



LOCAL

ELMHURST
 LOMBARD
 VILLA PARK

A WEEKLY JOURNAL WRITTEN BY RESIDENTS OF YOUR COMMUNITY

SPONSORED BY THE *Chicago Tribune*

Elmhurst theater troupe inspires careers

BY ANNEMARIE MANNION
Triblocal.com reporter

Long before Tim Soszko got involved in performing in and organizing the Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival, the nation's largest sketch comedy festival, he played a crocodile in a production of "Peter Pan" at Elmhurst Children's Theatre.

He credits his career in acting, directing and teaching to the 61-year-old theater.

"I was kind of a shy kid," Soszko said. "[Being in the troupe] helped me break out of my shell. And it gave me more of a sense of what theater could be—beyond the mandatory school stuff—like the school plays."

Anne Knudsen, secretary of the theater board, said since its beginnings, the theater

has relied on volunteers to keep it thriving. Participants pay \$80 per production, which covers the cost of the script, licensing fees and costumes. Knudsen said other children's acting troupes in the Chicago area charge in the \$700 to \$800 range per production.

"The only way we can do this is with the volunteer work of parents," Knudsen said. "We're not out to get a lot of money out of this. We try

to break even with each production."

The group stages two plays a year and a sketch comedy performance which middle school kids write and perform.

"Usually we try to go for musicals that have large casts," Knudsen said. "We'll have 150 kids try out for a production that has 50 roles."

PLEASE SEE THEATRE, PAGE 4

Skatepark project gets a \$4,000 grant

BY VILLA PARK SKATEPARK COMMITTEE

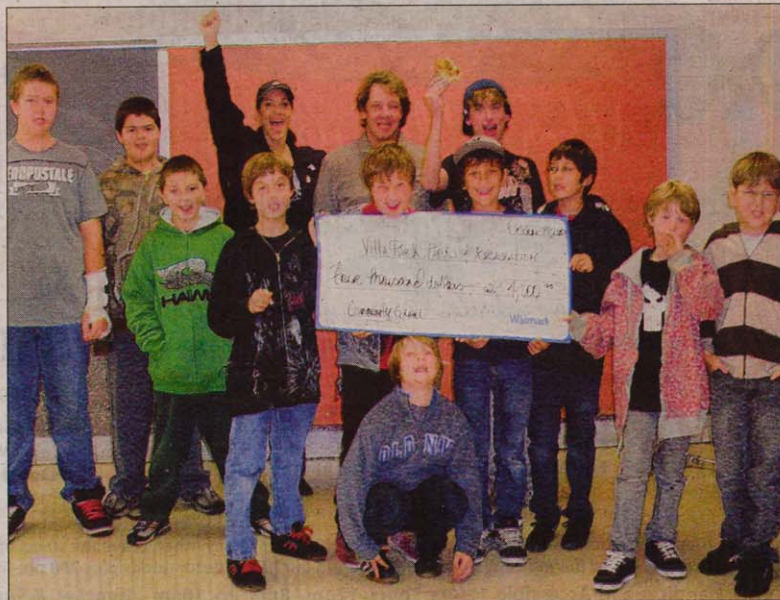
There were whoops of joy recently when pre-teens learned a project to build a new skate park in Villa Park has received a \$4,000 grant—and when they saw the big check.

In an effort to support community organizations, Walmart awarded the grant Oct. 14 to the Villa Park Recreation Department for the project.

"We are so excited, and this grant could not have come at a better time for us," said Paulina Jimenez, skatepark chairman. "The kids needed to see the check so they believe that this is for real and that we are moving forward. But we still need more companies like Walmart to step up to the plate and contribute."

The committee plans to build a new park to replace one in poor condition at Jefferson Park.

For more information on the project, call 630-834-8970.



Members of the Villa Park Skatepark Committee celebrate as they hold the \$4,000 check.

Photo submitted by Villa Park Recreation Department

INSIDE

Prescription medicine collection is a success

PAGE 6 >

Elmhurst seniors learn about fire safety

PAGE 13 >

Triblocal sports player of the month contest begins

PAGE 15 >