



**MILWAUKEE PARKS  
FOUNDATION**



*2022 ANNUAL REPORT*



**“If we had a medicine that delivered as many benefits as parks, we would all be taking it.**

**Parks deliver cardiovascular benefits, fight loneliness, combat osteoporosis, counter stress anxiety, and more. And they do those things without adverse side effects and at minimal costs.”**

*Dr. Frumkin, Senior Vice President at the Trust for Public Land*



# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Dear Park Champions,

*Parks are joy. Parks are play. Parks are family, community, togetherness.*

It's hard to fully describe all that parks are, and the tensions they hold here in Milwaukee. Every challenge we face plays out in our parks. Individuals who are unhoused often find themselves sleeping in parks, residents utilize trails to improve their mental and physical well-being, and unwanted and unsafe activities can affect young people who play in our parks.

*Parks are healing and health. Parks are "crime prevention." Parks are racial and social justice.*

Conversely, live music in our parks brings neighbors to appreciate beauty together. The smell of summer grills announces family gatherings and occasions to celebrate. Rivers and lakes converge in our parks, trees stand tall to provide respite from urban life. Strong youth and family serving organizations anchor our parks, connecting Milwaukee's young people to nature, play, water, exercise and more.

*Parks are mental and physical well-being. Parks are clean air and water. Parks are medicine.*

Doing this work for the last two years, I've often thought of parks as a barometer for how we as a community are doing. There is a lot to celebrate and there is a lot of work still to be done. It can feel heavy day after day to hold the tension of parks. Parks both give us life, and reflect the harm caused by generations of disinvestment and systemic racism. Parks are both a space of healing and conflict.

We continue to do this work because we see the vision. How different would Milwaukee be if every park in every corner of our County, regardless of the socioeconomic makeup of the surrounding neighborhood, was buzzing with year round activity? If young people always knew they had a safe place to go and have fun in their nearby park? If our parks were consistently well maintained, accessible, state of the art, and safe, so many resident needs would be fulfilled.

For this vision to become a reality we must see true investment on all levels. We must continue to "collectively steward a thriving park system," and we must see everyone get involved in a way that is meaningful to them. At Milwaukee Parks Foundation we are building a people-centered movement for parks, rooted in equity. It's hard work, but it is full of joy and light and love.

*Parks are for you and I. Parks are for all of us.*

Thank you for being an important part of this work.

I hope to see you in the parks soon,



Rececca Stoner  
Executive Director





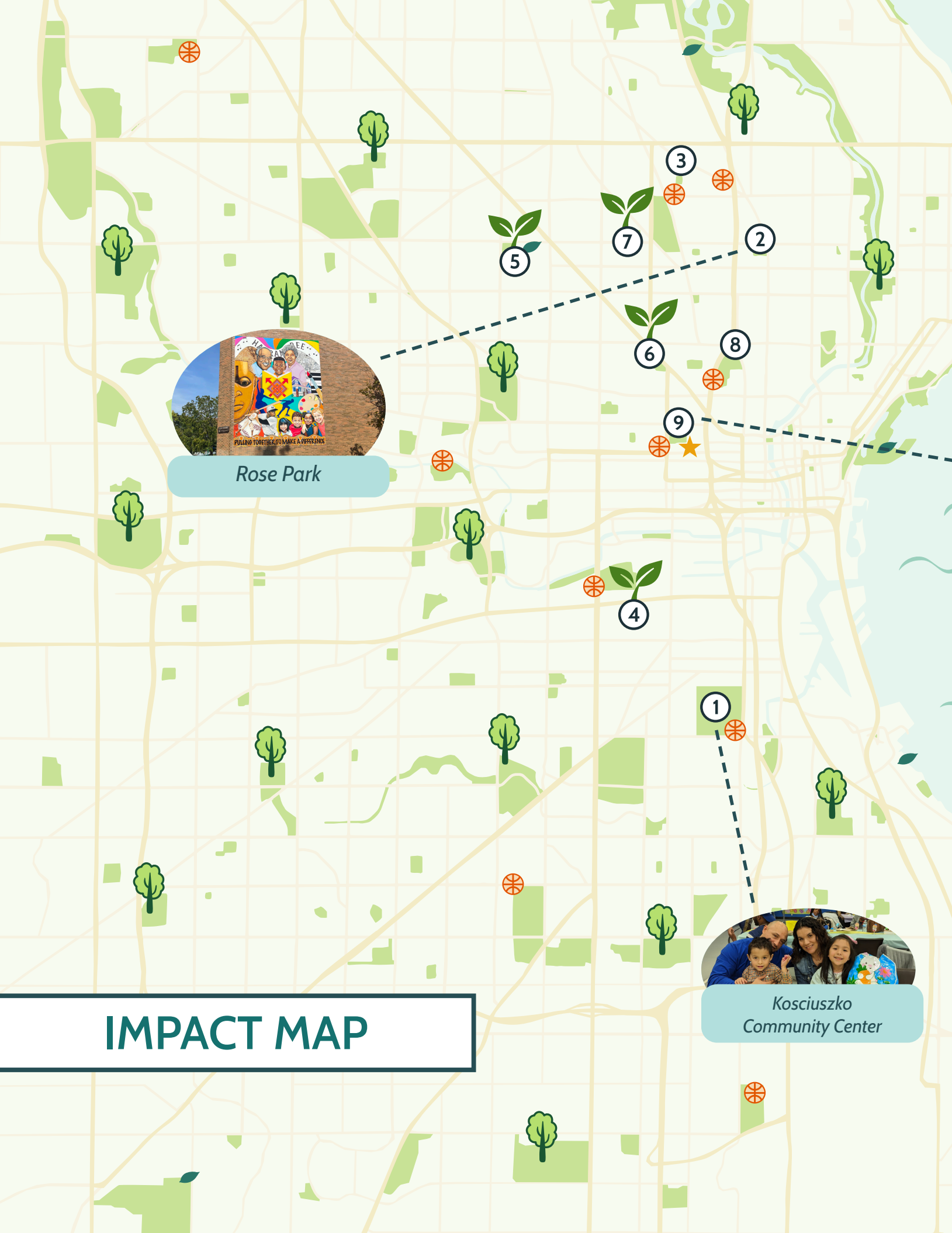


Rose Park



Kosciuszko Community Center

# IMPACT MAP





## System-Wide

- Increased capacity for parks through additional staffing - \$50,000
- Contribution to the Wisconsin Policy Forum for their continued work researching sustainable funding for parks - \$10,000

## KEY



### Sprouts Projects

Investment in resident-led organizations supporting their parks



Impacted Basketball Court




Healthy County Challenge Location



King Park

## Parks Impacted

- ① **Kosciuszko Park & King Park**  
Community Center Fund for improvements - \$12,500
  - ② **Rose Park**  
New Community Mural - \$20,000
  - ③ **Lucille Berrien Park**  
New Community Mural - \$12,000
  - ④ **Clarke Square Park**   
Decorate the Park Holiday Event - \$5,000
  - ⑤ **Sherman Park**   
Harvest fest with Chairwoman Nicholson - \$3,000
  - ⑥ **Clarence and Cleopatra Johnson Park/Alice's Garden**   
Fieldhands and Foodways program - \$5,000
  - ⑦ **Moody Park**   
Community Holiday Extravaganza - \$5,000
  - ⑧ **Carver Park**  
Baseball field refurbishment project - \$100,000
  - ⑨ **King Park** ★ (MPF New Office)  
Lyrics for our Sanctuaries youth poetry competition - \$6,000
-  **11 Locations**  
22 Basketball Courts refreshed - \$53,302
-  **7 Locations**  
County Executive David Crowley's Healthy County Challenge - \$10,000

# Seeds

SUSTAINABLE PARK INVESTMENT

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The central challenge Milwaukee Parks Foundation (MPF) continues to face is raising support for the Park System as a whole. All of us have a favorite park, a favorite playground, where we want to see investment. But it is sustainable, impactful support into the highest need parks that will change the shape of park system, our communities, and our county. This is where Seeds come in.

Through Seeds investments, MPF supports system-wide improvements with an intentional focus on parks that have the most need. In 2022 alone, more than \$500,000 was poured back into our beloved parks thanks to the generosity of many of you. Halfway through 2023, that amount is more than \$1,000,000.

By investing in system-wide solutions, MPF plants seeds that can be enjoyed for years to come. What does this look like in action?

### Below are two examples of impactful investment:

#### Kosciuszko Community Center Fund



Milwaukee County Parks is home to two thriving community centers. The Kosciuszko Community Center and the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center. In 2022 alone, these Centers saw more than 33,000 visits from neighbors. Community Center Funds donated were used to upgrade boxing rings and boxing equipment for programming, purchase additional weight room equipment, basketballs, a new pool table, and bleacher repair for a beloved indoor basketball gym.

#### Carver Park Baseball Diamond Renovation

Last but not least, the Beckum Stapleton Little League is one of the most thriving, longest standing little leagues on Milwaukee's northside. Thanks to the generosity of Christian Yelich and American Family Insurance, the Carver Park Baseball Diamond where they play regularly is being completely refurbished. Young people deserve the highest quality play spaces, and we are grateful this partnership can help accomplish that.

In 2022, Milwaukee Parks Foundation debuted our Sprouts strategy, seeking to invest in grassroots leaders and groups anchoring our parks. We believe the best ideas for each park won't come from outside, but rather, from those that know it best.

So with over 150 parks system-wide and too many worthy groups to choose from, where did we start? In 2020, Milwaukee County Parks created an Equity Index, which ranks parks using surrounding population and environmental statistics. In summary, the Equity Index quantifies historical disinvestment in the community surrounding each park. This data-driven approach allows us to focus our energy and resources where they are needed most, both within the Sprouts strategy and across MPF's work.

In the summer of 2022, to test our strategy, MPF launched the Sprouts Fund. Guided by thoughtful and experienced leaders on our Program Committee, we invited groups working in Atkinson, Clarke Square, Clarence and Cleopatra Johnson, Moody and Walker Square Parks. We offered grants of \$5,000 to support projects with momentum or in need of resources to get off the ground. Without exception, each group was brimming with ideas. We heard about the desire to gather and play, to care for parks and neighbors. These conversations were incalculably valuable, providing insight into the needs and challenges faced by parks groups today. We approved gifts to Clarke Square Neighborhood Initiative, Friends of Moody Park, The Table and The Village Group.

## Other early examples of our Sprouts strategy in action include:

### Collaboration

on community-led mural projects in Rose Park with Friends of Rose Park and Wells Fargo, as well as in Berrien Park with Milwaukee Alliance Against Racism & Political Repression, Lucille Berrien's family and True Skool.

### Partnership

with local leaders like Camille Mays and organizations like Nearby Nature MKE, finding new ways to collaborate through continued exchange.

### Production

of a youth writing competition themed around parks named Lyrics for Our Sanctuaries, yielding both tributes to our green spaces and insight from young creatives.





Community Mural in Berrien Park



### Moody Park

Throughout the 2022 holiday season, we were able to support their community gatherings for Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, each planned and hosted by young leaders from the Amani neighborhood.



### Clarence and Cleopatra Johnson Park

This program invites students and families, of all ethnic backgrounds, to explore the agricultural and culinary traditions of the Africans who were brought to the Americas, and of African American people.



# DONOR HIGHLIGHT

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## Fund for Lake Michigan

Through a funding collaborative including Molson Coors and Fund for Lake Michigan, Milwaukee County Parks hired two new staff members, greatly increasing their capacity to care for our parks. The Special Projects Coordinator will lend project management support and expertise across our 150+ parks, allowing Milwaukee County Parks to implement critical improvement projects. The Reforestation Coordinator will focus on restoring tree canopy in Milwaukee's neighborhood parks. With the effects of climate change and urban heat islands harming our communities, this role is needed more than ever before.



Due to the generosity of Fund for Lake Michigan and Molson Coors, Milwaukee County Parks will see a significant increase in both the planning and execution of critical capital projects, reforestation, and wetland enhancements ultimately creating healthier communities and a thriving parks system.

*“ We all know how important healthy mature trees are for offering shade and helping to keep our parks and neighborhoods cool on these increasingly warm summer days. From our perspective, there’s a direct connection between clean water, a thriving urban tree canopy, public health and improved quality of life, so we’re thrilled to partner with Molson Coors to boost and accelerate Milwaukee County Parks’ urban forestry programs. ”*

*Vicki Elkin, Executive Director of the Fund for Lake Michigan*

# PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHT

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## Reviving Milwaukee’s Emerald Necklace with Partnership

Milwaukee County Parks are more than just green spaces for our community; they are the lungs of the county, providing a breath of fresh air and recreational spaces to its residents. Together, Milwaukee Parks Foundation and Milwaukee County Parks are working towards a vision of rekindling the spark of these green sanctuaries and breathing new life into these cherished public spaces.

In close partnership, we address long-standing challenges like crumbling infrastructure, outdated amenities, and

maintenance issues while incorporating community input and activation. These joint efforts are transforming our parks - ensuring our green spaces are vibrant, our playgrounds are safe, and our trails are inviting.

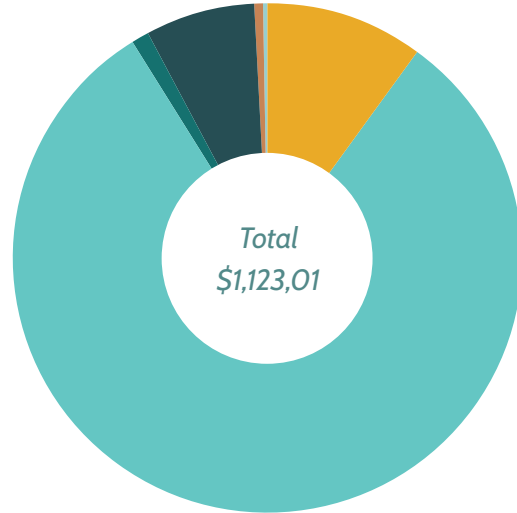
In the story of Milwaukee’s partnership between its County Parks and the Milwaukee Parks Foundation, the message is clear: when public entities and community organizations come together with a shared vision, they can create profound positive change.



# FINANCIALS

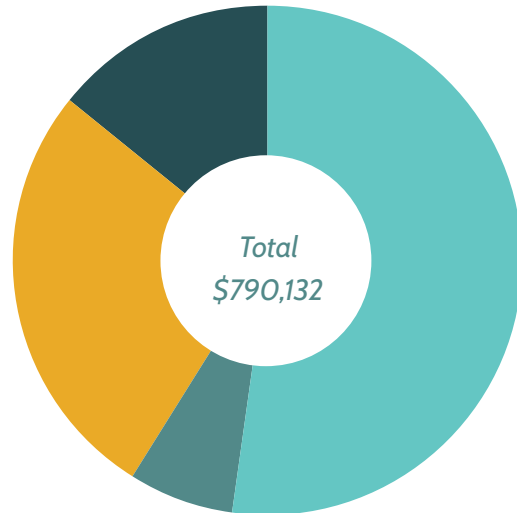
## INCOME

Foundation and Corporate Contributions	\$926,134
Individual Contributions	\$115,403
Special Event Revenue	\$80,028
Government Contributions	\$12,000
Earned Income (raffles, merchandise, interest)	\$5,636
In-Kind	\$1,295



## EXPENSES

SEEDS – Park Investment:*	\$422,646
Programs & Services:	\$217,432
SPROUTS – Resident-Centered Park Activation:	\$53,900
Management & Fundraising:	\$96,154



**Net Revenue: \$332,882\***

*\*Please note, much of this revenue is earmarked for future, specific park projects.*

88 cents of every dollar contributed to the Milwaukee Parks Foundation is invested directly into Milwaukee County Parks.

# OUR STAFF

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**Rebecca Stoner**  
*Executive Director*



**Tristen Shorter**  
*Director of Communications*



**Adam Carr**  
*Director of Strategic Partnerships*





# OUR BOARD



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**Marcus White**  
*The Johnson Foundation at  
Wingspread*

# THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

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Thank you to the supporters below who gave a generous gift of \$500 or more to parks between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2022.

American Family Insurance  
American Family Insurance Dreams Foundation Inc.  
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Bader Philanthropies, Inc.  
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Debra and Moshe Katz  
Emily and Angie Phillips  
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Wells Fargo Community Foundation  
Will Belke



# LIST OF PARTNERS

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Amani Youth Council  
Beckum Stapleton Little League  
Boys & Girls Club of Greater Milwaukee  
Camille Mays Sound Healing Ck Ledesma  
Clarke Square Neighborhood Initiative  
COA Youth & Family Centers Colectivo  
Dominican Center  
Escuela Verde  
First Tee  
Friends of Lincoln Park  
Friends of Moody Park  
Friends of Rose Park

Friends of Sherman Park  
Friends of the Domes  
Gift of Wings  
Haveone Studios  
Kavon Cortez Jones  
Kohl's  
Lyrical Sanctuary  
Mario The Poet  
Milwaukee Alliance Against Racist & Political Repression  
Milwaukee Bucks  
Milwaukee County Parks  
Milwaukee Riverkeeper  
Nearby Nature MKE  
Northwest Side CDC  
Palante Media  
PEAK Initiative

Public Policy Forum  
Running Rebels  
Sherman Park Community Association  
Tarik Moody  
The Ability Center  
The Nature Conservancy  
The Park People  
The Village Group  
True Skool  
UW-Milwaukee's Center for 21st Century Studies  
Walker Square Neighborhood Association  
We Black We Golf  
Wehr Nature Center  
Wheel and Sprocket

“Our parks are a vital asset for our community. The Go Green for Parks event is an annual celebration that captures our community's passion for parks and the positive impact they have on our lives.”

Tami Garrison, Milwaukee Parks Foundation, Past Board Chair & 2022 Go Green for Parks, Co-Chair



Go Green 2022 at South Shore Park





OUR PARKS.  
OUR COMMUNITY.  
OUR FUTURE.

### OUR MISSION

Engage our community in supporting Milwaukee County Parks to collectively steward a thriving park system.