

Willmore Park Society

SPRING 2026 NEWSLETTER

Honoring the Legacy of Cyrus Crane Willmore

7200 Hampton Avenue, St. Louis, MO | 314-255-5099 | willmoreparksociety.com



Willmore Park — A St. Louis treasure since 1947

A Beautiful Day in the Park

What a glorious day it was!

Yesterday, **Saturday, April 25, 2026**, volunteers from across St. Louis Hills and beyond gathered at Willmore Park for our **Earth Day Cleanup** — and the results were absolutely spectacular. Armed with rakes, trash bags, gloves, and an unstoppable spirit of community pride, our neighbors came together to beautify the park we all love.

To every single person who showed up, rolled up their sleeves, and made a difference: **thank you**. Whether you spent thirty minutes or three hours, your effort

is seen, appreciated, and deeply valued. The park has never looked better, and neither has the spirit of this community.

But here's the exciting part — the energy from yesterday's cleanup is just the beginning. The Willmore Park Society has been building momentum, and we have some truly remarkable news to share with you in this edition. So grab your favorite spring beverage, settle in, and let's celebrate what we've accomplished together — and what's ahead.



We Are Officially a 501(c)(3)!

★ MILESTONE ANNOUNCEMENT ★

As of **April 24, 2026**, the Willmore Park Society has received official
501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt Status
from the Internal Revenue Service.

This is the news we've been working toward, and we are thrilled to share it with you. Just one day before our Earth Day Cleanup — talk about perfect timing — the IRS formally granted the Willmore Park Society tax-exempt status as a recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

What does this mean for you and for WPS?

- **Your donations to the Willmore Park Society are now tax-deductible.** Every dollar you give goes further, and you can feel confident knowing your generosity is recognized.
- **WPS can now pursue grants** from foundations, government programs, and corporate giving initiatives that were previously unavailable to us.
- **Corporate partnerships and sponsorships** become possible, opening the door to larger-scale investments in park improvements.
- **Fundraising initiatives** for signage, security, beautification, and community programming can now operate at a new level.

This milestone would not have been possible without the belief, patience, and support of every person on this mailing list. You believed in this mission when it was just an idea — and now it's official. From the bottom of our hearts, **thank you.**



Show Your Willmore Pride!

We are excited to announce the arrival of our **brand-new 3x5 oval Cyrus Crane Willmore window stickers!**

These beautifully designed stickers are the perfect way for neighbors and supporters to display their connection to Willmore Park and the remarkable legacy of Cyrus Crane Willmore. Place one on your car window, your front door, or your laptop — wherever you want to show the world that you stand with Willmore Park.

They also make fantastic conversation starters. When someone asks about the sticker, you'll have the perfect opening to share the incredible history of our park and the visionary who made it possible.

How to Get Your Sticker

Call us: 314-255-5099

Visit: willmoreparksociety.com

Stickers are available while supplies last — get yours today!



Save the Date: 80th Anniversary Celebration in 2027

Mark your calendars and start getting excited — **Willmore Park turns 80 in 2027**, and the Willmore Park Society is already planning a landmark community celebration to honor this extraordinary milestone.

This will be a once-in-a-generation event celebrating the history of Willmore Park, the vision of Cyrus Crane Willmore, and the incredible community that has called this neighborhood home for eight decades. We're envisioning a celebration that

brings together families, neighbors, local leaders, and history enthusiasts for a day (or weekend!) of festivities, remembrance, and joy.

We need YOU to help make it unforgettable!

- **Volunteers** — Help us plan, organize, and execute the celebration
- **Ideas** — Have a vision for what this event should look like? We want to hear it
- **Sponsors** — Businesses and organizations interested in supporting the event are welcome

Stay tuned to future newsletters for more details as planning unfolds. This is going to be something truly special.



Building Bridges with City Leadership

The Willmore Park Society believes that great things happen through partnership, and we are actively building a collaborative relationship with the City of St. Louis to invest in the future of Willmore Park.

This weekend, official correspondence was sent to **City Parks and Forestry Department leadership** outlining our shared goals for the park and expressing our desire to work hand-in-hand with the city. This is not about conflict or complaints — it's about **collaboration**.

Our goals for Willmore Park include:

Priority Area	Description
Improved Signage	Clear, attractive signage that honors the park's history and helps visitors navigate the grounds
Enhanced Security	Measures to ensure Willmore Park is a safe and welcoming space for all families and visitors
Beautification Projects	Landscaping, tree care, flower beds, and general upkeep to restore the park's natural beauty
Recreational Amenities	Expanded facilities and programming

Priority Area	Description
	that serve the diverse needs of our community

We are committed to working **with** the city — not against it. Together, we can ensure Willmore Park receives the attention and investment it deserves. We look forward to sharing updates on these conversations in the months ahead.



Honoring a Legacy: Cyrus Crane Willmore Day

The Willmore Park Society is proud to announce our intention to formally request that the **State of Missouri recognize a "Cyrus Crane Willmore Day"** — a fitting tribute to one of St. Louis's most visionary builders and a figure of national significance in American homeownership.

But who was Cyrus Crane Willmore, and why does he deserve this recognition?

His story is nothing short of extraordinary:

- **From orphan to industry leader.** Born in Wisconsin and orphaned at a young age, Cyrus Crane Willmore built himself — through sheer determination and an unwavering optimism — into one of St. Louis's most influential real estate developers.
- **Founder of the Cyrus Crane Willmore Organization (1920).** Specializing in "high-grade home districts," his company became synonymous with quality residential development in St. Louis.
- **Developer of University Park and University Hills.** He transformed cornfields into thriving communities valued at \$25 million — neighborhoods that remain desirable addresses to this day.
- **The man who "outsold" the Depression.** In late 1929, just as the nation plunged into economic catastrophe, Willmore boldly launched **St. Louis Hills on 700 acres** — the last undeveloped land within city limits. He sold **\$3**

million in lots within 18 months, defying the economic devastation around him.

- **President of the National Association of Real Estate Boards (NAREB), 1943.** During the height of World War II, Willmore served as the national leader of America's real estate industry, championing private-enterprise homeownership and advocating for post-war housing for returning veterans.
- **Champion of veterans' homeownership.** His powerful post-war speeches advocated passionately for returning servicemen to have access to quality, affordable homes — a vision that helped shape the nation's housing policies for a generation.

"Through all times, the optimists have sailed uncharted seas, for they are the makers of the charts."

— Cyrus Crane Willmore

Willmore defined a champion as **"a fighter who can go just one more round"** — and his entire life embodied that spirit. From orphanhood to national leadership, from cornfields to communities, from Depression to triumph, he never stopped building, believing, and fighting for a better future.

Preserving His Words for a New Generation

The Willmore Park Society is currently working with **AI technology to recreate and preserve Willmore's historic post-war homeownership speech**, bringing his words back to life for a new generation. This speech — a passionate call for every returning serviceman to have access to a quality home — represents not just a St. Louis story, but a **national one**. Cyrus Crane Willmore helped shape American homeownership policy during one of the most critical periods in our nation's history, and his voice deserves to be heard again.

We will share more about this exciting preservation project in upcoming newsletters.



Join the Movement

The Willmore Park Society is growing, and there's a place for everyone. Whether you have an hour a month or a lifetime of passion for this park, we need your energy, ideas, and commitment.

Current volunteer opportunities include:

- **Park Cleanups** — Help us keep Willmore Park beautiful with regular maintenance and seasonal cleanup events
- **80th Anniversary Event Planning** — Join the committee planning our landmark 2027 celebration
- **Outreach & Communications** — Help spread the word through social media, flyers, newsletters, and community engagement
- **Fundraising Committee** — Put your skills to work helping WPS secure the resources we need for park improvements

Ready to Get Involved?

Call: 314-255-5099

Visit: willmoreparksociety.com

We'll match you with the opportunity that fits your interests and schedule!



Your Donation Makes a Difference

Now that the Willmore Park Society is an official **501(c)(3) nonprofit**, all donations are **fully tax-deductible**. Your generosity directly fuels the improvements and programs that make Willmore Park a source of pride for our community.

Your donations support:

- Park signage honoring the history of Willmore Park and Cyrus Crane Willmore
- Security improvements to keep our park safe for families
- Beautification projects including landscaping, tree care, and infrastructure

- Community events that bring our neighbors together

Every contribution — large or small — makes a real impact. To the donors and supporters who have already stepped up: **you are the reason we're here today.** Thank you for believing in this mission.

 **Make a Tax-Deductible Donation**

Call: 314-255-5099

Visit: willmoreparksociety.com

Your support helps us honor the past and build the future of Willmore Park.



 **From Our Park to Your Home**

As we close this edition of the newsletter, we want you to know how deeply grateful we are — for your presence at yesterday's cleanup, for your support of our 501(c)(3) journey, for your belief in this mission, and for your love of Willmore Park.

This park belongs to **all of us**. It belongs to the families who picnic under its trees, the children who play on its grounds, the neighbors who walk its paths, and the community that has called this area home for nearly eighty years. Together, we can honor Cyrus Crane Willmore's extraordinary vision and ensure that Willmore Park thrives for generations to come.

There is so much ahead — the 80th anniversary, our partnership with the city, the pursuit of Cyrus Crane Willmore Day, and so many more milestones to reach together. We can't wait to share the journey with you.

With gratitude and optimism,

The Willmore Park Society

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