

The Richardson Family Park was transformed from an empty lot to a beautiful community park through endless volunteer hours of community planning and a land donation by the Richardson Family. The idea for the park began in 1994 and came to fruition in 1999. [See the complete story about the development of the park](#)



At the east side of the park there was a concrete block wall 180 feet long. This was a favorite site for graffiti by local gangs. The project leaders enlisted a group of artists, In Creative Unity, to design a mural to cover the whole of the wall including a building at the south end. The art was based on real locations in the neighborhood. The committee through St. Agnes Catholic Church arranged a meeting with leaders of the main local gang, the Dead End Harpys, who pledged to respect the mural and not deface it.

Over the years the agreement with the Harpys broke down and gang members often vandalized the mural. By late in 2006 the protective coating that allowed city workers to clean off the spray painted graffiti without damaging the art underneath had worn away. The mural was irreparably damaged and the city said it would no longer attempt to clean it.

Jennifer Charnofsky and Lillian Marenco, who had been central figures in the original creation of the park, contacted Stash Maleski, the director of In Creative Unity. Stash said he would try to reassemble the original artists to recreate the mural. This would mean sandblasting the wall to completely remove the existing mural. Photographs of the old mural would be taken first as a guide for the artists to replicate their original design. Then a superior set of protective coatings would be applied that would last far longer than what was available in 1999. But this was going to cost \$20,000.

Jennifer and Lillian went to the local neighborhood council, the Empowerment Congress North Area Neighborhood Development Council (ECNANDC). In a series of meetings in late 2006 the council agreed to fund the project in full. In April 2007 the sandblasting was done and the artists returned. In a few weeks a beautiful new mural was in place.

On May 12, 2007, a big community party was held at the park, cosponsored by the ECNANDC and USC's Neighborhood Outreach program. Almost 200 people attended, including City Councilmember Bernard Parks (CD8), who spoke movingly on the importance of the park to the children of the area. From there interest in the park grew. USC had made a new grant to the park for further renovation. And on August 5, 2007, the L.A. Stars All-Star Charity Basketball game featuring NBA All-Stars Baron Davis, Paul Pierce, and Gilbert Arenas, will be held at the USC Galen Center and is slated to donate \$37,000 to the Richardson Family Park for regular afternoon programming for neighborhood kids.

[LA Parks Listing of the Richardson Family Park](#)