A legacy of community Art in and around Douglass Park
Go to the people. Live among them. Learn from them. Love them. Start with what you know. Build on what they have. But of the best of leaders when their task is done, the people will remark:

“We have done it ourselves”

Chinese poem

Taking seriously the need to do work which benefits the local area, we engaged in discussion with professionals servicing clients in the North end of Champaign. These individuals armed us with a short list of community needs which included: teen center, grocery store, more youth activities, and a community center sponsored and run by those living in the surrounding neighborhood. We initiated this project during the fall 2007 semester. During this short time, with the help of with representatives from the City of Champaign, we identified two possible locations to carry out these needs. We were constrained by resources; hence we chose to produce this document which identifies art murals in public spaces. The following booklet illuminates the creative impulse that has shaped this area through the years, as well as outlines the key moments in Champaign’s North End.
In making this pamphlet, we spoke with many individuals who live and/or work in the North end. Overwhelmingly individuals referenced the important life events they experienced at Douglass Park and within the facilities that are at the border of the park. To this end, an art walk would fail to be significant without acknowledging the various forms of art and social activities that have occurred in this space.
“Blacks in Champaign County not only suffered economic restriction, but experienced social segregation as well. In response to having separate and inadequate communal facilities for Champaign-Urbana Blacks, the Douglass Community Center was founded in the early 1930s.” (http://www.prairienet.org/years/douglass.htm)
The center named for the scholar and activist Frederick Douglass, was rebuilt in 1945.
Honor Douglass Founders.

Several of the original committee and staff of Douglass Community Center were honored Sunday at a celebration of the 20th anniversary of the founding of the center. Pictured at the celebration, left to right, are Mrs. Raymond Scott, wife of one of the founders; Mrs. Edna Diffay, past secretary; Richard R. Edwards, past board chairman; Taylor Thomas, first director; and Odelia Wesley, past secretary.

Douglass Center show a success.

Douglass Center, 512 N. Grove, held their Style and Talent Show from 3 to 6 p.m. Sunday, to raise money to buy sewing machines and other equipment such as cheerleading suits for the girls and drum corps outfits. Douglass Center is the only recreation center in Champaign-Urbana for Black youth. Above, several of the models were, left to right, Barbara Adams, Linda Jackson and John Smith. Below, singing group the Four D's, rear, left to right, Diana Abram and Darlene Kelly, and front, left to right, Nancy Buchanan and Dorothy Abram, entertained. Mrs. Mamie Jackson directed the show.

Nov 20, No year given
For nearly eight decades, the Douglass Park area (which includes the park, center, and annex) has been an indispensable to residents in Champaign’s north end. Residents have participated in various artistic and recreational activities which include, but are certainly not limited to, African and modern dance, football, vocal and instrument lessons, karate, basketball, roller skating, reading activities, computer skills, and various other games. Additionally, the lives and hard work of school children and adults alike have been celebrated in this space. In the meeting rooms, during activities, and during the annual Champaign Urbana Days reunion, people recall feeling connected to the area and speak of this area with great pride.

June 11, 1969

**DAY CAMP TO START AT DOUGLASS CENTER**

The Douglass Center’s former Day Camp will be held from Monday until Aug. 8 for children ages 5 to 13.

The purpose of the camp is to supply a complete and extensive recreational experience at no cost for the youth of the community. Activities will include arts and crafts, music, swimming, sports, skating, and one trip a week to places such as Lake of the Woods and the St. Louis Zoo. Booker T. Ford is the director of the camp.

June 11, 1969
**Project Skates Launched,**

*SUN MAR 3 1969*

**Douglass Center Youth to Benefit**

A newly launched campaign is seeking funds to provide indoor roller skates for Douglass Center.

O. P. Bartholow, owner of the Chances R restaurant in Champaign, said, "A few weeks ago, Booker Ford, director of the Douglass Center; Bruce Nesbitt, a Champaign patrolman, and I met to discuss what could be done to help the youth in the northeast neighborhood of Champaign," he said.

Bartholow said Ford indicated Douglass Center has an indoor basketball court which is ideal for roller skating, but that funds weren't available to purchase skates. The skates cost $14.50 per pair.

"Northeast neighborhood groups, campus organizations, business clubs and local businesses agreed to work together to do something about the situation," Bartholow said.

The Chances R has offered to pay for two soul bands to play at the restaurant Monday night he said, and to donate all receipts from the dance to the Douglass Center Roller Skate Fund. Tickets will be $1 apiece.

The Volunteer Illini Project, a campus organization, has agreed to donate $500 to the fund and to sell tickets to the dance. Ford will distribute tickets to be sold in the northeast neighborhood and various campus groups will also sell tickets, Bartholow said. Tickets will also be distributed to various service groups.

Two local bands, The Nickel Bag and Eddie and The Sensations, have agreed to play for one-half of their usual fee. Eddie and The Sensations will also provide three dancers.

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**Programs Scheduled**

*ERI DEC 1972*

The Champaign Park District's Douglass Center will begin programs for persons of elementary, junior high and senior high school age at the old OIC building located at 802 N. Fifth St., Champaign.

Arts and crafts, drama, swimming, stunts and tumbling are a few of the activities for children.

On Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, grade schoolers may use the facilities from 3 to 5 p.m.; junior high schoolers from 5 to 7 p.m.; and senior high schoolers from 7 to 9 p.m.

Thursdays will be for "old folks," those 18 and over. A basketball league will be organized.

Programs are scheduled in the

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**BOOK TURTLE**

Six "street librarians" who dance and distribute books throughout the community, are a new service at the Douglass Library. Three of them,

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**WED JUL 19 1972**

from left, Yolanda Dorsey, Audrey Keaton and Patrick Sterling, wear these colorful costumes and pull the "Rolling Turtle Library" full of books and materials for young children. The six are in the Neighborhood Youth Corps program.
Douglass Park and Recreation Center

This recreation space was hard won and those supplying activities in the space have had to be constantly vigilant to ensure that resources and activities remain present. Community groups have (and still do) debate tirelessly with the Park District, other city agencies, and the university over the growth, development, and use of the park area. During the sixties and seventies, coalitions between University of Illinois programs and the center provided students free visual arts and music classes, a day camp program, and funds for the purchase of skates. These connections were often short, for a summer or semester. In the late sixties, many serving in leadership positions wanted what current university professionals are still arguing for: a long term collaboration between current U of I professors, staff, students, and residents. Long term collaborations may alleviate needs such as space, understaffing, different activities, and monetary resources. In addition to collaboration with university affiliated individuals, as early as 1973 there has been a call for coalitions between other agencies serving north end residents such as the Urban League and local ministers. Quoting former center leader Nate Dixon “If all of us in the community knows exactly what the other is doing, I think we can reach a lot more people.”
This recreation space was hard won and those supplying activities in the space have had to be constantly vigilant to ensure that resources and activities remain present. Community groups have (and still do) debate tirelessly with the Park District, other city agencies, and the university over the growth, development, and use of the park area. During the sixties and seventies, coalitions between University of Illinois programs and the center provided students free visual arts and music classes, a day camp program, and funds for the purchase of skates. These connections were often short, for a summer or semester. In the late sixties, many serving in leadership positions wanted what current university professionals are still arguing for: a long term collaboration between current U of I professors, staff, students, and residents. Long term collaborations may alleviate needs such as space, understaffing, different activities, and monetary resources. In addition to collaboration with university affiliated individuals, as early as 1973 there has been a call for coalitions between other agencies serving north end residents such as the Urban League and local ministers. Quoting former center leader Nate Dixon “If all of us in the community knows exactly what the other is doing, I think we can reach a lot more people.”
Douglass Park and Recreation Center

**Director:**

**Dixon: I'm satisfied when the kids are happy**

By Les Somogyi
Of The Courier

When Nate Dixon accomplished his goal of getting the community involved, he won't sit back and relax.

"I'm always getting into changes. I believe in making improvements for everyone. There is always room for change," he said.

Dixon, now director of the Champaign Park District Douglass Center, said the only time he is really satisfied is when he sees that "the kids are happy."

Keeping kids at Douglass Center happy is not an easy task for Dixon.

"The secret behind programming for these kids is to find what interests them and keep them interested in those activities," he said.

"But there are always some loose ends. One time you get the right program, but not enough money. Or, how are you going to teach music, for example, to kids who can't afford to pay the entry fee to the course. How are you going to hire a teacher or other staff members?"

"It's really hard to program for these kids," he said.

Dixon said he is trying to communicate with other social services agencies in the community like the Urban League and the ministers' association.

"If all of us in the community know exactly what everyone else is doing, I think we can reach a lot more people. And, reaching people is very important here."

"You see, this is a very high risk area. At least as far as programming is concerned. If these kids don't have anything to do, they'll go out on the streets and will most likely get into trouble. So we've got to find the right kind of programming for each age group. From the smallest to the senior citizens," he said.

Dixon also said he is interested in shaping up the community.

"I'm trying to get the entire community involved in recreation and other activities," Dixon said. "That's one of my goals. But when I accomplish that goal, I'm not going to sit back and relax. There is a lot to be done."

"Starting with this center."

"Now that's going to be a tough job to do. But I wanted to do it, because I wanted to know exactly what is going on. Making sure that contractors comply with the affirmative action ordinance of the park district is very important to me."

Dixon said that the park district has received several grants that could be attributed to compliance with the affirmative action clause of the requirements.

Several federal grants are approved only if the park district complies with those requirements.

"The federal government is keeping tabs on moneys, nowadays," Dixon said. "And they would rather keep spending that money where minority is involved."

Dixon also said he is interested in affirmative action for black youth in the Champaign Park District area.

"This is where they find their identity," Dixon said. "We have so many people in our programs that we can hardly take care of them. There must be something people like around here."

Dixon, his wife, Cora, and three children live at 190 E. Bellfontaine, Champaign.

Jun 2, 1973
Douglass Park and Recreation Center

Protest Douglass Center plans
June 27, 1975

Park board audience walks out

About 25 members of Champaign's black community staged a silent walkout thursday night at the Champaign park.

board meeting.

Led by Edna Eastin, a leader of the group protesting the construction plans for a new Douglass Center, the members of the audience silently walked by board President William J.

Reitz and dropped small

sheets of paper on it.

The papers said: Build Douglass Center Now.

They all walked out.

It was the only activity related to the controversial project at the park board meeting.

The board approved a month-to-month lease agreement with

Robert Reitz, owner of the downtown Senior Citizens Center building.

The current lease terminates this month. Commissioners said that since the future of the center is "less than stable," a month-to-month lease was necessary. Either the park district or Reitz can give two

week notices to terminate the new lease.

Park board General Manager

Robert Holman and Champaign

City Manager Gene Miller are expected to ask Reitz to leave in the $350-per-month rent.

But Commissioner Morgan

Powell, who said he had talked with Reitz, said Reitz is reluctant to leave the rent.

The high rent was one of the reasons the city council did not give continuation of helping the center. The council awarded $5,000 to the center for six months. During that time a new center will be sought.

About a dozen senior citizens came to Thursday's meeting in support of the downtown location.

A center volunteer, a senior citizen herself, presented a petition to the board with 130 signatures asking to "keep the center" at the downtown level.

Another woman argued that the downtown center is in a "better location" than the C Center on West Church Street. She said people are "much happier" at the downtown center.

She asked why the park district would continue operation of the C Center but not the downtown center.

Commissioner Powell told her the downtown center is funded by the city while the C Center location is already manned by the park district.

Commissioner Donald F.

Freeman commended the senior citizens for having spoken out Tuesday night before the council, which changed its vote to fund the center. Last week the council voted to award no funds to the center. It would have meant closing the center by the end of July.

Commissioner Richard Davis Jr. took the opportunity to remind the park board that members of the black community also have been trying to speak out on the Douglass Center contro-

versy "but have been running into stone walls."

The appointment of Stanley G. Motley as the park district's new superintendent of parks was approved Thursday night. Motley will begin work in Champaign July 28. He will receive a $15,550 salary. He is coming from Lemont Township Park District, near Joliet, where he had been working for about three months. He is the first director of the Lemont unit. Before that he was director of parks and recreation of the Streamwood Park District.
Douglass Park and Recreation Center

Resident’s stories of interaction in the park area provide us with hope. Individuals working in this area provide us with knowledge and strategy. We are called to action, to build the alliances so many working in the agencies have proposed we do. Hope because we understand the function this area has served and hope because we come to realize that this historic landmark will continue to supply future generations with community based and supported activities.

Aug 5, 1973

Tab’s grid clinic starts this week

The “Start For Stardom Camp With Tab,” a free football camp for Twin City youths aged nine through 15, will conduct its second annual clinic Wednesday through Saturday at the Douglass Community Center in Champaign.

Morning sessions will be held from 10-11:30 each day. Former University of Illinois football star Tab Bennett originated the camp last summer and will again be managing the sessions. More than 300 youngsters participated last year.

Persons interested in registering for the camp should contact Nate Dixon at the Center at 512 E. Grove (356-6122) or Bruce Nesbitt (333-7061) at the U of I Student Services Building for further information.

Ed Jenkins, former Champaign Centennial standout and a current member of the Fighting Illini will be head instructor. He will be assisted by Illini co-captain Ken Braid, tight end Tom Mullen and other team members.
**Douglass Park and Recreation Center**

**Jan 1, 1977**

**Martin Luther King fete Saturday at Douglass**

A day-long celebration in honor of Martin Luther King's birthday is planned for Saturday at Douglass Center in Champaign.

The program is being sponsored by Douglass Center in cooperation with the Blackford Afro-American Culture Center in Champaign.

A continental breakfast also will be offered.

A special children's program is scheduled for 2 p.m. Saturday. The program will feature the film, "I Have a Dream" and "From Mom to Memphis.

**Douglass Center library approved**

The Champaign City Council Tuesday unanimously approved a library for Douglass Center. The $85,000 to $100,000 construction cost for a proposed 1,000-square-foot library in the Douglass Center, which would be dedicated in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday, has been scheduled for 2017.

The council's decision was reached after several public hearings, which were well attended. The council also agreed to add $50,000 in federal funds to the building fund for a new library.

**April 4, 1969**

**Improved Culture Project For North End Children**

By Darlene Napady

Plans for a permanent committee to oversee cultural enrichment activities in Champaign-Urbana's North End were revealed Thursday night in a meeting between area residents and the University of Illinois Division of University Extension.

"Our major problem in the past has been that there has been no carry-over," explained Booker Ford, director of Douglass Center.

"People come here and set up activities, such as music lessons, for a certain period of time, then leave. The kids naturally feel disappointed, especially those who have developed an interest, so someone must see to it that these things don't end with summer."

Douglass Center members seemed somewhat skeptical about their relations to such a committee, and many details apparently will have to be worked out.

**But all agreed to a second meeting of the committee.**

**Extension representatives** said they tentatively had considered music, visual arts, drama, and dance as components of a summer project of the area.

**Last summer's program included instrumental and vocal music as well as visual arts.** But only the visual arts program was successful because it was continued through the year, Ford said.

"The area needs this kind of committee to make sure that such programs are brought in on a sporadic basis and that they relate to needs and heritage of the black community," said John Lee Johnson, a community organizer for the Community Service Center.

"Right now most people in this area do not know what culture is, not even black culture."

"Blacks need to understand musical instrument and how to read and stage a play before they can develop a genuine knowledge of black music or theater."

A major problem in providing such activities evidently will be finding room to accommodate such programs as music lessons, and noise from recreational activities would be distracting.

Schools in the area probably will be available in summer, but Ford said, many children do not like the idea of going back to school for such activities.

University facilities also are available, but they are too far for children to walk and transportation always has been a problem.

A multi-purpose facility to accommodate all such activities is still in the discussion stage.
Classes in Arts, Music Started During Summer

By William S. Becker

In an all-out effort to show that culture and the arts are not activities reserved only for some communities, residents of the North End organized over the summer and held comprehensive classes in visual and music for black youths of Urbana-Champaign.

Details of the summertime program, held at Douglass Community Center in Champaign, were disclosed Friday.

According to Douglass Center director, Booker Ford, North End residents were notified of the program by fliers distributed in the community. All of the art and music classes were free of charge and required no equipment.

Forty-four elementary school children responded for classes in painting, drawing and ceramics, and a large number of North End pre-teens and teenagers participated in lessons for voice, piano, chorus, brass instruments, woodwinds, percussion, and guitar.

**Extension Artists Taught**

Instructed by a six-member team of artists from the University of Illinois Division of University Extension in Art, and assisted by university students in the Volunteer Illinois Project program, children in the Douglass Center classes took field trips to area farms and reproduced what they saw in drawings and ceramic sculpture.

Their projects, including water colors, tempera colors, masks and ceramic pigs, banks, were displayed over the summer at the Illini Union and are now being shown in a Lincoln Square Shopping Plaza display.

North End youths studying musical instruments took advantage of a $10,000 experimental guitar laboratory headed independently by the Baldwin Co. of Cincinnati, and local Baldwin distributor in Champaign.

The lab, first in the country, was designed for class guitar instruction by Dr. Herman Slawman of the University of Illinois campus in Chicago. It consists of 24 electric guitars, amplifiers, earphones, and a central unit, so that teachers can listen to one or all of the guitar players.

According to Dan Perrino, dean of student programs and services at the U of I, and formerly head of the Division of Extension in Music, the equipment will remain in the North End to be used during the day in one of the community's elementary or junior high schools.

Perrino said a North End committee is setting up a program in which neighborhood teens and pre-teens will use the equipment afternoons, and adults in the evenings.

Instructors for the guitar equipment will come from the black community, Perrino said.

For the summertime program, music teaching in the North End, which had been going on a minimal basis with funds from the Urbana Park District, was co-ordinated by local jazz musician Tony Zamora.

Members of Zamora's jazz band, all experts on their respective instruments, instructed the North End youths. All of the musicians are black residents of the North End.

Other instructors were Mrs. Mary Burton, local piano teacher from the community; Jack Foltz, a voice major at the U of I; Michael Bates, a graduate student in music, and Preston Jackson, a local guitar player studying at Southern Illinois University.

Forty more North End youngsters at the ages of 10 and 12 joined the North End Community Choir, organized and run by Willie Summerville.

Summerville, a music teacher for Champaign schools' band and church choir director in the North End, reorganized the youth at the Peoria Union Elementary School and arranged a performance for the choir at the Illinois Union Building.

The North End hopes to continue the chorus on a year-round basis.

The music phase of the Douglass Center program also sent 20 North End youngsters to the Illinois Summer Youth Music Program at the U of I campus.

"This is the first program like this the kids have been able to do," said Ford. "Especially where they've been able to show off what they've done."

"I was very pleased with the program. It has opened many avenues and many doors to kids who would never have had the chance to do this kind of thing because of lack of money or opportunity."

Now at Douglass Center, Fort said, arts and crafts classes for children up to junior high have been added, and will get under full swing next week.

Franklin Junior High School in Champaign are being held from Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. They, like their counterparts last summer, are free of charge and require no equipment.
New Douglass rec center will be opened Saturday

By Michael Murphy
Of The Courier

The Champaign park district expects to open its new Douglass Park recreation center this week.

Following months of stormy debate and a year of reconstruction work, the center in northeast Champaign will be reopened Saturday.

Robert Tomlinson, general manager of the park district, said in his weekly report that an open house has been set for 1 to 3 p.m. that day.

The new building replaces a 30-year-old center block structure that was a community as well as a recreation center for black residents of northeast Champaign.

Community residents strongly opposed reconstruction plans for the center, saying the $90,000 allocated would replace gymnasium space in the old building but would not allow enough space for other neighborhood activities.

Demolition of the old building and English Bros. construction work on the new center were delayed for several weeks by the protest. The project was finally moved off dead center a year ago, when the park board voted an additional $100,000 to the project.

The money was to be used to add a senior citizens wing on the building at 6th and Grove Streets. It became available when bids on the park district's Bicentennial Center project came in well under estimates.

Both recreation centers were financed with funds from a successful 1972 bond referendum.

When inflation forced the park board to scale down its Douglass Center plans, a long-running feud was touched off between park board President William Helms and Richard Davis, who was the board's only black member until he moved from Champaign earlier this year.

In addition, a group of area residents organized to demand a more complete recreation center. Its leader, activist Roy Williams, was jailed on one occasion when he allegedly interfered with workmen at the construction site.

Pickets also roamed the site during demolition work.

A building permit for the 14,000-square-foot facility was issued by city officials Oct. 8, 1975.

Meanwhile, plans for the senior citizens' wing were amended to apply the extra $100,000 toward remodeling the Douglass Annex, a nearby building that formerly housed a grocery store.

Plans for continued operation of a library branch in the building also created some controversy.

However, the Champaign Public Library board decided last November to move the branch, at least temporarily, into a donated building north of the park that previously served as the office of the Champaign Asphalt Co.
In their film, "And the Beat Goes On: the Spirit and the Legacy of the Douglass Center Drum Corps" (2006), authors Nick Green, Brian Mitchell, Jay Walker, as well as Coreyawn Donald, Kwan Cobbs and Mike Jones document the profound impact music had on creating a feeling of "community pride".

(http://www.will.uiuc.edu/pressroom/drumcorps.htm)
CAPTURING THE
"SPIRIT OF THE MUSIC"

Documentary recalls award-winning organization, drive for its return

By MELISSA MERLI
merli@news-gazette.com

CHAMPAIGN — Like many other members of the black community in Champaign-Urbana, Will Patterson remembers being galvanized as a youth by the Douglass Center Drum Corps.

In the late 1970s, he hung around the team and became a “stick boy,” retrieving members’ drum sticks whenever they were dropped or flew out of energized hands. By the time he was a teenager, the Douglass Center Drum Corps—which had won a national contest in 1968—had disbanded.

Now Patterson hopes that a new documentary by the Youth Media Workshop will drum up interest in restarting the corps: “And the Beat Goes On: The Legacy of the Douglass Center Drum Corps.” It will be shown at noon Saturday at Boardman’s Art Theatre. The public is invited.

It was Patterson’s idea to make the documentary. He and Kimberlee Kranz, outreach coordinator at WILL-AM-FM-TV, are the executive producers of “And the Beat Goes On,” the third project of the Youth Media Workshop. The two direct the workshop, which teaches media production techniques to economically diverse African-American students from Champaign-Urbana public, middle and high schools.

For the 25-minute documentary, the youths interviewed three former members of the Drum Corps, a former drill team member and a young man who many hope will rejuvenate the Drum Corps. The youths also helped put together and edit the documentary.

Where: Boardman’s Art Theatre, 126 W. Church St., C.

Tickets: Free.

A question-and-answer session will follow, and people appearing in the documentary and the student producers, among them Brian Mitchell, Nick Green and Jay Walker, will attend.

If you go ...

What: Youth Media Workshop presents “And the Beat Goes On: The Spirit in the Legacy of the Douglass Center Drum Corps,” with support from WILL-TV, Innovative Ed Consulting Inc. and funded in part by a grant from the Illinois Humanities Council.

When: Noon Saturday.

The all-male Douglass Center Drum Corps and all-female drill team started in the early ‘50s. Over the years the team had various leaders, among them Milton “Bumble” Norwood, described as a real showman.

“He was a big, heavyset guy who could move like he weighed 10 to 15 pounds,” recalls Bud Johnson, a former Drum Corps leader himself.

Also appearing in the documentary besides Johnson are former Drum Corps leader Jesse Ratcliff, former member Terry Townsend and former majorette Linda Turnbull. She remembers that their going to the 1968 competition in New York was “like going to Hollywood.” She had never left Champaign before.

In New York, the drum corps competed against 346 other groups from throughout the United States. “Not only were we intimidated by them, but we were impressed by them,” Johnson recalls. Townsend, who describes their win as unbelievable, recalls CBS News
Continued from D-1

anchorman Walter Cronkite talking about them on the evening news and a state-police escort from Indiana back to Champaign.

"It was like we had won the NCAA Final Four," he says.

The documentary ends with Lee Duncan, a charismatic young man who many hope will revive the Drum Corps. A former Chicago resident, Duncan recently graduated from Urbana High School. He had begun playing the drums when he was 5; he was a leader on the instrument at his Chicago middle school. In "And the Beat Goes On," Duncan says people have to support the Drum Corps and the children who want to be part of it.

"Support is everything," he says.

Patterson, now associate director of the African American Studies and Research Program at the University of Illinois, would agree. "It's a dream to get it going again," Patterson said. He said Racchiff is perhaps the only consistent aspect of the Drum Corps.

The documentary shows him outside Douglass Center, pounding away and blowing a whistle in his mouth.

Around him youngsters drum, too.

"The main thing is the drums are in horrible shape," Patterson said. "They have a lot of them, but, again, they're not all usable.

"The quads have a screw that pokes Lee in the gut, and they don't even have bass drum-sticks. Some drums are too big for some of the kids who want to get involved. The equipment is outdated, but the spirit of the music is there so people will do it anyway."

As a scholar, Patterson, who has a doctoral degree from the UI in educational policy, said he is interested in Douglass Park and Douglass Center and the many activities that once existed there in addition to the Drum Corps.

He and Kranich plan to have the Youth Media Workshop make a more extensive documentary on those Toward that goal, they are applying for a $250,000 grant.
Douglass Park

The annual Champaign-Urbana Days occurs the second Saturday of each August in this park (http://www.prairienet.org/years/calendar.htm). This celebration is earmarked as a homecoming event in which families reunite, eat, and engage in events such as the basketball tournament hosted by Sean Williams and the fashion show supervised and managed by long time community member Linda Turnbull. The most recent park celebration was highlighted by a shift in activities and actors.
Many weekend events planned for C-U Days

Food, shows, games, rides will be offered.

By PAUL WOOD
News-Gazette Staff Writer

CHAMPAIGN — Family ties and community bonds have been celebrated for nearly two decades at the Champaign-Urbana Days in Douglass Park. Nicole Steward, the summer camp coordinator for the Champaign Park District, says the event has grown to attract more than 3,000 people each year.

The events, all free of charge, start today and run through Sunday at the Douglass Community Center, 512 E. Grove St.

Activities include a barbecue cook-off, youth games, a bounce house, senior luncheon and bingo, carnival rides and a basketball tournament. Also included are a car show, a talent show and a fashion show.

Vendors from around the area will offer their wares.

Tonight, there’s a movie in the park, “Spy Kids,” and people are welcome to bring blankets and chairs, Steward said.

This year’s Herb Stevens Memorial Talent show from 5 to 9 p.m. is special, she said, because Mr. Stevens, a philanthropist from Paxton, recently died.

“For many years, he sponsored the event on Fridays,” Steward said. “Anyone 18 and younger could showcase a talent, and each participant got $40. This year is different, with scholarships and awards. He left instructions in his will.”

Saturday is a baseball tournament from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and a barbecue cook-off showcasing local purveyors of the specialty meats. Mayor Jerry Schweighart will be the judge of the cook-off, which starts at 2 p.m.

“The car and motorcycle show features antique vehicles, and gets more popular each year,” Steward said.

Alpha Kappa Alpha will present school and community awards.

Sizzling Greg Bacon and The Generic DJ will provide music.

The final day will feature the continued tournaments and a gospel fest showcasing local choirs from 4 to 7 p.m., Steward said.

There will also be a Back-to-School Fair at Champaign-Urbana Days at Douglass Park that is happening from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. The Christie Clinic Van, staffed by Family Practitioner Volunteers from Christie Clinic and the Carle Foundation’s Mobile Unit, staffed by volunteers from the Public Health Department, will be there at the Douglass Community Center providing free school health exams to uninsured children, free immunizations, and assisting uninsured families to sign up for the state KidCare and FamilyCare insurance programs.

Also this weekend at Douglass Park and the farmers’ market, the Anti-War, Anti-Racism Effort will have informational banners and leaflets marking the anniversary of the United States dropping weapons of mass destruction on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Aug. 6 and 9, 1945.

You can reach Paul Wood at (217) 351-5203 or via e-mail at pwood@news-gazette.com.
5th and Park Mural

Angela Rivers, Bennie Drake, Eugene Britt, and Daniel Mitchell created a respected community landmark from latex, oil, and lead based paints donated by community members. In cooperation with the City of Champaign, Angela Rivers initiated this project to provide area youth with an opportunity to create art and to provide hope to all who viewed the mural. Both Rivers and Drake selected the mural site because it was close to their homes and near community churches. After choosing the site, the wall was sandblasted and the artists proceeded to transfer initial sketches onto the wall. The sketches were then filled with paint.

Angela Rivers holds a position at the DuSable Museum in Chicago, Illinois. Eugene Britt and Bennie Drake still live in the Champaign Urbana area. Drake is still creating artwork using masonite, acrylics, rendering with pen and ink. He describes his current works as a “mind game”, illuminating the evolution and continual changing nature of life objects.
The Drake Family: Mr. Bennie Drake on right

Mural on 5th and Park
Douglass Park Sculpture: Fredrick Douglass: In Remembrance

Sculptor and musician Preston Jackson lives in Illinois, spending a majority of his time teaching at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and in Peoria at the Checkered Raven Gallery.

The following is a portion of the artist’s statement, taken directly from the Champaign Public Library website:

“This sculpture is an archway piece — it is a two-way door that symbolizes a gateway to both the past and the future. The door, which is central to the piece, is in a fixed position, neither open nor closed. The bar-like structures in the door suggest confinement of some sort. Dualities in symbolism and thought abound. At the very top we see storm clouds and a menacing-looking black tree whose branches pierce space like bony fingers searching for a hangman’s rope. It also suggests the impending Civil War and the events at Harper’s Ferry, events which occurred during Douglass’ lifetime.”

(http://champaign.org/about_us/douglass_branch_library/douglass_sculpture.html)
Shauna Carey, Art Teacher at Booker T. Washington, describes the project in the following way:

“The mural was painted with a group of eight 5th grade students as an enrichment project in 2002. The kids decided on the images and events that made our school unique. I drew the mural with their input and they painted it. We worked once a week for about a semester on it. A parent suggested the quote from Booker T. Washington and it fit with our school philosophy so it seemed the right quote to use.”
Staff at the Don Moyer's Boys and Girls Club have worked with students over the years to produce four different artistic projects highlighted in this tour. Artists are area youth from Champaign, Urbana, and Rantoul Illinois. Three works are exhibited at the club. Another is exhibited at the Douglass Center.

Upon entering the Don Moyer's the ceiling or "Tile art" is visible. Members paint tiles that reflect a favorite pet, animal, activity, or even their names. Each year, more tiles are painted, filling the corridor of the main hallway club members frequent.
“Continents” is another project found directly to the right before entering the gymnasium. Art therapist Morris Mosley and club members produced this wall art in 2006 according to staff members. Continents are made from wood and decorated with various multi-colored cloths, painted versions of masks, a pencil drawing of a Trojan horse, animals, fish, and pottery.

Current staff at the Boys and Girls club are not certain as to who the artists of the large mural (found in the gymnasium) are. “Gymnasium mural” appears to be crafted from bright colored acrylic paints. Individuals are shown playing basketball, shooting pool, working out mathematical equations, among other activities.
Works Cited

All newspaper articles are courtesy of the Urbana Free Library (Urbana, Illinois) Archive Department.

3. “Months to build, years to serve Northeast Champaign---Douglass Center comes down in minutes this morning”, Douglass Recreation Center photo file, September 25, 1977, by Phil Greer for the CU Courier. See page 8.

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