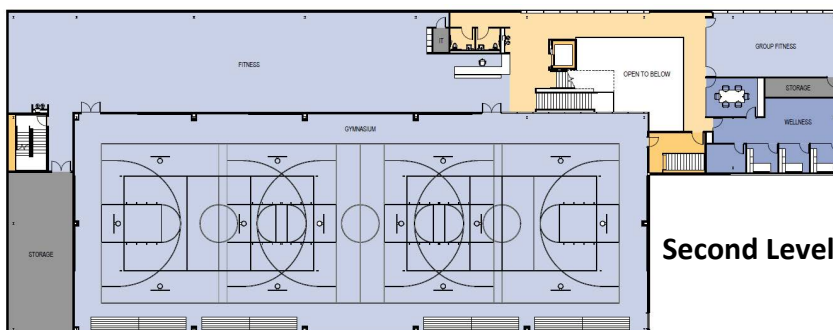
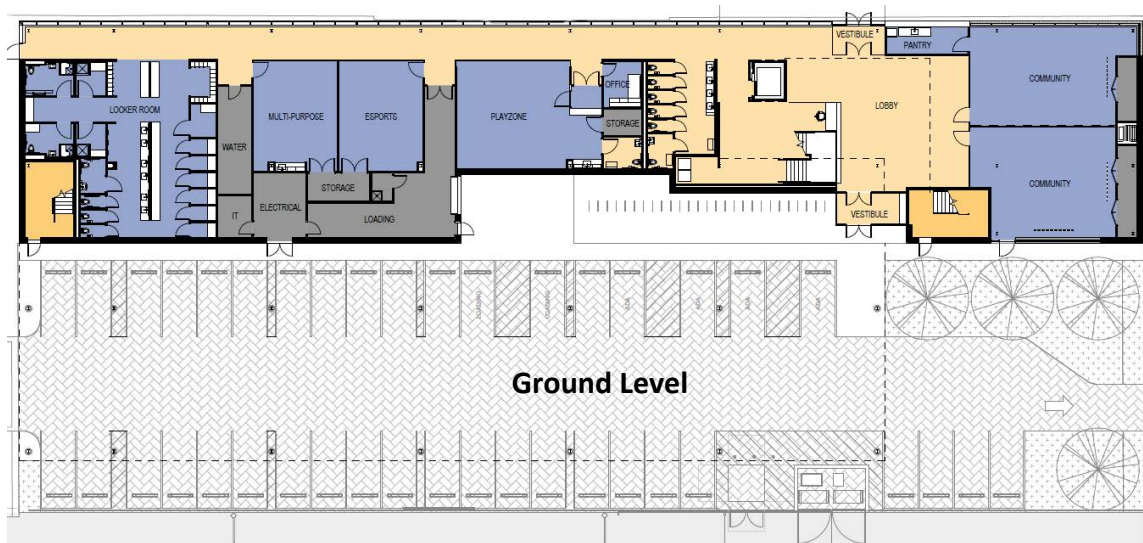
### How We Got Here

2013	The Park District continued to hear feedback at community meetings regarding the need for indoor facilities.
2014	The Park District of Oak Park (PDOP) conducted its 10-year Comprehensive Master Plan that included collecting community input through surveys, focus groups and community meetings. The full report is available on the PDOP.org website. It was recommended the Park District conduct a feasibility study to determine if the community would support the construction of a Community Recreation Center (CRC) and identified the facilities to include to meet our resident's needs.
2015	The Parks Foundation of Oak Park revamped their mission to include major projects to benefit the community.
2016	<p>PDOP collaborated with the other five taxing bodies to select a consulting firm to conduct a feasibility study for a Community Recreation Center. One elected official and one staff member from each of the six taxing bodies participated in the six-month feasibility study to evaluate need. Throughout the study, key stakeholders and community partners met monthly to survey and assess the participation and benefits of a Community Recreation Center.</p> <p>At the end of the study, it was determined that a Community Recreation Center was a needed and desirable community asset and it was feasible to build and sustain.</p>
2017	PDOP, D200 and River Forest Park District (RFPD) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to explore possible options and configurations for a shared CRC. The RFPD decided to pursue the development of their existing recreation center and D200 chose to conclude their capital project process "Imagine" before furthering a partnership agreement.
2018	The Park District continued conversations with D200 while they were actively involved in their "Imagine" process. Additionally, the Park District engaged in a Memorandum of Understanding with the Community Mental Health Board of Oak Park Township (CMHB) to provide office space for resources and services in the CRC, which was requested by the OPRFHS students during the feasibility study.
2019	<p>Park District conducted the scheduled 5-year community survey to solicit input about facilities and program offerings. Once again, the residents confirmed the need for an indoor track, gymnasium, affordable fitness facilities and indoor aquatics.</p> <p>The Parks Foundation approached the Park District regarding the need for a Community Recreation Center and offered to lead a Capital Campaign to assemble funds to help pay for this need in the community.</p>



For more information visit [ParksFoundationOP.org](https://ParksFoundationOP.org)

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Features/Programs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Indoor walking/running track</li> <li>● 2 full courts for basketball, pickleball, volleyball and more</li> <li>● Fitness center and classes</li> <li>● Child watch/Playzone</li> <li>● Free after school space for D97 and D200 students including homework space</li> <li>● E-sports room</li> <li>● Community meeting space</li> <li>● Onsite parking</li> <li>● Intergenerational programming</li> <li>● Indoor lap swim, warm water therapy and aquatic recreation (Phase 2)</li> <li>● Social/Gathering space &amp; party room</li> <li>● Wellness/Resource Offices (OPMHB)</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Cost</b></p> <p><b>Capital:</b></p> <p><i>Phase 1 - \$18.5M</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gym</li> <li>● Track</li> <li>● Fitness</li> <li>● Community Space</li> <li>● Parking</li> </ul> <p><i>Phase 2 - \$5-10M</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Aquatic Center</li> </ul> <p><b>Operating Budget:</b> \$715,000 Annually</p> <p><b>New Tax Increase:</b> \$0</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Operations supported through membership and program fees</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Parks Foundation of Oak Park</li> <li>● Oak Park Mental Health Board (OPMHB)</li> <li>● Good Heart Work Smart Foundation</li> <li>● State of Illinois</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Location</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Madison Street <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Harvey to west of Highland</li> <li>○ Municipal Hub area</li> </ul> </li> </ul>





## A PLACE TO BELONG

SUPPORT FOR AN OAK PARK COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER

# Build Without Raising Taxes

**Community makes a difference. Foundations, corporations, businesses and individuals will be recognized for their support.**

### Naming Opportunities

Facility Name	\$ 5,000,000
Aquatics Center	\$ 5,000,000
Gymnasium	\$ 2,000,000
Fitness Center	\$ 1,000,000
Walking/Running Track	\$ 500,000
Community or Multi-Purpose Room	\$ 500,000
Lobby or E-Sports Room	\$ 500,000
Play Zone/Child Watch	\$ 500,000

### Donor Recognition

Park Partners	\$1,000,000 and up
Park Growers	\$500,000 - \$999,999
Park Stewards	\$100,000 - \$499,999
Park Supporters	\$50,000 - \$99,999
Park Enthusiasts	\$10,000 - \$49,999
Park Friends	\$9,999 - \$5,000



# A PLACE TO BELONG

SUPPORT FOR AN OAK PARK COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER

Make a Difference: Join the Team

## Campaign Gift / Pledge Letter of Intent

☐ It is my/our intention to make a **pledge contribution** to the Parks Foundation of Oak Park Campaign to support an Oak Park Community Recreation Center with a gift in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_; payable over the next (circle one) **One Year** **Two Years** **Three Years** **Four Years**; with installments payable each (circle one) **Year** **Quarter** **Month**. It is my/our intention to make the first payment beginning (date) \_\_\_\_\_, 20 \_\_\_\_.

☐ In lieu of pledge installments, it is my/our intention to make a **one-time contribution** to the Parks Foundation of Oak Park Campaign to support an Oak Park Community Recreation Center with a gift in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_, with payment made by (date) \_\_\_\_\_, 20 \_\_\_\_.

I/We understand that this letter of intent is not a legal obligation. However, it is my/our intention to complete the gift unless unforeseen circumstance render payment a hardship on me or my/our family. I/We understand that our contribution will be used for Capital Expense of the Community Recreation Center.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I/Wish to remain anonymous \_\_\_\_\_ I/We wish to have my/our name(s) listed among the campaign donors

**PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:** PARKS FOUNDATION OF OAK PARK (501c3), 218 W. MADISON STREET, OAK PARK, IL 60302



**PARKS FOUNDATION**  
of OAK PARK

**A PLACE TO BELONG CAMPAIGN**  
**[PARKSFOUNDATIONOP.ORG](http://PARKSFOUNDATIONOP.ORG)**