



Golf • Youth Development • Ecology • Community

2020 YEAR-END REPORT

In 2020, Canal Shores focused on providing a safe and socially-distanced environment for our staff, golfers and volunteers. Thanks to our team, Canal Shores navigated one of the most challenging years in our history. It was gratifying to see so many golfers discovering Canal Shores for the first time and community members using our open green space for a variety of other recreational purposes.



As Canal Shores turned the corner on our 100th anniversary, we completed a strategic plan to implement our values and dedicate ourselves to our four pillars: golf, youth development, ecology, and community. Using input from our stakeholders, we formed the blueprint for taking the next steps as an organization.



Canal Shores made other strides as well. We completed our first year as a recipient of the prestigious Evanston Community Foundation’s Root2Fruit grant, which helps non-profits enhance their organizational effectiveness. As a statement of our values, we adopted a diversity and inclusivity policy. We created our first operating reserve fund in modern history. We also continued to add best practices and policies to our management and operation.

Golf & Recreation

Canal Shores continued to be recognized nationally as leading the charge to attract a new generation of golfers. We pride ourselves on being a distinctive community golf course at a time when community golf is becoming increasingly popular for its accessibility for all and speed of play. Because Canal Shores is a local historical gem, it was [featured on NBC Ch. 5, when golf was allowed to open back up.](#)



In 2020, over 20,000 rounds were played at Canal Shores by golfers of all ages, skill levels and backgrounds. We had golfers from 290 different zip codes--not only from all over the Chicagoland area, but a wide variety of places around the country. In addition to being a destination, Canal Shores remained one of the least expensive golf courses in Chicagoland, helping fulfill its mission to make golf affordable and accessible for all. We also revised the handicaps for our course.



Youth Development

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, Canal Shores was able to continue to host youth golf clinics in 2020. We had over 400 youths ages 5 – 14 participate. Canal Shores remains an ideal setting for young golfers whether they are learning the sport or advancing their skills to the next level.



We continued the Thomas Haller scholarship program for minority youth. As with our clinics, our scholarship programs teach kids the importance of discipline, hard work, integrity, and good sportsmanship. Canal Shores looks forward in 2021 to expanding its scholarship programs to include even more underserved youth.

Ecology

Once again, Canal Shores benefitted from a tremendous volunteer effort in removing invasive species, restoring native vegetation, and maintaining the banks of the North Shore Channel. We had hundreds of volunteers help with a variety of ecological projects. One of those projects was a walking trail by a portion of the canal created by an Evanston Boy Scout troop.



In cooperation with the National Park Service Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program, we adopted an action plan for implementing our master ecology plan. We created a standing Ecology Committee to lead our ecological efforts going forward, including implementing our master ecological plan. We also held a variety of controlled burns to get rid of invasives and brush, which allows rejuvenation of the canal banks.



We were recertified by Audubon International as an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary, which is a designation held by only 7% of golf courses around the country. As part of our commitment to ecology and nature, Canal Shores continued to offer tours for birding enthusiasts. Canal Shores relocated native vegetation near the Central Street bridge to prevent its loss in connection with the bridge reconstruction project. We also updated our tree policy and created a policy for land restoration projects.

Community

Canal Shores proudly served as a safe and socially-distanced recreation area for not only golfers, but walkers, joggers, dog-walkers and bird-watchers. We extended our relationship with American Legion Post 42 and the outdoor patio bar and grill that served veterans and local community members looking for an outdoor place to relax and spend time with other community members.



Canal Shores hosted a special Zoom event with a historian discussing the history of golf on the North Shore in the 1800s. We also created the Canal Shores Giving Society to help engage members of the community in helping us take important steps towards financial sustainability.

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Canal Shores is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that receives no taxpayer funding. We [greatly appreciate support from donors](#), both old and new, and look forward to improving the 82 acres of green space we provide to the local communities.

Best wishes from Canal Shores for a healthy and happy 2021!

Sincerely,
Karl Leinberger
President, Canal Shores Board of Trustees