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# Praise by Pelosi, Schakowsky, and Bustos at Women for Brad Reception Infuses Tenth Dems Intern with Pride in Her First Vote

By Michelle Patino

Driving to the hotel on the evening of May 28 proved to be more difficult than intern coordinator Marissa Bohrer and I expected. But after taking a series of wrong turns, we eventually made it to the Hilton in Northbrook for the third annual Women for Brad reception. Getting there proved to be well worth the effort.

This year's event featured House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi along with two other Democratic Congresswomen, the illustrious Jan Schakowsky and freshman Representative Cheri Bustos.

The evening began with what seemed to be a never-ending supply of hors d'oeuvres and,



*Nancy Pelosi with some of the many Tenth Dems who attended the event.*

since I am underage, many cold, sobering glasses of water. After Marissa and I mingled with the other guests, chatting about the

*continued on page 3*



# www.tenthdems.org Tenth News

JULY 2013 Illinois Tenth Congressional District Democrats Newsletter Volume 10, Edition 7

## Wisconsin Congresswoman Gwen Moore Charms Crowd at Local Candidate Appreciation Reception

By Christina Danno

On June 23, Tenth Dems hosted a Local Candidate Appreciation Reception at the Chevy Chase Country Club in Wheeling. The evening was planned as a way to celebrate Democrats who stepped forward to run for local offices within the 10th Congressional District.

The evening's keynote speaker was Congresswoman Gwen Moore, who has represented the 4th Congressional District in Wisconsin, the Milwaukee area, since 1992. The first African-American woman to represent Wisconsin in the U.S. House of Representatives, she has fought for women's issues and for the poor and middle class.

As folks circulated and enjoyed the buffet of assorted hors d'oeuvres, Rev. Jesse Jackson paid an unannounced visit. Rev. Jackson talked about some of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition's initiatives. He also solicited prayers for the ailing Nelson Mandela.



*The crowd warmly welcomes Congresswoman Moore as she strides to the podium.*

10th District Congressman Brad Schneider stopped by to congratulate the candidates being honored and once again to thank Tenth Dems for its important contribution to his election to Congress.

The formal agenda began with welcomes from Tenth Dems Chair Hon. Lauren Beth Gash and event co-chairs Joe Adler and Marguerite Hampton. Next came an overview of Tenth Dems, the

*continued on page 4*

GO INSIDE TO PAGES 5, 7, 9, AND 11 FOR MANY  
 MORE PHOTOS FROM THIS EXCITING EVENT.

# Mark Kirk Considers Border Security the Most Important Feature of the Immigration Reform Bill

Turning his back on his constituents, on June 11 Illinois Senator Mark Kirk joined those Republicans opposed to immigration reform in procedural votes to block formal debate of the Comprehensive Immigration Reform bill, S. 744.

Defending his vote, Kirk mouthed typical Republican Party rhetoric: "Any immigration reform proposal must first restore the American people's confidence in their government's ability to control the border." Never mind that the last five years have seen unprecedented expenditures on border security while immigration to the United States across the southern border has slowed to a trickle.

Kirk's refusal to support debate on the immigration reform bill came as a huge disappointment to those who were expecting the supposedly moderate junior Senator to play a key role in helping to enact a path to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants living in this country. One blogger bemoaned this "disappointingly passive position for Kirk, who could be a game-changer in this debate. If Kirk isn't ready to support the bill, he should be actively working to make it better, not waiting to see if he likes the finished product."

In a statement issued on June 12, Kirk claimed that he withdrew support for S. 744 specifically because the majority rejected the Cornyn amendment. Offered by Texas Republican Senator John Cornyn, the amendment requires that certain border security benchmarks be met before a path to citizenship is triggered. According to the ACLU, "S. 744 already contains a bipartisan, stringent set of border enforcement actions that are a condition of legalization." Thus, the Cornyn amendment would unnecessarily delay citizenship by imposing "arbitrary, unnecessary, and potentially unfeasible additional triggers, including a fully biometric exit system in use at all land ports of entry, which is estimated to cost billions...."



In his June 12 statement, Kirk disputed the characterization of the Cornyn amendment as a poison pill intended primarily to delay citizenship under the new law. Still, the suspicion that the Cornyn amendment's onerous border security requirements were intended

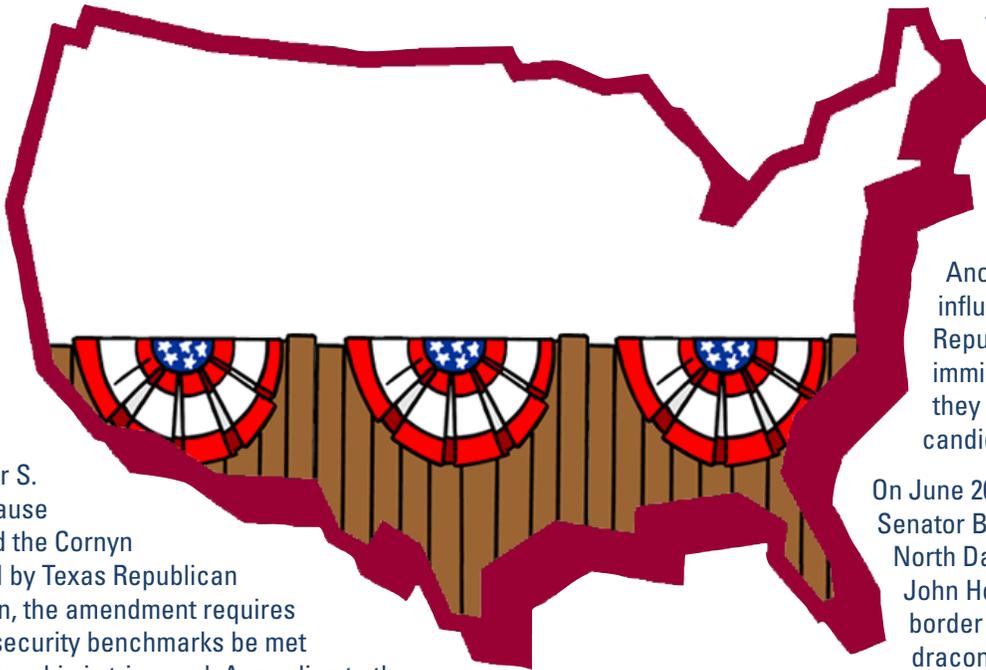
as a poison pill is reinforced by the following observation in the *Wall Street Journal*: "The reality is that the U.S. already spends vast sums on a border that is probably as 'secure' as it has ever been."

Another reality that may have influenced Kirk and other Republicans is the fact that once immigrants become citizens, they tend to vote for Democratic candidates.

On June 20, Tennessee Republican Senator Bob Corker, partnering with North Dakota Republican Senator John Hoeven, proposed additional border security measures less draconian than those in the Cornyn amendment, and Kirk once again

jumped aboard the immigration reform bandwagon. And, on June 27, he cast one of the 68 votes for the Senate immigration bill.

If immigration reform becomes law this year, Kirk no doubt will tout his support when campaigning for reelection in 2016. Fortunately, readers of this column will not be fooled. ■





*Leader Pelosi with Hon. Lauren Beth Gash, Tenth Dems intern Michelle Patino, Intern Coordinator Marissa Bohrer, and Rep. Cheri Bustos.*

large turnout and the incredible chicken in peanut butter sauce, Congresswoman Bustos spoke. She praised Brad for his upbeat attitude and identified him as her go-to colleague on issues of foreign policy and the Middle East.

Next, Congresswoman Schakowsky took the floor. She lauded the leadership of the 10th District's freshman Representative Brad Schneider and extolled his drive in working to reform our gun laws. Congresswoman Schakowsky then introduced Minority Leader Pelosi.

Leader Pelosi delivered plaudits for Brad with enthusiasm as intense as the bright red suit she wore. She called Brad the "happiest freshman in D.C.," always trying to foster bipartisanship and thinking of new ways to approach issues such as equal pay and gun reform.

As Leader Pelosi spoke, I sensed relief and pride in the air. Here was perhaps the highest ranking woman in American politics expressing gratitude and praise for our newly-elected Congressman, telling us that he is on our side—that he is working not only for us, but also with us, in our struggle for equality. The momentum was immense, and when Brad finally took center stage, the applause was righteous.

After thanking his family and all of us for supporting him, Brad went on to talk about the uphill battle he was fighting in D.C. The stubborn partisanship on behalf of both parties, the pretension of senior members of Congress who work against the very

people who elected them for many years, and the unforgivable disenfranchisement of women and other minorities, as it turns out, are not myths; they are very real and dangerous threats to the progress of our American ideals. Brad, however, was not discouraged and, consistent with the moniker, "the happiest freshman in D.C.," he explained how he was working with some freshman Republican colleagues to find common ground.

Specifically, he talked about the Gun Trafficking Prevention Act as a starting point for addressing gun violence without alienating proponents of Second Amendment rights. Then he moved on to issues that were especially pertinent to his audience that night: he spoke of his sponsorship of bills that could ameliorate the dysfunctional policies against women, such as the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 and the Paycheck Fairness Act.

The audience erupted in applause, interrupting Brad's speech so often that it might almost have been considered rude. But the fact of the matter was that our Congressman has been doing more wonderful work than I, personally, foresaw he could do. I was exhilarated to know that the first vote of my life had been for the right man, and further excited by the fact that he was doing so much for women in return.

The way back home was not nearly as rough as the way to the hotel reception, and I think that may have had something to do with my reassurance about and continuing faith in my Congressman. ■

# Congresswoman Moore Charms Crowd

continued from page 1

organization; a description of the internship program by this year's internship coordinator, Marissa Bohrer, and one of this year's interns, Lauren Pliskin; and some information about Community Connection and the work Tenth Dems is doing in, for instance, Waukegan and North Chicago.

In a break from the usual agenda at political events, the audience was treated to a poetry reading by Abrianna Matus, who read "The Old Nightmare," an original poem that won her a prize at this year's Community Connection-sponsored Poetry and Prose Slam. We also heard a reading of Gilberto Colin's award-winning essay, "Fitting In."

Introducing the heart of the agenda, Waukegan Township Supervisor Patricia Jones acknowledged and thanked all of the candidates who ran in the spring 2013 local elections, regardless of the results of their races. Then two of those candidates spoke briefly: State Representative Sam Yingling, who won his race, talked about overcoming obstacles as a candidate, and Nikos Tsonis, who lost his race for Wheeling Township Trustee enumerated the myriad reasons why he concluded that running for office was "a great experience." (See right for a full transcript of Tsonis' remarks.)

Introduced by State Sen. Julie Morrison, Rep. Moore began by thanking everyone who organized the event and praised Tenth Dems and the candidates the event was meant to honor. She warmly acknowledged Tenth Dems' many good works, including sending volunteers into Wisconsin to work for Obama in '08 and '12.

We then were treated to a signature Gwen Moore speech, one peppered with anecdotes and illustrated by quirky props—all in service of serious and thoughtful observations. For example, the Congresswoman commented on the Republicans' war on women, offering fairy tales as context. She explained how women historically have been socialized with gender roles, as illustrated by Grimm fairy tales and classic Disney movies such as *Snow White*.

"The fairy tales most often feature the ultimate rescue of women coming from some mythic handsome prince galloping in to save the damsel in distress just in the nick of time," she pointed out, brandishing a "poisoned apple."

She also warned us against despair with the state of our politics, or complacency after an election is won, characterizing these states as "sleepwalking." The Congresswoman pointed out that Republican Robert Dold has announced that he is running in 2014 to attempt to recapture his seat in Congress from Democrat Brad Schneider. With an anecdote about her exhausting trip to Chicago the previous day, she reminded us of the importance of wake-up calls. She then gave a wake-up call of sorts by detailing some of Dold's votes in the last Congress—for the Ryan budget, against women's right to choose.

Punctuating a final, hilarious family story, Rep. Moore displayed a Cracker Jack box to remind us that when we work we do so for the prize inside the box—in Tenth Dems' case, the opportunity to improve our communities and our country by actively supporting candidates for public office who share our values. ■



## Remarks Given by Nikos Tsonis at Local Candidate Appreciation Reception

My name is Nikos Tsonis and I ran for Trustee of Wheeling Township this last spring along with seven other candidates as part of a Democratic slate. It was my first campaign, so I entered it with a lot of enthusiasm but not a lot of foresight. As it turned out, the campaign was truly a great experience, in spite of my not winning, and for a number of reasons.

There was the way it led me to revisit and expand relationships with friends as I reached out for help with contributions and campaigning.

There was the learning about the community and local government that only direct involvement in an election can give you.

And there was the sense of accomplishment in seeing myself do things that were intimidating – including speaking in front of crowds.

It was an extremely rewarding experience – and I want to encourage anybody with an interest in making their community better as a public servant to go ahead and run. Honestly, you will be greatly rewarded by the campaign alone. Win or lose.

And one more thing I will mention. While running for office I had the opportunity to run into a species of people that is special and rare – the idealist. Many of the voters were idealists, as were most of the candidates.

And then there were the volunteers. The people who spent time doing the heavy lifting in campaigns because they believed in the candidate, the values of the Democratic Party, the issues we face as a community, or simply the importance of a vibrant two-party system that is the backbone of our country. People who believe that one day our society will be a little bit better, freer, and more just than the one we grew up in. There are many good people in the world, but not as many who are willing to work without any assurances of success – no assurance that the candidate will win or that we will see the change we seek in our lifetime. Volunteers often do not even get a proper thank you after a campaign – today's event notwithstanding. But the volunteer marches on.

Know that your work and idealism inspire and energize the people around you, including the candidates that run for office. While I enjoyed campaigning as a whole, I would be lying if I said that I did not sometimes get tired, discouraged, worried that my effort was for naught. But I was reenergized and fortified when I saw the volunteers around me, my fellow idealists, working towards the goal of a better future.

And for that we all thank you. ■



*(l. to r.) Moore chronicles Dold votes; holds the symbolic Cracker Jack box; holds the poisoned apple. "Don't bite that apple..."*



*(l. to r.) Tenth Dems Chair, Hon. Lauren Beth Gash, begins the proceedings; Barbara Altman; Sam Yingling; State Sen. Julie Morrison; Steve Sheffey; Abrianna Matus reads her poem.*



*(left) Event co-chairs Joe Adler and Marguerite Hampton welcome the crowd; (center) Intern Coordinator Marissa Bohrer and intern Lauren Pliskin.*

*(top right) Chuck Gutman introduces Gilberto Colin and reads his original essay; (bottom right) Waukegan Township Supervisor Patricia Jones.*

# Forest Preserves a Zone of Wonder and Discovery

By Debra Shore

The trailhead for my path to public service lies in the Cook County Forest Preserves, probably at Somme Prairie Grove in Northbrook, but it could just as easily be in Harms Woods in Glenview or at Bunker Hill Savanna in Chicago. In the early 1990s I joined a group of volunteers laboring to restore remnants of northeastern Illinois' native prairies, oak woods, and wetlands. I wanted to learn more about nature near where I lived, not solely in the high Rockies where I had camped and climbed.

Here you will not find breathtaking vistas, soaring mountains, waterfalls cascading hundreds of feet. Yet, do we not diminish ourselves with comparison to the Sierra Nevada, the Everglades, the Grand Canyon, and Niagara?

Ours is a precious beauty, cultivated by paying close attention to grasses, sedges, butterflies, and birds. These ecosystems were once some of the most biologically diverse on earth. (The Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, birthplace of the discipline of ecology, has more species of plants than all of Great Britain.) Peter Forbes of the Center for Whole Communities has said that we can recognize 1,000 product brands but cannot name 10 plants native to our region.

Say these names out loud. These are our neighbors:

*Cream wild indigo*  
*Blazing star*  
*Sneezeweed*  
*Bastard toadflax*  
*Rattlesnake master*  
*Purple Joe Pye weed*  
*Bloodroot*  
*Zig-zag goldenrod*  
*Compass plant*  
*New Jersey tea*

It's fun, isn't it? *Bastard toadflax!*

And thus I found a zone of wonder and discovery—and hundreds of dedicated people devoting countless hours to remove invasive weeds and shrubs from the preserves, to monitor populations of rare plants and animals, to collect seeds and pull weeds and assist threatened natural communities back to health. I found the work spiritually and physically enlivening. Yet learning about the condition of the forest preserves also thrust me into political activism, because many preserves had been neglected by those charged with their care. They were in poor shape and getting worse. So I got angry—and I organized.

Some of us founded Friends of the Forest Preserves and began advocating for added resources for habitat restoration and for more ecologically minded land management. I volunteered on

campaigns to elect progressive members to the Cook County Board, which oversees the Forest Preserve District, and testified at budget hearings. I donated and canvassed and called. One day in early 2005 someone suggested that I consider running for a seat on the board of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, given my interest in conservation and the vital role MWRD plays in managing water in Cook County. (The rest, as they say, is history. I ran and won and am serving a second term.)

I tell this story now because the Forest Preserve District of Cook County is embarking on a three-year celebration of its centennial (and deserves as much attention, in my opinion, as it can get). Visionary leaders in the early 1900s knew that people living in the teeming metropolis of early Chicago would need places to go for contemplation and recreation. They envisioned an emerald necklace of natural areas encircling the city and fought to establish the first system of countywide preserves in the entire country. (It took several years and court battles finally to establish the Forest Preserve District, hence the three-year celebration of its centennial.)

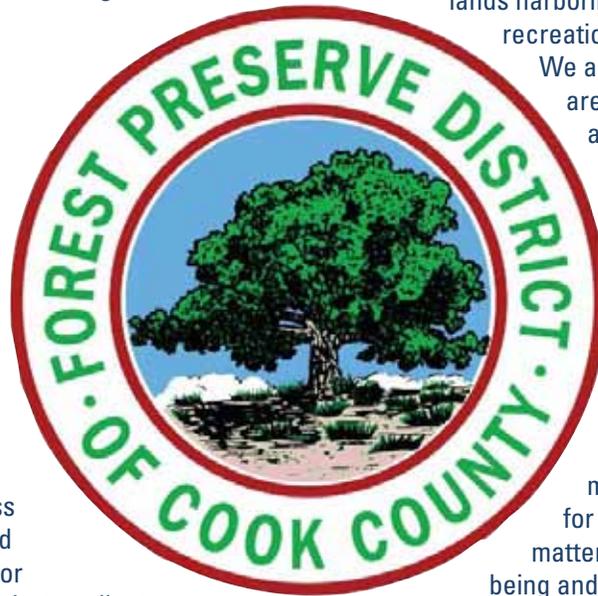
Due to the persistence and foresight of the founders, residents of Cook County can now enjoy more than 68,000 acres of natural lands harboring globally significant biodiversity and providing recreational opportunities for millions of people.

We are lucky ducks! Yet these precious natural areas—providing vital services like cleaning our air, capturing stormwater, and sequestering carbon—remain threatened and mostly degraded. Without our attention and care, they will suffer further.

Sixty years ago, the legendary General Superintendent of the Cook County Forest Preserves, Cap Sauers, wrote a prescient article titled "The Order of Parks," in which he quoted British historian G. M. Trevelyan: "The need to preserve natural beauty is not merely a question of preserving holiday grounds for masses of people from the town. It is also a matter of preserving a main source of spiritual well-being and inspiration on which our ancestors thrive, and which we are now in danger of losing forever. We are literally 'children of the earth,' and removed from her our spirit withers or runs to various forms of insanity. Unless we can refresh ourselves at least by intermittent contact with Nature, we grow awry."

The good news is there's a lot we can do to protect and preserve our natural heritage, to restore these places back to health. If nothing else, I encourage you to get out at least once each season to a forest preserve. Join in the work of habitat restoration. Find a plant or bird new to you and learn its name.

*Sneezeweed*, here we come! ■



Sheila Schultz greets Rev. Jesse Jackson



Steven Gan greets Cong. Brad Schneider



(l. to r.) Rev. Jackson with Cong. Moore; with Evelyn Alexander



Congressman Schneider with Max Boton



Rev. Jackson with Laura Tomsky, Joe Dubaniewicz, and Barbara Altman



Event photographer Claire Esker and State Senator Mike Frerichs



Rev. Jackson with Joe Adler, Laura Tomsky, Lauren Beth Gash, and Marguerite Hampton



Lenny and Suzanne Cahnmann



Tenth Dems interns pictured with Rev. Jackson



John and Danielle Lesiotis



# The Boy Scouts and the Southern Baptist Convention— Another Example of History Repeating Itself

By Steven Gan

As history has taught us, the more one group moves forward with its civil rights, the more other groups will push back and dig in their heels. That has always seemed to be the pattern and it has been and will be no different with LGBT civil rights.

By the time you read this article, the Supreme Court will have made a decision on how marriage equality for gays and lesbians in this country will be “categorized.” The way many of the pundits are reading their tea leaves, along with the recent advancements of marriage equality in the states of Maryland, Rhode Island, and Minnesota, indications are that the Court’s decision on two cases will to some extent be a plus for the further advancement of civil rights for gays and lesbians in this country. *Ed. Note – The Court’s June 26 decisions indeed proved to be the “plus” predicted.*



As a gay American myself, I am enthralled by the dynamic, vibrant, and emotional discourse that has gushed out over these past few months. I have been particularly overwhelmed by the feeling that society as a whole is now embracing marriage equality, because as a compassionate, rational, and evolving society, the realization now is that “it’s the right thing to do.”

As encouraged as I am at this point in time for LGBT civil rights, I have to tell you that I read an article on June 13 that truly disturbed me. The crux of the article (as reported by Reuters and other publications) is that “the Southern Baptist Convention voted to voice opposition to the Boy Scouts of America’s decision to admit gay members, saying that homosexual conduct is contrary to a scout’s oath to do his duty to God.” The article went on to say, “The Southern Baptists, the nation’s largest Protestant denomination approved a non-binding resolution opposing the policy at its annual convention in Houston. The resolution requires no action by member churches but leaves them to decide individually whether to stop sponsoring scout troops.”

As many of you already know, the Boy Scouts of America, based upon a majority vote of its senior members, will no longer prevent any boy, regardless of his sexual orientation, from participating in the organization. Although, on one hand, many people were ecstatic over the decision, there was disappointment when the BSA clearly stated that openly gay adult scouts would still not be allowed to participate in any capacity. As hard as we try to justify the decision by saying, “it’s a start,” discrimination on any level is still pure, unadulterated discrimination on every level.

You’ve probably heard from time to time from one of your gay family members or friends about how horrible it was growing up and having to keep his or her gayness a secret. I know that for me it was very difficult, especially since I was one of four boys in my family, and the other three were rough, tough, and always making me their target to tackle during painful football games.



To avoid being ostracized from my little world, I kept my secret from everyone for many years and even often created elaborate stories about whom I was dating, all in the hopes that my gayness would not be too noticeable. And of course you know full well what happens when you start lying and masquerading about who and what you are. You start to go crazy. You start to develop all kinds of psychological issues that can end up affecting your personal and professional relationships and endeavors.

But although we embark on evolving into a more enlightened, rational, compassionate, and inclusive society, the Southern Baptist Convention sent a message that if you’re gay, you are not welcome in any of the troops that are sponsored by their religious organization.

Now this article is not about the tenets of any religious belief system. It is, however, a voice to try to convey to the Southern Baptist Convention that no matter how hard you try to keep your scouts entrenched in a mindset that being gay is immoral, there will still always be some scouts who will secretly associate and be friends with gays, enjoy watching gay and lesbian actors on TV and in the movies, listen to music created by gay men and women artists, cheer on gay and lesbian athletes, and (god forbid) eventually identify with being gay. This is the reality.

And the more you try to instill prospective boy scouts with the belief that being gay is wrong and immoral, the more you will force boys and young men to pretend to be someone who they aren’t, making some of them feel less than who they really are, and perpetuating a terribly discriminatory attitude that flies in the face of the honor you are actually trying to instill and have them uphold. This is so unconscionably hypocritical.

In my view of the world, you can’t have it both ways. On one hand, you can’t be telling young scouts to be honorable, trustworthy, and moral and then, on the other hand, tell them that if they show any signs of being gay, they better pull up the stakes, pack up their tent, and leave, as they are no longer “moral in the eyes of God.” Well, God made all of us the way God wanted us to be. And in time, as has occurred with many of the other civil rights battles before us, you will come to understand this. ■



*(clockwise from upper left:) Gates Millennium Scholarship winner Josue Pasilas with Barbara and Ron Altman and Waukegan High School counselor Chuck Gutman; State Sen. Julie Morrison with Elliott Hartstein and Carol Blustein; State Rep. Scott Drury; Vivek Bavda; Event co-chair Joe Adler mingles before taking the podium with co-chair Marguerite Hampton to welcome the crowd; Karen McCormick and Marguerite Hampton with Cong. Moore; Event photographer Quenton Galvin and State Sen. Mike Frerichs.*





# Garden to Table Project Begins with Planting and Tending ComCon's Community Garden

By Laura Tomsky

The Garden to Table project is a full-circle adventure that will encompass growing and harvesting the food to be used in economical and nutritional meals as part of our healthy cooking classes for local families. By request, the program has been expanded to include canning demonstrations.

Community Connection needs mentors, gardeners, cooks, nutritionists, canners and lots of volunteers! A project for the young and young at heart, this will be a great community building activity with long-lasting educational results.

The garden was planted earlier this spring with the help of Tenth Dems volunteers and is filled with carrots, iceberg lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, and bush beans, among other things.

The garden's location at 35 S. Genesee Street in Waukegan is wonderfully restful, with a gazebo, statues, and a children's butterfly garden, as well as a great view of our beautiful lakefront.

With the planting complete, we need volunteers to help with weeding, watering, and reviving an area of native plantings and with the children's butterfly garden. If you have a green thumb or simply like to dig in the dirt, please contact us—just an hour or two of your time will help us continue to make the Community Garden a special place. Garden volunteer hours are available during the week and on the weekend by contacting Joe Dubaniewicz at [Joe@TenthDems.org](mailto:Joe@TenthDems.org). For more information, you may also contact *Laura Tomsky, Executive Director, Tenth Dems Community Connection, at [LauraTomsky@TenthDems.org](mailto:LauraTomsky@TenthDems.org), or 847-871-7049.* ■



*(Above:) Volunteers at the garden; (Below:) Who knew gardening could be so much fun?*



*In the beginning – raised beds waiting to be planted*



*After the rains – things are starting to grow*



*(Above:) Joe Dubaniewicz, taking a well-deserved break; (Below:) Volunteers surveying a day of planting.*





*Hors d'oeuvres and more.*



*Evelyn Alexander and Cynthia Alexander*



*L. to r., seated, Cynthia Alexander, Evelyn Alexander; standing, State Sen. Julie Morrison, Ron Schwartz, Connie Blade, Ron Levitsky*



*Nancie Blatt, Rhoda and Dan Pierce, Lowell Jaffe*



*Sam Yingling chats with Phil Kerrigan*



*Samantha Thomas and Ilya Sheyman*



*Tenth Dems interns pictured with Rep. Moore*



*Will County Auditor Duffy Blackburn*



*Ilya Sheyman and Sharon Narrod*

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