

# Major outdoor park developments based on Universal Design principles

## UNITED STATES/ACT SERVICES - UNIVERSAL DESIGN IN OUTDOOR PARKS

ACTServices Inc. is a US-based accessibility consulting firm that specializes in creating accessible and inclusive parks and outdoor entertainment facilities. Since 2010, ACTServices has made two national parks accessible: Forest Glen Park (Illinois) and The Gathering Place (Oklahoma), considering especially children's ability to experience the park and nature in general. These parks have influenced other park planners and have won numerous awards, such as 'USA Today's Best New Attraction' and 'TIME for Kids World's Coolest Places, 2019.'

### Problem targeted

Parks and recreational spaces often lack accessible features and services that could give children and adults with disabilities the opportunities to enjoy leisure activities.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

Accessibility Consultation and Training Services (ACTServices) is a consulting firm that specializes in accessibility of museum exhibits, recreational spaces, and applying Universal Design principles. The firm works with people with various disabilities, the parents of children with a disability, and professionals such as special education teachers, recreational therapist, physical therapist, etc. ACTServices has worked with two parks in the United States: the Forest Glen Park, a two-acre, universally designed park in Woodridge, Illinois; and The Gathering Place, a 100-acre open-space riverfront park in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

**"I was honored to work on the award-winning Gather Place as a model for other parks."**

Mark, Trieglaff, President, ACTServices, Inc.

Through the collaboration of architects, city planners, and people with disabilities, Forest Glen Park incorporated features such as walkways with gentle slopes and accessible playground surfaces for wheelchairs. The Gathering Place includes, among other features, accessible restrooms, walkways, play areas, and desensitization spaces. The park has received many awards and is recognized by the National Geographic Society as one of the 12 "mind-bending" playgrounds worldwide.



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Time for adventure in the park, accessible and inclusive for all kids!

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The Forest Glen Park received a grant from the Kellogg Foundation as part of its Access to Recreation programme. The grant covered all aspects of the park's development and its play elements. The Gathering Place was a huge investment of \$465 million, funded by the Kaiser Foundation and other individual donations.

The two parks are proof of how universally designed and accessible park development and recreational facilities can be replicated anywhere.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2010

- The Gathering Place was voted as one of TIME magazine's 100 best places to visit in 2019.
- ACTServices has worked with over 20 zoos and national parks across the United States.
- *A practice of Civil Society.*