

Ashland Parks Foundation to Award More in Grants than ever this year

The Ashland Parks Foundation (APF) was established in 1995 with a mission of enhancing Ashland's quality of life by financially supporting its parks and other non-profit recreational groups and projects.

Annually, before the end of the 2nd quarter of each year (June), the five-member APF board receives grant requests and hears a brief presentation from each community organization or group that has applied. Having served on the APF board for the last three and a half years, I very much look forward to the annual meeting when we hear the grant requests. The presentations are often very compelling and sometimes quite emotional, and it's rewarding to be able to award grants to organizations doing good work or providing valuable service to those in our community.

Revenue for the grants comes from the interest generated on the principal balance of the APF General Fund and varies from year to year depending on how the fund's investments perform. In years when the General Fund doesn't increase in value, unfortunately, there are no grants awarded. However, this year the APF is able to award more than it ever has in its 23-year history!

Any non-profit group, project or organization that makes use of or works toward improving Ashland's parks system is eligible to apply for a grant of financial support. Requesting groups shall provide a letter of request that includes contact information, a mission statement, a brief description of the project and relation of the project to parks.

In years past, grants have been awarded to youth scholarships and equipment for youth programs such as baseball, soccer, water polo, swim lessons, art classes and more. Other grants have gone to help create a pollinator garden at The Grove, to offer adult and youth scholarships through the Recreation Division of the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission (APRC) and to help fund an APRC volunteer appreciation dinner, to name a few.

Should you want to apply for a grant from the Ashland Parks Foundation, the grant application form can be found here:

http://www.ashlandparksfoundation.com/Files/APF_Grant_Application.pdf

In addition to an APF General Fund that serves to broadly support parks and recreation in Ashland through grants, there are also individual donation campaigns that allow for donations to go to support particular projects, facilities, programs or activities. Currently, in addition to the General Fund, the APF has four other donation campaigns including Lithia Park 100-Year Celebration Book, the Butler-Perozzi Fountain Restoration Project, the Ashland Senior Center and the Ashland World of Music Festival Annual Event. There is great flexibility in how donations to the Foundation may be earmarked at the request of the donor. Gifts can be earmarked for specific facilities or capital improvements, for programs or activities, as memorials for loved ones or for unrestricted use and/or as an endowment fund, to provide a few examples.

APF distributes its funds only after careful study of the need, and the APF board of directors works closely with the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission in determining priorities and usually concentrates on those projects that APRC alone could not provide.

Should you want to contribute to the Ashland Parks Foundation or learn more about the organization, please go to: www.ashlandparksfoundation.com.