



# RIVERFRONT PROGRESS CONTINUES

**T**he Detroit Riverfront has emerged as one of the biggest success stories in our region. Attracting more than three million visitors each year, it has become a beautiful gathering place for our entire community.

This fall, we transformed another formerly blighted space along the riverfront into Robert C. Valade Park. This new park provides a tremendous destination along the East Riverfront and will feature programming throughout the year. Valade Park includes a bridge that connects Stroh River Place with the Aretha Franklin Amphitheatre and brings us closer to a completed Riverwalk along the East Riverfront. We encourage you to stop by and see this incredible addition to the Riverwalk. And if it's snowing, bring your sled!

Next year, we begin our busiest construction season yet. In 2020, we will complete the boardwalk at Riverfront Towers and we will continue connecting the Riverwalk from the Joe Louis Arena site to the edge of Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park. Later in the year, we will break ground on Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park and the May Creek Greenway.

While 2020 will be a busy year for construction, we are also looking forward to a continued expansion of our programming and operations activities. As the perpetual steward of this special place, the Conservancy maintains and operates the Riverwalk and the Dequindre Cut. Our work never ends... and it is a costly endeavor.

There are numerous worthy organizations and causes requesting and soliciting

philanthropic dollars throughout our community with the goal of improving our great city. This holiday season, please consider making a gift to help us maintain the riverfront parks and greenways as safe, accessible and beautiful destinations for all of us, and for generations to come.

Every donation makes a difference. This work is only possible because of your generosity. Thank you for supporting our mission and for believing in the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy.

Matthew P. Cullen  
Chairman



# INTRODUCING ROBERT C. VALADE PARK



The Detroit Riverfront Conservancy's latest family-friendly park has officially opened along the Detroit River. And judging from the feedback so far, Robert C. Valade Park is sure to become one of the most popular destinations along the riverfront.

**L**ocated at 2670 Atwater Street, just east of the Aretha Franklin Amphitheatre, the park features an expansive, sandy beach with chairs and umbrellas, a children's musical garden, colorful playscapes for kids to climb on, a community barbecue pavilion and Bob's Barge, which is Detroit's only floating bar. The park is also home to The Shed, a 3,600-square-foot building that will be used for food, events and programming.

The public's first chance to experience the new destination came on Saturday, October 26 as the Conservancy hosted its popular HarvestFest Detroit celebration

the community who were anxious to check out the new park.

More than 1500 people came to the event and enjoyed trick-or-treating

and lots of family-friendly activities including hayrides, face painting, bounce houses, meet-and-greet and photo opportunities with superhero

and princess characters, live music, a pumpkin patch, games, giveaways and much more.

*"Hosting HarvestFest Detroit at Robert C. Valade Park this year was a wonderful opportunity for the community to experience this exciting destination during one of our most popular events."*

- Rachel Frierson, director of programming

at the new park. Typically the event is held along the Dequindre Cut, but the location was moved this year because there were so many people throughout



“It gave us a chance to see how the community interacts with the new space so we can better identify and activate future programming opportunities,” said Rachel Frierson, director of programming.

The Conservancy plans to have Robert C. Valade Park programmed all year long. Future programs include volleyball leagues, movies in the park, senior hustle

parties, winter activities and more.

The park’s name celebrates native Detroit and former Carhartt, Inc. Chairman and CEO Robert C. Valade, and is in recognition of a gift to the Conservancy from the Molly and Mark Valade Family Fund.

The project has also been supported by the William Davidson Foundation, the John S. and James L. Knight

Foundation, which selected the project as one its 2017 Knight Cities Challenge winners, the Walters Family Foundation, and the Mona and Richard Alonzo Fund. The Conservancy also received a grant for the project from Gannett/ USA Today Network as part of the “A Community Thrives” initiative, which supports programs that positively impact local communities.



# SUMMER MEMORIES ON THE

Once again, the summer season saw an exceptional turnout of visitors along the Detroit Riverfront.

To kick off the summer, River Days returned for its 13th consecutive year - but with a new location and style. More than 100 food trucks and over 40 local and national acts, including Smokey Robinson, Brandy and

Faith Evans converged at West Riverfront Park.

Sponsored by General Motors, one of our most popular events every year is Reading & Rhythm on the Riverfront (R3), an early literacy program to help

children get excited about reading. This year, R3 served more than 4,300 kids and their families through interactive children's entertainment and stories read live by community leaders like Congresswoman





Debbie Dingell, THAW President Saunteel Jenkins and GM's Terry Rhadigan. All children in attendance enjoyed a free ride on the Cullen Family Carousel and were sent home with a free book, courtesy of the Detroit Public Library. Outdoor fun returned again this year to the Dequindre Cut

Freight Yard. For adult visitors, the Freight Yard now holds a permanent liquor license and a wide selection of beer and wines are available for purchase. The Freight Yard featured 16 weeks of programming, including live music, kids dance parties and vendor fairs selling works by

local artists. Additionally, the Conservancy partnered with local non-profits, such as D.Cipher and Detroit Party Marching Band to host events, inviting the community to gather among the shipping containers to support worthy causes.



# SOIRÉE 2019

## A MASQUERADE AT

After a stormy afternoon, the clouds parted and gave way to an atmosphere of excitement and adventure at the Dequindre Cut Freight Yard as the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy celebrated its popular Soirée on the Greenway fundraiser on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> of September under the light of a full moon.

Presented by Citizens Bank, the 7th annual Soirée drew 500 guests for an evening of fall-themed food and drink. In keeping with tradition, the Conservancy commissioned a new work of art to unveil at the event as Detroit's own Freddy Diaz created a mural as a tribute to the artists who painted on the Dequindre Cut before its transformation into a community greenway.

Attendees came in their favorite masquerade costume and, to top it off, one-of-a-kind masks created by artists from across the country were provided to the first 100 guests, compliments of Ford Motor Company.

Between CANVASxDetroit interactive graffiti experience, liquid nitrogen ice cream demonstrations by Dr. Nitro and pedal-powered animal bikes from Juan Martinez, this year's Soirée was once again a night to remember. Additionally, local chocolatiers Bon Bon Bon hosted a Build Your Own

Bon activity in which guests could build their own chocolate masterpieces.

This year's Soirée helped the Conservancy to raise more than \$75,000 to ensure that the Riverwalk and Dequindre Cut continue to be safe and beautiful spaces for everyone to enjoy.





# THE FREIGHT YARD

*“Citizens Bank is proud to return as presenting sponsor for Soirée on the Greenway. The work that the Conservancy is doing along the riverfront is crucial to boosting the economic vitality of the Detroit community and their efforts are bringing together people from all corners of the city.”*

- Rick Hampson, president of Citizens Bank, Michigan





## DONOR SPOTLIGHT: HONORING ROBERT C. VALADE

In August of this past summer, the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy announced that Atwater Beach would be renamed Robert C. Valade Park. The park is named in honor of the late Robert C. Valade, former chairman and CEO of Carhartt, Inc., and is in recognition of a gift from the Molly and Mark Valade Family Fund.

“My dad loved the City of Detroit and above all, he enjoyed being out on the water,” said Mark Valade, CEO of Carhartt, Inc. “He had a passion for sailing, power boating and fishing. The Detroit Riverfront and Lake St. Clair were the best places to do all of his favorite activities.”

Born in Detroit, Robert Valade began his career with Carhartt in 1949 in the shipping department. Within 10 years, he rose through the ranks to become chairman and CEO, eventually taking over for his father-in-law. Outside of his work, Robert loved to pass time on Lake St. Clair and on the Detroit Riverfront, and for that reason, the public spaces along the Detroit River hold a special meaning for the Valade family.

“I know my dad would be proud to have his name

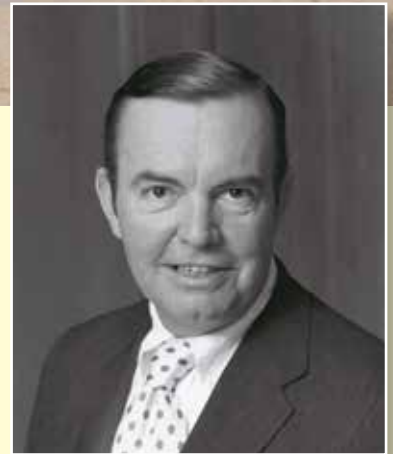
associated with a part of the cultural and recreational development on the Detroit River,” said Mark. “Our hope is that this park offers a destination for families to get outdoors, spend time together and experience the city in a new way.”

The newly-opened Robert C. Valade Park has several

unique features that make it a stand-out destination on the riverfront, including a sandy beach, barbecue pavilion, children’s playscapes, “Bob’s Barge” floating bar and The Shed,

which offers space for programming and a place to get something to eat. The Valade family is looking forward to witnessing the Detroit community come together in this special space.

“Making this gift in celebration of my dad and in support of the park seemed like a natural fit,” said Mark. “We’re honored to be associated with the great work the Conservancy is doing.”



*“I know my dad would be proud to have his name associated with a part of the cultural and recreational development on the Detroit River. Our hope is that the park offers a destination for families to get outdoors, spend time together and experience the city in a new way.”*

– Mark Valade, CEO of Carhartt, Inc.





## COMING SOON TO **DETROIT'S RIVERFRONT**

Construction continues this season as the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy looks to complete the East Riverfront and make significant progress along the West Riverfront.

### **J**oseph Campau Greenway

Earlier this year, the City of Detroit broke ground on the Joseph Campau Greenway.

The first phase of the project is centered between Jefferson Avenue and Robert Bradbury Drive and is expected to be completed in the coming weeks. Work on the second phase will commence in the spring.

The 1.2-mile greenway that stretches from Vernor Highway to Jefferson Avenue will provide east side residents with safer and more convenient access to the riverfront. The greenway will include a 10-foot wide bicycle and pedestrian path, new benches, outdoor power stations, light posts and security cameras. The Conservancy will provide security and maintenance for the greenway when it opens in 2020.

### **Riverfront Towers**

Work to construct a boardwalk along the Riverfront Towers property has been progressing steadily this summer and fall. Currently, crews are finishing the last of the concrete and installing

the railing and light posts. This new stretch of Riverwalk, which lies 17 feet from the river's edge, will be completed no later than mid-January.

### **The Platform Parcel**

Since late September, crews have been busy extending the Riverwalk along this stretch of property, which is located between the Joe Louis Arena site and Riverfront Towers. To date, crews have leveled the ground, run electric lines, poured concrete sidewalks and curbs and installed light posts. The installation of the marine railing, benches, security cameras and landscaping will begin in early spring.

Owned by businessman Peter Cummings, this parcel represents a crucial piece in developing a five-and-a-half miles of Riverwalk along the riverfront.

### **Uniroyal Promenade**

Crews have been on site this fall doing preliminary work on this exciting project which when finished in 2021, will complete the 3.5 miles of Riverwalk along the East Riverfront. The Uniroyal Promenade will connect Mt. Elliott Park with Gabriel Richard Park, as well as provide access to

the MacArthur Bridge to Belle Isle. In addition to the connectivity, the Promenade will be another stunning amenity in itself – featuring creative design elements and landscaping, as well as new benches, lighting and security cameras.

### **Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park**

The Detroit Riverfront Conservancy and members of Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates and Adjaye Associates—the two firms leading the design of Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park—held an early-October Community Meeting at the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 58 building that was attended by more than 240 people.

The purpose of the meeting, which was the fifth public meeting since the process began in 2017, was to update the community on the status of the project, including the Delta Dental Children's Play Garden and park landscaping.

Construction on the 22-acre park will begin in summer 2020 with a completion date of fall 2022.



## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: LINDA FORD

Linda Ford was born in Detroit and grew up in the Metro area, moving from Troy to Mt. Clemens to Clinton Township and eventually back to Detroit for college. She has resided in Dearborn Heights for more than 30 years, but she has a deep love for Detroit and the riverfront, which she feels is tied to her family roots.

From her childhood, Linda has fond memories of visiting relatives in the city and spending time exploring places along the riverfront, such as Belle Isle. “My mother was a single mom and we moved from place to place,” said Linda. “But one thing that was consistent were the homes in which my family lived. The stability of family that lived in Detroit and the time spent visiting them – that makes me feel so attached to the city.”

Today, Linda is one of the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy’s most dedicated volunteers. While she volunteers with a lot of events and programming –

everything from Reading and Rhythm on the Riverfront to HarvestFest and River Days, her favorite part of volunteering is simply being an ambassador for the Conservancy, the riverfront and the city of Detroit.

“It’s lovely to be a part of that community that comes down to the riverfront,” said Linda. “It’s a break from the hustle and bustle – an environment where you’re almost in a vacation frame of mind.”

As a Riverfront Ambassador, Linda spends a lot of time walking or biking along the Riverwalk and answering questions from visitors. Oftentimes she disseminates information: talking to people about programs that are available to them, making sure parents know about the opportunities available for their kids and filling people in on what’s new and what the Conservancy is doing.

Volunteers like Linda are essential to the visitor experience along the riverfront. This past year alone, more than 385 volunteers invested approximately 8,100 hours into making the riverfront an exceptional place to be. If you’re interested in volunteering, fill out the online application form at the Conservancy’s website.

To learn more and apply, visit [www.detroitriverfront.org/volunteers](http://www.detroitriverfront.org/volunteers) or call **(313) 566-8207**.

## WAYS TO VOLUNTEER

- Check wristbands at an event
- Lead arts and crafts activities for kids
- Staff the information booth
- Become a Riverfront Ambassador
- Set up at events



# WE ARE THANKFUL FOR YOU

The scenic, family-friendly riverfront that our region knows and loves today only exists as it does because this project brought our community together to change the world. The redevelopment of the riverfront was made possible by bringing together thousands of community members and working collaboratively across business, government, and community to return an important natural resource to the citizens of Detroit. The result has been not only an extraordinary transformation of the East Riverfront, but a place that is inclusive and welcoming to all.

The Detroit Riverfront is unique from other park systems across the world and across our city. Instead of tax dollars, our operation is funded by thousands of donors who make an annual gift to ensure that the riverfront is a safe, clean, beautiful gathering place for our more than three million visitors each year.

As we continue to realize our vision of a 5.5 mile riverfront by building new parks and greenways our annual need for capital repairs, landscaping, security officers, staff, and resources grows. We are at an inflection point in our history, and in order to preserve our work for generations of Detroiters tomorrow, we need your support of our organization today.

## WAYS TO GIVE

Considering a gift to the riverfront? Here are some ways you can help out:

- Make a one-time donation or become a Monthly Sustainer
- Learn about your employer's matching gift program
- Become a member and receive exclusive benefits
- Purchase an engraved brick or paver, underwrite a commemorative bench or make an honorary gift for a loved one
- Support the Conservancy at its fundraising events

**We hope you will consider joining us in our mission to provide a world-class riverfront for all. Please visit [detroitriverfront.org/waystohelp](http://detroitriverfront.org/waystohelp).**

## About the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy

The Detroit Riverfront Conservancy is a non-profit organization founded in 2003 with the mission to develop public access to Detroit's Riverfront and to serve as an anchor for economic development. As the permanent stewards of the Riverwalk and the Dequindre Cut, the Conservancy is responsible for raising the funds needed for construction, operation, maintenance, security and programming of the public spaces located along the riverfront. The Conservancy's ultimate vision is to develop five-and-a-half miles of riverfront from the Ambassador Bridge on the west to Gabriel Richard Park, just east of the MacArthur Bridge to Belle Isle. Visit [www.detroitriverfront.org](http://www.detroitriverfront.org) for more information.





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