

# Illiniwek Forest Preserve

Along the banks of the Mississippi and beyond



## Farewell to Camp Hosts Joy and Louie Streit



From spectacular Fourth of July fireworks to the amazing lock and dam, Joy and Louie Streit will miss many things at Illiniwek – where they have served as full-time camp hosts for the past five summers.

Being a camp host is a 24/7 gig. Their duties have included keeping the park and facilities clean, welcoming campers and finding a comfortable site for them, collecting money and putting it in the office, helping the rangers, explaining rules and making sure they're followed, giving directions to restaurants and shops, warning campers about incoming storms and answering questions newcomers may have. Louie even parks campers for those who don't know how.

"The two things Joy and Louie pride themselves on is going above and beyond to keep the park clean, and getting acquainted with campers and making them feel welcome," said Mike Petersen, Illiniwek park superintendent. "On Mondays, Joy and Louie walk around the campground to pick up trash – even cigarette butts."

They also make a point to wave at every single person they pass throughout the day. As a result, they've bonded with regular campers and built great friendships. Campers often bring the Streits gifts from their hometowns and even home



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countries as an appreciation of the hard work the couple does to make Illiniwek a wonderful place. The Streits say that Illiniwek is a peaceful campground and most of the visitors are retirees just like them.

“We love Illiniwek because we love the Mississippi,” Joy says. “We also love the people we work for. We’re gotten close with the park rangers and go golfing with them.”

Beyond Illiniwek, Joy and Louie have spent the last nine and half years on the road hosting at campgrounds across the country. The two snowbirds escape to the South or Southwest during the cold months in states including Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Alabama and Louisiana.

They love their lifestyle because it’s an easy way to travel and see the country. The Streits say the work keeps them young and they get to meet lots of magnificent people. They got involved with campground hosting after talking with a friend who suggested they go online and check state park websites for camp host postings.

Illiniwek is sad to see them go, but wishes the Streits the best in their future endeavors. **Thank you, Joy and Louie, for your years of service!**