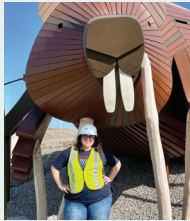




Issue 27 / Q2 / 2025



A MESSAGE FROM OUR PROGRAMMING TEAM

Dear Riverfront Friends,

The Detroit Riverfront is more than just a beautiful backdrop—it's a place where community comes to life. You can feel it in the rhythm of our programs from kids finding their beat at *Reading & Rhythm on the Riverfront*, to neighbors sharing a laugh during yoga, and seniors staying active with *Detroit Riverwalkers*. These moments, big and small, turn open spaces into a living, breathing gathering place for the community to make memories, reflect, and connect.

At the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy, we believe that programming is more than activity, it's an invitation. An invitation to discover joy, to feel seen, and to belong. That's why our team works year-round to create meaningful, inclusive programs that help everyone feel welcome, represented, and at home. Whether you're here for the first time or you've been walking these paths for years, we want you to know: *this place is yours*.

We host more than 200 days of programming each year, drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors—from toddlers to teens, families to older adults, lifelong residents to first-time tourists. From multi-generational gatherings like *Riverfront Fish Fest* to peaceful sunset

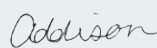
meditations, each program is designed with intention: to spark connection, celebrate culture, and reflect the incredible diversity of our city.

Our work is grounded in listening. Thousands of Detroiters and Metro Detroiters have shaped our efforts through surveys, focus groups, and conversations—sharing their hopes and visions for what the Detroit Riverfront can be. This input guides everything we do, from programming to park design. When *Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park* opens this October, it will be a place built by and for our community—with programs that echo the voices, creativity, and spirit of the people who shaped it.

And we don't do this alone. We're proud to partner with local organizations, artists, small businesses, and neighbors whose deep roots in the community help ensure our programs are not only vibrant but relevant and authentic. Together, we're lifting up homegrown talent, building lasting connections, and creating a riverfront that feels like home.

Join us this summer, bring a friend or two and introduce them to all there is to discover. There's something here for everyone—and we can't wait to share it with you.

Sincerely,



Addison Mauck
Director of Visitor Experience



Renée Rodriguez
Program Manager



CONNECTING WITH THE HEART OF DETROIT

PROGRAMMING AT RALPH WILSON PARK

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park is just months away from opening this October, and over the past year, the programming team at the Conservancy has been hard at work planning for this space to become a vibrant hub for community connection, recreation, and discovery. From peaceful moments in nature to active play and immersive educational experiences, the park is designed to inspire a deep connection to the outdoors and to Detroit's rich cultural heritage.

Four interpretive themes have been identified that will help guide programming throughout the park, giving visitors a wide variety of ways to engage in this new dynamic public space. The themes were developed through a thoughtful process of community engagement, including over 1,800 surveys collected, multiple public meetings, and events aimed at capturing the voices and visions of Detroiters. The Conservancy is also partnering with Huron-Clinton Metroparks to develop enriching educational opportunities including field trips and science-based programming at the Water Garden.

Power of the Outdoors

This theme highlights the park's role in inspiring people to connect with nature. Visitors will find opportunities for peaceful reflection and outdoor learning, from group meditation and yoga classes to birdwatching and nature-themed art sessions. Passive features such as the nature walk around the Huron-Clinton Metroparks Water Garden and tree-lined promenades throughout the park will invite moments of quiet observation and connection with the natural world.

Four Seasons of Play

The park's diverse landscape, including play gardens, sports courts, and hills will offer four seasons of active play for all ages.

Programming will be developed to engage with visitors both young and old, encouraging carefree outdoor play, activities to inspire creative movement as well as classic exercise and sporting opportunities. Passive features like the Bernstein Bear Slide and William Davidson Sport House will ensure that the park remains lively and engaging throughout the year.

Connecting with the Environment

With a focus on environmental stewardship, this theme encourages visitors to learn about their impact on the planet. Nature-themed field trips for students throughout the community, environmental stewardship career development and many volunteer opportunities will promote hands-on engagement. Interpretive signage on topics like local ecosystems and environmental restoration will foster a deeper understanding of our natural surroundings.

Lessons from the River and Land

Detroit's history is deeply intertwined with the land and water that define its landscape. Ralph Wilson Park will reflect this heritage with programming like cultural events and gatherings, informative walking tours, elder storytelling sessions, and educational field trips. Historical markers and interpretive signage will bring these stories to life, connecting the past with the present.



Park Construction Progress, May 2025



EXCITING UPGRADES ON THE DETROIT RIVERFRONT

As the weather warms up and the Detroit Riverfront comes alive with activity, several recent improvements are enhancing the visitor experience. These are just a small sampling of the work that has been happening all along the riverfront this year, with many more projects planned for summer and fall.

The Cullen Family Carousel at Cullen Plaza now features a beautiful new canopy, replacing the previous canopy that had been damaged in a storm. The carousel also received some care and attention from our friends at the Detroit Institute of Arts who carefully restored the sea creatures and animals, keeping them in good condition for riders. This summer, rides on the Cullen Family Carousel are free of charge, open Tuesday – Sunday from noon – 7 p.m.

At Mt. Elliott Park, the Gilbert Family Schooner Splash Pad has undergone major improvements this spring including pad resurfacing to ensure safe and refreshing summer fun for families.

Multiple areas along the Riverwalk and at the parks have undergone paver and concrete repairs, improving both accessibility and safety.

These upgrades are part of an ongoing commitment to providing a world-class riverfront experience. Maintaining and improving over seven miles of riverfront, including parks, plazas, and greenways, requires consistent care and attention.



HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT A THRIVING DETROIT RIVERFRONT

Maintaining the beauty, safety and accessibility of the Detroit Riverfront isn't just about concrete and canopies; it's about creating a space where memories are made and our community can come together.

These recent upgrades were made possible through our annual fund, which relies on the generosity of supporters like you. With the highly anticipated opening of Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park in October, adding over 22-acres of space to our footprint, your support is more critical than ever.

By contributing to our annual fund, you're directly supporting the ongoing maintenance, improvement, security and expansion of these vibrant public spaces. Every donation, no matter the size, makes a difference. Together, we can continue transforming our riverfront into a place where everyone feels welcome, inspired, and proud.

To make an immediate impact, please consider donating today. Visit our website or scan the QR code to help keep the Detroit Riverfront thriving for generations to come.



Interested in wearing your support of the Detroit Riverfront on your sleeve for all to see?

Check out detroitriverfront.org/RiverfrontMerch to purchase a wide variety of Detroit Riverfront gear, from Dequindre Cut hoodies, to Best Riverwalk T shirts and baby onesies.

ADDITIONAL WAYS TO GIVE

In addition to visiting our online store, you can support the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy through volunteering, planned and legacy giving, sponsorships, and more. Every effort helps us keep the riverfront vibrant and accessible for all. Visit detroitriverfront.org/waystohelp to learn more. Or, scan the QR code to give a gift today!



Give online by visiting detroitriverfront.org/give/2025_NL2

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PARTNERS IN PROGRAMMING

BUILDING COMMUNITY ALONG THE RIVERFRONT

The Detroit Riverfront Conservancy's programming is a testament to the power of partnership. Year after year, the Conservancy collaborates with a dynamic network of organizations from across Detroit to offer a rich variety of free programs designed to serve the entire community. These partners help make the riverfront more than just a destination—they make it a vibrant gathering place where Detroiters can move, learn, connect, and thrive.

Health and wellness take center stage throughout the year. Thanks to partners like Urban Solace, yoga sessions offer peaceful moments of mindfulness along the water's edge. The energy picks up with Vámonos, whose lively Zumba classes invite participants to dance their way to better health. Two Left Feet Hustle keeps the beat going with weekly hustle during Riverwalkers that bring joy and community to the Riverwalk. And for those craving something more adventurous, Motown Roller Club delivers nostalgic fun with community roller-skating events at Valade Park all summer long.

The riverfront also serves as a runner's haven, with groups like We Run 313 hosting regular runs and meetups along the Riverwalk and greenways. These events foster not just fitness, but also a deep sense of connection and camaraderie.

Beyond physical wellness, collaborations with groups like We Shall Read and the Wise Guys Chess Club make the riverfront a place that minds can grow through reading, critical thinking, and meaningful play. Just this year, a new partnership with the Girl Scouts of Southeast Michigan has launched *The Healing in Nature Patch*, offering girls the chance to explore the link between mental health and the natural world through activities like sensory meditations, yoga poses, tree tag, affirmations, and more.

Many of these partnerships have been in place for years, and the programs they support continue to evolve in response to the community's feedback and changing needs. At the same time, the Conservancy is constantly seeking new collaborations and developing fresh programming to remain aligned with the hopes and interests of the people it serves.

The Detroit Riverfront Conservancy is proud to work hand-in-hand with these inspiring partners working to build a stronger, healthier, and more connected Detroit—one program at a time.



Learn more by visiting
[DetroitRiverfront.org/Things-to-do](https://detroitriverfront.org/things-to-do)





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