

April is National Volunteer Month



Illinois Statistics on Volunteering

- 2.6 million volunteers
- 26.3% of residents volunteer
- 294.8 million hours of service
- 29.8 hours per resident
- \$6.0 billion of service contributed

Source:
VolunteeringInAmerica.org

Volunteers at the Batavia Depot Museum share a good time.

Depot Volunteers make the difference

Volunteers are an essential part of any organization. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor, more than 61 million people, or 26.4 percent of the population, volunteered their time at least once between September 2007 and September 2008.

The Batavia Depot Museum has utilized volunteers since its dedication in 1975. They currently have nearly 100 active volunteers, and they recognize the importance of each and every one of them. "The museum could not operate without the help of these dedicated volunteers," said Depot Museum Director Carla Hill, "We greatly appreciate and acknowledge their hard work."

One volunteer, Georgene Kauth O'Dwyer, has been a dedicated

volunteer at the Depot Museum since the beginning. "I loved the community and wanted to be a part of it," she said, "Now I've been doing it so long that it's become part of my life!" O'Dwyer also got her 14-year-old grandson interested in volunteering, and he's now a regular volunteer at the Depot Museum. "It's so good when younger people get involved," she said.

The majority of volunteers work as docents during the Depot's open hours. According to Museum Curator Chris Winter, volunteers often greet visitors; help answer questions and man the gift shop. They also have specially trained volunteers who assist researchers in the Gustafson Research Center. The time commitment is simply two hours per month, and volunteer benefits include a discount on items in the museum's gift shop,

recognition during National Volunteer Month in April and a volunteer luncheon in December.

"Batavia has a great spirit of volunteerism," O'Dwyer said, "People in town are willing to be involved in the community, and we can always use more volunteers. It's so rewarding!" Becoming a volunteer is easy. Simply contact Chris Winter at the Depot Museum at 630-406-5274, and you'll receive a brief training before being added to the volunteer list for scheduling. It's an enjoyable way to spend a couple of hours, according to O'Dwyer. "It's a commitment, but it's a pleasant one! You get to meet a lot of new people, and they all have a story to tell!"

For more information or to become a volunteer, please call the Depot Museum at 630-406-5274.

Paddle boats offer affordable family fun

Paddle boats are affordable fun for the whole family! The Batavia Park District will operate paddle boat rentals from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend on the Riverwalk.

Hours of operation will be from 2-8 pm seven days a week with extended hours on special event days, such as Windmill City Festival (July 9-11). The rental rate is \$10 per half hour, per boat.

New this year, party rental opportunities will be available for corporate picnics, birthday parties and more. Please watch for more information in the Summer Fun Guide along with a \$2 off coupon



for a half hour paddle boat rental.

A valid driver's license or photo ID will be required to rent a paddle boat, and renters will need to sign a waiver. Kids ages 10 and under must be accompanied by an adult 18 or

over. Lifejackets will be provided and must be worn.

For more information about paddle boats please contact Carla Hill at 630-406-5274.

Park District Director Clark receives statewide recognition



Batavia Park District Executive Director Michael Clark pictured with wife, Donna, after receiving the Illinois Parks & Recreation Association's Fellow Award on Friday, January 29

Michael Clark, Executive Director of the Batavia Park District, was recently selected as this year's recipient of the Illinois Parks and Recreation Association's "Fellow Award". The award is presented to a past or present parks and recreation professional who has shown excellence in promoting the parks and recreation movement on a statewide basis. Clark was presented with the prestigious award in front of colleagues and legislators at the IPRA state conference on Friday, January 29 in Chicago.

The IPRA awards and recognition program is a way to recognize leaders in the parks and recreation field. It is a testament to the long hours and hard work put forth in order to advance the profession. "The award recognizes Mike not just for his sheer volume and quality of work but for his courage and ingenuity to break the mold," said Allison Sohr, Director of Marketing and Public Relations for the Batavia Park District. "He asks the 'why not' and 'what if' questions during a significant time of change in the park and recreation field, redefining and sculpting the future of this profession."

IPRA is a not-for-profit organization and a public interest group whose members share a common goal—providing quality park and recreation opportunities for the people of Illinois.

For more information please contact the Illinois Park & Recreation Association at 630-376-1911 or visit *ILipra.org*.



**Batavia Bark Park:
the best things in life
are FREE**

When the Batavia Bark Park opens for its third season April 1, users will be able to enjoy the park at no cost. After evaluating the past two seasons and looking at similar area facilities, staff made the decision to open the Bark Park up to patrons for free. “We want people to be able to enjoy the Bark Park the same as they would enjoy any of our other parks,” said Jeff Clark, Director of Leisure

Services for the Park District.

Batavia Park District staff is also planning on offering programs and events at the Bark Park in the near future. “People have expressed an interest in having events such as birthday parties or play dates in the Bark Park,” said Clark.

Patrons will no longer have to show proof of vaccinations for their dogs or wear a permit to enter the Bark Park. The security gates that

were located at the park will be removed so users can enter and exit at their leisure.

The Bark Park is located at West Main Community Park, 40W101 W. Main St., and includes three acres of fenced-in open space, a wooded area and a shelter that was added last fall.

For more information about the Batavia Bark Park, please call 630-879-5235.



Batavia Park District invited into private/public partnership

The Batavia Park District has recently been invited by Preferred Development, a Chicago-based development and management company, to participate in a downtown Batavia redevelopment project designed to generate foot traffic with the construction of a new recreational facility. Preferred Development has entered into a purchase contract for the shopping center at the west side of Island Avenue and has asked the park district to come to the table with plans for an anchor facility that

would promote commerce, satisfy recreational needs, support the city’s vision and revitalize the heart of downtown Batavia.

Plans have not been formalized but there is a Community Development Committee meeting taking place on Tuesday, January 12 at the City Council Chambers to roll out concept plans. “The park district is excited about this invitation,” said Executive Director Mike Clark. “This proposal is in its infant stages and the park board has made no decisions as to how we will proceed.

We value the community’s feedback and will be certain to listen to their voice before deciding whether to move forward.”

“This in no way impacts the park board or staff’s commitment to the Hall Quarry Beach and is not related to that facility in any way,” Clark said. “Given the results of our most recent referendum, the park district is committed to doing everything possible to preserve Hall Quarry Beach for generations of Batavians to come.”

Ready for a change? Become a nationally certified fitness instructor!

The Batavia Park District and the National Exercise Trainer’s Association are co-sponsoring a group exercise certification class for potential and current fitness instructors. The certification course will be held from 8 am to 4:30 pm on Saturday, April 10 and from 8 am to 1 pm on Sunday, April 11 at the Park District Civic Center, 327 W. Wilson St.

Participants will learn basic academic and practical application of teaching group exercise. No college, science or teaching background is required. “Passing the certification allows one to obtain the fundamental knowledge

required to become a successful instructor,” said Kathy Freedlund, Fitness Director for the Batavia Park District, “Participants will learn about anatomy, kinesiology, exercise programming and health and fitness. It’s fun to be a group fitness leader, and it keeps you fit and healthy!”

Workshop registration includes a full-day review, written exam, 2-year certificate and membership in NETA. Register by March 10 to receive the early bird rate of \$199. After March 10 registration will be \$249. For more information or to register, call 1-800-237-6242 or visit NETAfit.org.



MARCH MADNESS IS HERE!

Win Prizes, Have Fun—It’s FREE!

Registration is free at www.bataviaparks.org. Sign up now!

Play the Batavia Park District’s online U Pick ‘Em Men’s NCAA Basketball contest. Pick who you think is going to win each game of the NCAA Men’s Basketball Tournament and compete against other fans for prizes.

Get in the game!

