



## **2019 Year-End Report**

In 2019, Canal Shores celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of providing recreational opportunities and open green space for all. At this important milestone, despite challenges, Canal Shores made strong progress in its four pillars of **golf, youth development, ecology and community**. An entirely self-supporting 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, Canal Shores receives no public funds or taxpayer support and relies on revenue from golf, events, and private fundraising to operate and maintain the green space.

### **Golf and Youth Development**

Canal Shores is a local historical gem. Designed by noted golf architect Tom Bendelow, it is a distinctive community golf course near the CTA train line, crossing five streets and straddling the North Shore Channel. In 2019, almost 12,000 rounds were played by golfers of all ages, skill levels and backgrounds. Canal Shores is one of the least expensive golf courses in Chicagoland, which is part of its mission to make golf affordable and accessible for all.

Volunteers and staff worked hard to improve playability via new bunkers and improved greens. With options of 5 and 10-hole loops designed for fast, fun and flexible play, we attracted new golfers including Millennials and Generation Z consumers. This was reflected in positive social media postings and increased daily round play in 2019 that reversed previous year declines.

In 2019, Canal Shores significantly increased its commitment to junior golf, particularly for underserved youth. Canal Shores played host to two new youth golf scholarship programs. One scholarship program focused on introducing golf to 18 underserved minority youth. Another scholarship program provided free week-long golf summer camps to 50 financially limited income youth. Both programs not only introduced the game of golf with its accompanying health and social benefits, they also taught kids the importance of the life skills of discipline, integrity, and good sportsmanship. Canal Shores looks forward to continuing these scholarship programs to help underserved youths.



Canal Shores junior golf camps had over 600 participants ages 5-14, the most participants ever. Canal Shores prides itself on providing an ideal setting for young golfers learning the sport or taking their skills to the next level.



In addition, Canal Shores played host to noted golf writer Tom Coyne featuring Joel Murray of the Murray brothers [The Links Life at Canal Shores](#). Joel also hosted his third annual fundraiser for first responders at Canal Shores. Canal Shores shined in the golf spotlight provided by noted golf podcaster [Erik Anders Lang](#). Community golf is “on trend” due to its accessibility for all and speed of play, and Canal Shores is being recognized nationally as leading the charge to attract a new generation of golfers.

## Ecology

Our commitment to the environment remains as important as ever. Canal Shores continued to make strides in implementing its 2017 Ecological Restoration Master Plan. This plan identified native and valuable trees in an effort to protect and enhance the ecology of the 82 acres that Canal Shores maintains. Canal Shores' stewardship involved planting native plants, removing invasive species and creating a native-plant garden to enhance the habitat for pollinators. This was achieved through the hard work and dedication of numerous community volunteers.



Improvements in connection with this plan have resulted in an award from the Friends Of The Chicago River, certification by the National Wildlife Federation as a wildlife habitat, and accreditation as an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf.

In 2019, Canal Shores' service grant from the National Park Service was renewed. This grant is helping Canal Shores implement its ecological restoration plan by identifying opportunities and priorities.

This year, Canal Shores conducted its first modern birding survey and report. This report was the result of numerous hours put in by community volunteers to record the use of Canal Shores by migratory and other birds. The survey revealed an impressive 161 species of birds using Canal Shores' habitat. [The report can be viewed here.](#)

In September 2019, Canal Shores received another Community Spaces grant from the Union-Pacific Foundation to further implement our Master Ecological Plan. Also in 2019, Canal Shores finalized plans to restore the 5<sup>th</sup> hole habitat on the course using a community grant from Walmart. This restoration is expected to take place in spring of 2020. In sum, Canal



Shores continues to make important progress in making its habitat ecologically significant to people, animals, birds, and vegetation.

## **Community**

Canal Shores continues to be an example of inclusivity, welcoming everyone to enjoy its green space. Its Pro Shop is located below the American Legion Post 42 of Evanston, which along with Canal Shores, celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019 and coordinated to host events for veterans and community members.

Canal Shores was a site for the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Out Of SPACE concert series. Hosted by the City of Evanston, the 2019 edition of this concert series featured Jeff Tweedy, Bruce Hornsby & the Noisemakers, Cake, Mandolin Orange, and I'm With Her. Over 12,000 concert-goers attended this four-night event and enjoyed the communal green space under the stars.



Canal Shores continued to be a community hub enjoyed by dog walkers, joggers, birders, and cross-country teams and skiers. As one of the largest open green spaces around, it provides outdoor recreation opportunities for persons from over 20 communities.

Canal Shores was again the beneficiary of thousands of volunteer hours by innumerable members of the local communities, including Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts.

The Evanston Community Foundation recently awarded Canal Shores a \$15,000 grant to further develop its organizational structure and strategic plan. These plans are essential in bolstering Canal Shores' ability to meet the challenges of running an 82-acre open green space with no taxpayer funding.

As we enter into our 101st year, we thank you for your support and interest in [Canal Shores](#).

Sincerely,

Karl Leinberger  
President