Fort Wayne Parks: Nothing to Play Around With

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Fort Wayne and Chicago are often viewed as very dissimilar cities. To explore these differences, the Chapman Scholars of IPFW took a trip to Chicago from October 9th-11th. In Chicago, our group experienced differences and parallels in community, architecture, and lifestyle. In conjunction with this trip, we have also been exploring Fort Wayne and have made observations in these same areas. Through our examination, we have noticed that the parks of Fort Wayne and Chicago are viewed in very different ways and play varying roles. The decision to make parks the focus of our studies stemmed from our upbringing in Fort Wayne. Even though we were raised in Fort Wayne, neither of us knew much about the parks.

People of Fort Wayne need to realize that the Fort Wayne parks are a treasure and should be preserved and enjoyed. In our presentation, we will explore and compare the history and current state of both the Fort Wayne Parks system (specifically Headwaters Park) as well as the Chicago Parks (specifically Millennium Park). In addition, the presentation will reveal why the Fort Wayne parks have been dissolving as a community center in favor of more modern forms of entertainment. Many of the aforementioned differences can be attributed to contrasts in scale in terms of population size, amount of tourism, and park development and recovery. These factors will be examined in tandem with the loss of popularity of the Fort Wayne parks.

Despite the apparent deterioration of the Fort Wayne parks, we believe that there is still a way to revive the parks as a community center. These solutions include making parks more known to the city, more beautiful, and more community friendly.