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**MAYOR EMANUEL, ALDERMAN SILVERSTEIN, CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT  
CELEBRATE THE OPENING OF NEW NATURE PLAY AREA AT INDIAN BOUNDARY PARK**

*Former underutilized zoo now community hub for environmental education*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Chicago Park District General Superintendent Michael P. Kelly, Alderman Debra Silverstein and members of the West Ridge community today cut the ribbon at the new Nature Play Center at Indian Boundary Park.

"We've transformed this space at Indian Boundary Park into safe nature play area that will allow for broader engagement of the community," said Mayor Emanuel. "This project is an example of how we are investing in every neighborhood and investing in every child while staying true to our motto as the City in a Garden."

Indian Boundary Nature Play Center is a hub for nature programs, education and discovery for the community and residents of Chicago. The nature play center utilizes the facilities of the decommissioned zoo and creates a community infrastructure that will foster environmental awareness and proactivity in both children and adults. The building and landscape work in unison to support activities including nature education, native species presentation, imagination play, star gazing, sustainable gardening and other activities for all ages. Additionally, a spray water feature has been installed adjacent to the play center.

"Indian Boundary Park has been a beloved fixture of the 50th Ward for nearly a century," said Alderman Silverstein. "I am very pleased to have worked with the community to remodel this space and turn it into an exciting new installation that will engage and delight our children for many more years to come."

Indian Boundary Park was established as a natural sanctuary for the burgeoning Northside community more than a century ago. Last year, the Chicago Park District and the community took steps to overhaul the underutilized Indian Boundary zoo, which was reopened today as the Indian Boundary Park Nature Play Center.

“This Nature Play Center was designed as a result of months of community input and participation,” said Kelly. “We are pleased to make a larger impact in West Ridge with the new nature play area.”

The Nature Center also includes restroom facilities, an alternate meeting space and storage. It connects to the landscape through several outer doors to create a seamless connection to the nature play landscape. Winding discovery paths, native plantings, and endemic environments highlight unique ecologies in the nature-play landscape. The partitions from the former zoo have created discrete, but permeable, areas for active nature experiences, as well as more structured spaces for educational programs and relaxation in natural surroundings. The \$570,000 project was funded by the Chicago Park District; the project also received NATO legacy funds.

Indian Boundary Park is also the site of many of Chicago Park District’s Night Out in the Parks events this summer. Upcoming events include a Movie in the Park featuring Anna Karenina on August 10, and A Night of Music at Indian Boundary on August 22 with Chicago West Community Music Center.

The Night Out in the Parks series brings 1,000 events and programs to more than 250 neighborhood parks throughout the City. The Park District has partnered with more than 50 artists and community organizations to expand and produce this successful initiative.

For more information, visit [www.chicagoparkdistrict.com](http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com) or call 312.742.PLAY, 312.747.2001 (TTY).

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For more information about the Chicago Park District’s more than 8,100 acres of parkland, more than 580 parks, 26 miles of lakefront, nine museums, two world-class conservatories, 16 historic lagoons, nearly 50 nature areas, thousands of special events, sports and entertaining programs, please visit [www.chicagoparkdistrict.com](http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com) or contact the Chicago Park District at 312/742.PLAY or 312/747.2001 (TTY). Want to share your talent? Volunteer in the parks by calling, 312/742.PLAY.