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University Park, Illinois, March 15, 2013 - Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park at Governors State University is celebrating 35 years as one of the nation's most unique and vibrant art museums. During its 35th Anniversary year, NMSP is reaching out to old friends and new with a series of lively events.

Since its establishment in 1978, Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park has grown into a major collection of 28 works set within the wild prairie swales of the GSU campus. Important works by renowned modern artists, combined with the park's breathtaking landscape, make NMSP unlike any other outdoor artistic venue.

"Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park stands at a new dawn," said Curator and Director Geoffrey Bates. "Its collection and siting are considered among the most significant in the country. Going forward, we are exploring new exhibition proposals, innovative programs, and exciting strategies for engaging the world at large. We're looking forward to the next 35 years."

NMSP has come a long way since the days when it was known as The Governors State University Center for Monumental Sculpture. From the creation of a single sculpture, "Yes! for Lady Day" – assembled by National Medal of Arts awardee Mark diSuvero in 1968 and 1969 – the number and scale of artworks has grown dramatically.

In NMSP's early days, visionary leaders like Lewis Manilow, Bill Dodd, and former GSU Presidents William Engbretson and Leo Goodman-Malamuth oversaw the collection of masterworks at Governors State University. In the early 2000s, with time catching up to several major works, Dr. Ora Simcha-Fagan stepped in, found funding for conservation, and worked to commission four works by important Illinois artists through the Capital Development Board's Percent for Art program. That led, in 2006, to the arrival of "Paul," a modern, melancholy look at American icon Paul Bunyan.

Bates thanked the current GSU administration, with its emphasis on bringing the arts back to campus, for supporting many innovative NMSP initiatives. The NMSP Board consistently strives to bring programming and events to the community, he said.

With its system of grassy trails, NMSP is perfect for wandering as you experience great works of art. The park is free, and open from dawn until dusk 365 days a year. Pets are welcome – they must be leashed at all times – and free guided tours conducted by knowledgeable docents are available from May to October. Visit www.govst.edu/sculpture for tour schedules.

NMSP was recently honored for innovative arts programming by the South Suburban Small Business Association. The selection was based on the availability of children's programming at the park.

During 2013, Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park is sponsoring a number of exciting events:

• Sculpture Rocks! March 23 at 2 p.m.
  Make your own sculpture with wood, pegboard, Carrara marble, wire, cardboard, dowels, and markers. We supply the materials and some inspiration, and you do the rest. $5 for materials. Limited to 50 children.

• Kids, Colors, and Kites - Saturday, May 18, 1 to 4 p.m.
  Make your own kite and send it skyward at NMSP. $8 per kite

• Carts & Cocktails 2013 - Saturday, September 21, 3 to 6 p.m.
  A major social and cultural event for the past two years, it's a lakeside cocktail party, complete with chauffeured golf cart tour of the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park. $100 per person.
  For reservations contact Gina Ragland at 708.235.7559. Sponsorships at a variety of levels are available; for more information, contact Jackie Small at 708.235.2188 or jsmall@govst.edu.

• Reclaim the Prairie! Sunday, October 27, 1 to 4 p.m.
  Restore the rolling landscape to a native, prairie state. Kids will learn about prairie restoration, receive coloring materials and crayons, and enjoy a sense of accomplishment while helping our planet. $5 Adults, $3 Children. Limit of 30 participants.

In addition, NMSP offers field trip opportunities for schools for a nominal fee.

"Experiencing the Park," a PowerPoint presentation that introduces students to important concepts dealing with sculpture and 3-Dimensional design, is available by pre-arrangement. This presentation, with a question-and-answer period, is approximately 40 minutes long.
Teachers should plan 1½ to 2 hours for visits to NMSP.

The Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park is located at Governors State University's main campus, 1 University Parkway, University Park, Illinois. To make reservations or for information on NMSP programs, call (708) 534-4486 or visit www.govst.edu/sculpture.