



The Re-ECHO

St. Louis Park

A Newsletter for the members of the St. Louis Park Historical Society

Please send your 2005 Membership Application/Renewal now

Children First

The Re-ECHO is published quarterly by the St. Louis park Historical Society and is written by Robert C. Reiss. Its purpose is to acquaint the members, volunteers and friends on how the activities, programs and resources of the Society are used to preserve the history of St. Louis Park. The name was inspired by the ECHO newspaper published by and for the students of St. Louis Park High School since 1917. Robert C. Reiss
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The Children First Initiative started in St. Louis Park. The initiative was developed by and for St. Louis Park and has currently spread to over 450 communities in the United States.

The Children First concept took shape in 1992 when Dr. Carl Holstrom, the Superintendent of the St. Louis Park public schools, gave what he thought was a routine talk to the St. Louis Park Rotary Club. The

gist of Dr. Holstrom's talk was that schools worked when there is a partnership between schools and families. As more and more families became stressed and dysfunctional, kids were lost and the community suffered. He concluded that we needed to invest more of our time and ourselves in the children and youth.

These Rotary talks were routine and generally soon forgotten, but this time someone was listening. Within days a retired businessman and fellow Rotarian, Wayne Packard, offered a sizable

amount of money to solve the problem. Within a month another Rotarian, Gil Braun, offered to match Packard's contribution.

The problem was that Dr. Holstrom did not have a plan that he felt would accomplish the needed results. A committee was formed to develop a solution without

results and the Search Institute, a non-profit youth research organization was brought on board. The Search Institute headed by Peter Benson, had identified 30 (later

The Rotaller, the newsletter of the Rotary Club of St. Louis Park, says:
Children First is not a program. It is about that teacher, that spouse or someone who helped when we needed help and guidance. It happens every day, everywhere.

40) assets that serve as building blocks for positive student improvement. Students with the most number of these assets achieve the most. These assets served as the framework for the Children First initiative.

An unsuccessful search was conducted nation-wide to find a model for the program. St. Louis Park turned out to be the first and had to develop the basics. What developed was a community wide plan to increase the the assets in every child.

The Search Institute's 40 assets cover the

Children First Cont'd.

following categories:

Support
Empowerment
Boundaries and expectations
Time use
Educational commitment
Values
Social competencies
Positive identification

The initial push for the program came from the community, but once it got started the "village" embraced it with passionately. When the first steering committee meeting was held the following people showed up:

School Superintendent
Retired Ass't Superintendent
School Board Members
State Representative
Mayor
Students
Retired Citizens
State Senator
Chief of Police
Rabbi
Ministers
Head Librarian
Health Department Staff
Boy Scout Staff
YMCA Staff
Judges
Hospital Foundation President

Community Education Director

The initiative became a partnership of public and private schools, students, health and business communities, service organizations, the city, and the faith community. Thousands of St. Louis Park residents were and are enthusiastically involved in asset building for the youth of the city. Initially when the children were tested they averaged 16.7 assets per child. In the latest tests this has increased to 19.4. Overall evaluation by the Search Institute indicates the program is working. Children First is not a government funded program. The only paid employee is the Coordinator, Karen Atkinson. Her job is to spread the "good news" about people who are helping build assets so other people start asset building on their own.

*The Children First story is documented in a book written by Robert Ramsey Ed. E. The book is available for \$10.00 plus \$3.50 for mailing and handling from: Karen Atkinson
Children First Coordinator
6425 West 33rd St.
St Louis Park MN 55426
952 928 6075*

2004 In Review

This year was very successful for the St. Louis Park Historical Society. The highlight of the year was receiving space in the Lenox Community Center to store and display our collection. We tried for a long time to make our collection more accessible, and Lenox fills this need. We are now able to open our files to the public on Mondays and Thursdays between 10:00 AM and 12:00 PM and, of course, other times by appointment. We have become an asset to the Community Center.

The move involved considerable financial considerations. Before we could move, we had to provide filing cabinets and display cases that fit into and were compatible with the space available. The cost involved over \$7000.00. We had planned a formal fund raiser, but it was not required. When we told our members and friends of our needs, the money was there.

The Re-Echo newsletter continues to be very well accepted and each of our four quarterly printings was sent to over 600 readers. We receive letters and phone calls. People want to share their experiences. This newsletter is fun to write. We are approaching a membership of 100 which is more than it has ever been.

We partnered with the St. Louis Park Charter Commission to celebrate the 50th anniversary of St. Louis Park as a Charter City. The celebration was kicked off on June 20 with a celebration in Wolfe Park. A power point presentation was made to all of the seventh grade classes during the fall session.

On September 18 we hosted a bigger and better Ice Cream Social. Continu-

2004 In Review cont'd

ing a tradition begun by the Park volunteer fire department as the Fireman's Carnival in Jorvig Park in the 1930's.

We have continued to monitor and support the Minnesota Department of

Transportation in its efforts to preserve the nationally registered "beehive parks" during the probable future upgrade of Highway 100.

We need your membership to provide the resources to continue to record the history of St. Louis Park. Please become a member or review your membership now.

Society Goals for 2005

What is in store for the St. Louis Park Historical Society in 2005? What are our goals?

A. Establish a numbering and cataloging system for our artifacts. Utilize computer technology to make our collection more user friendly.

B. *Continue to record the history of St. Louis Park with emphases on the time period after 1945. Document this history with written and oral interviews.*

C. Enhance the train depot experience by making the depot exhibit more exciting. Possibly a model train exhibit.

D. *Investigate the possibility and cost of adding rest rooms to the depot.*

E. Continue to encourage St. Louis Park or Hennepin County to take responsibility for maintenance and upkeep of the nationally registered park south of Highway 7 and east of Highway 100 now owned by MnDOT.
F. *Seek the financial backing of the City of St. Louis Park, business's, service clubs, or receive grants for funds to enhance projects.*

G. Continue to publish the Re-Echo newsletter quarterly and send it to everyone interested in the history of St. Louis Park.

H. *Actively seek new members. We need you!*

2005 Membership Application/Renewal Form

Select the membership category that is best suited for you.

_____	Family Membership	\$25.00
_____	Senior	\$15.00
_____	Student	\$ 5.00
_____	Business	Donation

Clip this form. Make sure the mailing address on the back is correct. Add a winter/summer address if applicable.

Please send your check and 2005 membership application/renewal to:
The St. Louis Park Historical Society
3700 Monterey Drive
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

This and That

This year we did not find out why the St. Louis Park fire trucks are still red instead of the yellow proposed by Omar McGary. Still looking.

No matter how far you travel, when you get there that is where you are. Only two people admitted to climbing the water tower. I'm sure there were more brave souls than that.

Wisdom does not necessarily come

with old age. Sometimes old age comes all by itself.

We still need more Echowan's to fill out our collection. They are still the most popular items.

There are no new clues in finding Doc Brown's alligator.

In 2004, the Re-Echo staff found no new applications for the semicolon.

Jeanne Andersen's website is:

www.Jeanneandersen.com

The St. Louis Park Historical Society meets the first Tuesday of every month. The next meetings will be held at Lenox on:

January 11 2005

February 8, 2005

March 8, 2005

You are invited to attend.

"Something in the Water" written by Don Swenson, is available from the St. Louis Park Historical Society for \$20.00 including handling. Available from:

Robert C. Reiss

5109 Stoney Bridge Ct.

Minnetonka MN 55345

952 470 1762

Wanted

The St. Louis Park Historical Society intends to catalog its collection in 2005 to make it more friendly for the users. To do this we need a computer. Does anyone have a spare?

The program we will use is Microsoft **Past Perfect**. To run this program the computer needs to have at least an XP operating system. Older operating systems cannot be used.

We would prefer this computer be a notebook because of security but we will consider a desktop. Call Bob Reiss at 952 470 1762 or Rcreiss@aol.com

A special thanks to Stephanie Schwartz who proofs the newsletters. You cannot believe how much better these articles are after she finishes.

Hundreds of St. Louis Park girls were Parkettes from the 1950's to the 1980's. Yet there is nothing in the Society's collection that tells this fantastic story.

Jennifer Davis Newell and Barbara Davis Reiss think this should be corrected. They need pictures, souvenirs, memorabilia, membership lists, and stories of incidents, good, bad, funny or not funny. We also want this to include the Fan Club. What trips did you go on? How has having been a Parkette changed your life?

Barbara says, "Come on, girls, there are a lot of us. Let's make it a big exhibit." Call Barbara Davis Reiss at 952 470 1762 or Rcreiss@aol.com.

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