

# HAAS PARK: GRASSROOTS EFFORTS SOW MORE GRASS ROOTS

Haas Park, once a land-locked one-acre playground at Fullerton and Washtenaw avenues in Chicago's park-poor Logan Square area, has expanded through work that began with the Haas Park Local Advisory Council and extended to the Logan Square Neighborhood Association, the Local Initiatives Support Corporation, the Chicago Park District, and TPL.

To expand the park significantly, the former Worldwide Distributors warehouse next door had to be demolished. So in late 2004, TPL became the proud owners of a big warehouse, thus saving the land for a later, affordable purchase by the park district.

This year, park proponents watched a uniquely satisfying demolition as the warehouse made way for a future playing field. The next steps are to have the street closed between the two properties, the pavement removed and grass planted in its place.

In May and again in September of 2007, the Haas Park Advisory Council, the Chicago Park District, TPL, the MetLife Foundation, and numerous community partners celebrated the completion of the Haas Park playground in Logan Square. Long-time Haas Park volunteer, octogenarian Loiuise Panske was also honored. The community gathered, children played, and everyone enjoyed a cookout and entertainment hosted by the Haas Park Advisory Council. The new playground was made possible with generous support from the MetLife Foundation, The Stenning on Lake Geneva Conservancy Society, and an anonymous donor.

The project has been a textbook example of TPL's mission to bring small, local organizations to the table with city, regional, or national entities to clarify needs and pool resources. In this case, the collaboration brought results that had been elusive for years, despite the work of a number of dedicated individuals.

The Haas Park acquisition brought about an unexpected additional benefit: it made TPL familiar to Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail, a community group that soon afterward approached TPL to buy land for a much-needed play lot and the access to the proposed elevated Bloomingdale Trail (see p. 1).



PHOTO BY BROOK COLLINS CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT

*Friends, neighbors, Haas Park Advisory Council members, Chicago Park District officials along with, from left to right, Anthony and Tamara Porfirio, Marc Herbert, Josh Deth (kneeling), Tim Mitchell, Gen. Sup. of the Chicago Park District, State Sen. Iris Martinez, Janice Jones, Ald. Manny Flores (1st Ward) and TPL's Beth White dedicate the new playground at Haas Park.*



PHOTO BY DARCY KIEFEL

*Chloe Porfirio leaps for joy at Haas Park's new playground.*