



FRIENDS
of
WESTCHESTER COUNTY PARKS, INC.

2011 YEAR-END REPORT





FRIENDS OF WESTCHESTER COUNTY PARKS HAD ONE OF ITS BUSIEST YEARS EVER IN 2011, AND THE ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THIS 501(C) (3) NOT-FOR-PROFIT CAME ON SEVERAL FRONTS. AS WESTCHESTER'S LEADING ADVOCATES OF THE WESTCHESTER COUNTY PARKS SYSTEM, FRIENDS OF WESTCHESTER COUNTY PARKS CONTINUED TO FUND PROGRAMS, FACILITIES AND SERVICES.

Now in our eighth year since being revitalized, Friends of Westchester County Parks has partnered with and helped Westchester County continue to provide world class park services despite a difficult economic climate and reduced staffing levels. Our organization has continued to fund important and popular programs and activities that would otherwise be discontinued. Friends of Westchester County Parks and its for-profit subsidiary corporation, Westchester Concessions, employed nearly 130 individuals, most of them Westchester residents, for projects, programs and concession operations.

More than \$2 million dollars was spent on activities, equipment, training and supplies for the betterment of the department, and most of that money went directly into the Westchester economy. Approximately \$100,000 was paid in federal, state and local taxes. Friends of Westchester County Parks are an economic engine for our county.

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

Speaking of economics, in 2011 Friends of Westchester County Parks commissioned an Economic and Fiscal Impact Analysis of the entire Westchester parks system. The report, issued in early 2012, found that the Westchester County park system creates an annual \$183 million positive impact on Westchester's economy. Major factors enumerated in this study included tourism, operational and capital expenditures, increased property values and the consolidation of data from recent economic impact studies for Playland Amusement Park and the Westchester County Center. It also examined the parks system as a factor businesses use when choosing to remain in or relocate to Westchester County.

PROS Consulting, Inc. was chosen to conduct this study based upon their extensive experience doing similar studies across the country, particularly for parks and recreation organizations. Leon Younger, President of PROS Consulting, led the

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Economic and Fiscal Impact Analysis with assistance by members of the PROS Consulting team. Leon has more than 35 years in parks, recreation, and leisure services, and is a recognized leader in applying innovative approaches to managing public organizations.

The purpose of the analysis and report is to assist in the understanding of the positive economic impacts of parks and recreation facilities and services, and to help decision makers better evaluate the creation, operation and maintenance of their invaluable parks system.

Friends of Westchester County Parks recognizes the severe budgetary pressures placed on Westchester County and as such, are not advocating a preferred method of delivering these facilities and services to the public. However, as the largest and most active organization advocating for the County park system, it is the duty of Friends of Westchester County Parks to encourage continued investment and support for what is clearly a good use of public, private and not-for-profit resources.

GRANTS AND DONATIONS

Friends of Westchester County Parks obtained numerous grants and donations this past year, with significant contributions from Entergy, Con Edison, Hudson Valley Bank, R.E.I., Bloomberg, The Secunda Family Foundation, The Westchester Community Foundation, The Klein Foundation, Abby R. Simpson and Fujifilm USA.

“BEST FRIENDS GALA”

Our seventh annual “Best Friends” awards reception was conducted on April 12, 2011 at the Harbour Club in Glen Island Park. The Honorees were Tom Secunda, Best Friend; Entergy, Green Friend; Hudson Valley Bank, Business Friend; and Miracle League Volunteers, Volunteer Friend. It was a record-setting event in terms of tickets sold (301) and actual attendees (258). The “Gala”, as we call it, has quickly grown into one of the must-attend events of the spring season and it is our way of saying thank you to the people and businesses that make such exceptional impacts to the quality of life we all hold so dear.

CAMP MORTY

Friends of Westchester County Parks again operated “Camp Morty” at Sal J. Prezioso Mountain Lakes Park in North Salem. Nearly 300 underprivileged children, who are wards of the county, participated in the six-week sleep-away camping program.



These are kids from homeless shelters, in the foster care system or on public assistance. Friends of Westchester County Parks have provided an experience that has given these kids a dramatically different look at life. In some cases, Camp Morty has been a life-changing experience. In fact last year we hired our first former camper as a counselor!

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES & PARTNERSHIPS

Friends of Westchester County Parks support the on-going volunteer activities of the department by supplying needed supplies and equipment. Volunteers provide over 30,000 hours of service to the department annually at an estimated value of over \$600,000. In 2011 we participated in two new programs. The first was the County Volunteer Day of Service where we attracted 40 new volunteers to the PRC rolls. The other was Operation River Rescue, where we joined hundreds of other Westchesterites in cleaning the Bronx River. Several thousand pounds of debris was removed, obstructions cleared and basins cleaned. In fact the Executive Director removed a shopping cart!

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We continue to help enhance our parks by providing critical partnerships with local corporations and companies that allow Friends to help sponsor some of the best and biggest programs that the county offers. As well as provide a venue for sweat equity projects such as adopt a park, volunteer days, “Friendship Day” at Camp Morty and the list goes on.

BRIDGING THE GAP

We were the vehicle that allowed the completion of the over 4 million dollar renovation to the closed bathhouse at Kingsland Point Park to be transformed into the Katherine W. Davis River Center, and environmental education center right on the Hudson River. This was done totally with private dollars and some talented construction work by PRC forces on the interior spaces.

Friends also have been able to help in other unforeseen ways. When the 2011 performance of “The Nutcracker” by the Westchester Ballet Company was in jeopardy, Friends stepped in to get the stagehands paid on time.

In December, Friends of Westchester County Parks forged a partnership with Con Edison, and the two entities combined for a \$40,000 donation that saved Bicycle Sundays, one of the County’s most popular parks programs.



IN MEMORIAM

There are so many ways our extensive parks system improves the quality of life for our residents, and makes the county a more attractive place for businesses, but we sometimes take these things for granted. Last fall, we paused to reflect on the importance of our parks as we paid tribute to Kay Carsky — a “friend” both to us and the parks she held so dear. Friends of Westchester County Parks paid tribute to Carsky on Sunday afternoon (October 23, 2011) with a bench dedication in her memory at Malcolm Wilson Park at the southern tip of the Bronx River Reservation in Yonkers.

Carsky passed away at the age of 74 last February, but her legacy lives on, in our parks and elsewhere throughout the county. Members of the FWCP board were joined by local elected officials and dignitaries, and friends and family. They remembered all Carsky did to improve the quality of our parks, as a board member of FWCP and as a founder of the Bronx River Conservancy, a group dedicated to preserving the 12.5 miles along the river and parkway from the Bronx border to the Kensico Dam.

Carsky served as a Westchester County Legislator for 18 years, and she held other elective and appointive positions. She also served on the boards of the Westchester Community College Foundation, the Westchester Land Trust and Arts Westchester, and was a member of County Executive Rob Astorino’s transition team. She used her leadership talents to help improve our community in myriad ways, and she was particularly concerned about the health of our parks. It was under her leadership that the Bronx River Conservancy was able to plan and implement clean-ups and take on other advocacy projects, and she spearheaded the county’s acquisition of the property that is now the site of Malcolm Wilson Park. She was a true Friend and will be greatly missed. We dedicated our 2011 Awards video to Kay and all her great contributions.

9/11 CEREMONY

2011 was the 10th anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11. Friends were a sponsor of the special remembrance ceremony for the more than one hundred Westchester residents who lost their lives that day. The ceremony was held at the base of “The Rising”, the county’s memorial to that tragic loss. Friends are the custodian of the permanent endowment fund that helps PRC maintain the memorial and surrounding areas.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Internal to PRC, Friends was once again integral to the Professional Development training program that allows its staff to be the best that they can be, and deliver award-winning services despite the budgetary and staffing reductions.

The program included:

- 2011 PRC Staff Conference
- PRC Academy – West Point leadership seminar
- Certification of Pool Operators
- Deer management
- Attendance at state and regional training conferences
- Playland managers and operators safety training
- Pesticide applicators certification and renewal
- Certification of Playground inspectors
- Alarm technicians

Friends of Westchester County Parks provided supplies for the Deer Management program, trash barrels for all facilities, gloves, loppers and biodegradable bags for volunteer efforts and incentive awards for PRC staff.

TREE AND BENCH MEMORIALS

There were 13 trees or benches memorialized in 2011 with a balance of \$120,000 in the trust fund for perpetual maintenance of the nearly 350 memorials.

BRONX RIVER WALK

Hundreds of people continue to enjoy the Dan Rather narrated Bronx River Walk, a self guided walking/biking tour of the BRP Pathway with stops along the way outlining the history of the parkway and the surrounding areas.

ORGANIZATIONAL NEWS

From a purely “inside” Friends perspective, 2011 was again a very busy year. We amended our by-laws to create an Executive Committee, which has made management of the operation much more effective and engaged our board members in a whole different way.

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We now have a PRC Board Liaison and meet with that board twice per year to discuss items of mutual interest and how we can assist in meeting their mission.

The Executive Director became a member of the Business Council of Westchester's Consortium for Business Development sub-committee on Quality of Life. Chairman of the Board, Liz Bracken-Thompson chairs the Marketing sub-committee. We are well-represented in the business community.

MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

In 2011 we continued to separate our administrative functions from PRC by contracting for marketing and PR services, website maintenance and advertising. Although these add costs to our operating budget, we have achieved very prominent visibility in terms of media coverage and effective reach through social media, e-blasts and advertisements.

Friends of Westchester County Parks has implemented a Facebook page and Twitter account, an Executive Director's blog and we are now able to effectively leverage content created by our organization as well as media coverage, simply by posting links to this content on the various platforms.

We developed the ability to do "Text to Donate" facilitating appeals at large special events that we sponsor. Through our marketing and PR consultant, Friends of Westchester County Parks received a Google grant of up to \$10,000 per month in free advertising on the world's top search engine. Search for Westchester Parks and about 60 other terms, and our Friends membership ad pops up along with it!

Our new-look website is clean and straight to the point. What we do, who we are, and how can you donate are up front and easy to see. We have added links to excellent stories on Friends initiatives, regional impacts and stories that are of interest to our visitors. Use of the website has grown dramatically in 2011.



OUTLOOK

Friends of Westchester County Parks accomplished a great deal in 2011, and the organization positioned itself well for both challenges and opportunities that will undoubtedly present themselves in 2012 and beyond. We've forged excellent relationships with both businesses and individuals that will be important as the parks system continues to face economic pressures. We have continued to increase our visibility in the Westchester community and beyond, and we will look to build on that as we move forward.

Friends of Westchester County Parks welcomed 10 new board members at the end of 2011, and expanded the board to 25. And at the end of the year, Friends of Westchester County Parks hosted an excellent reception at 42 the Restaurant thanking our existing Board of Trustees and welcoming the new members.

FINANCIAL DATA

REVENUE: \$2,053,341

ENDOWMENTS, SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS: 89%

FUNDRAISING: 8%

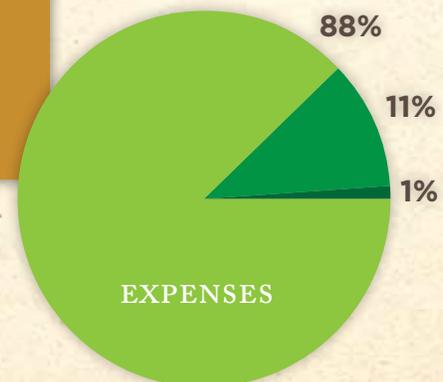
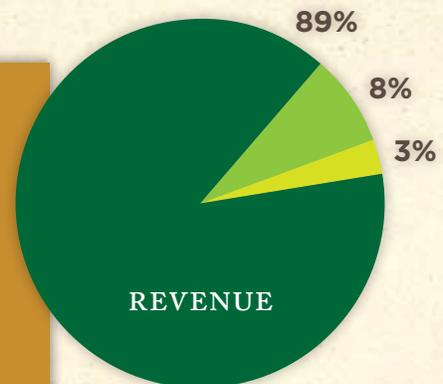
ADMINISTRATION: 3%

EXPENSES: \$2,447,639 *

PROGRAM AND FACILITY SUPPORT: 88%

ADMINISTRATION: 11%

FUNDRAISING: 1%



* Expenses exceeded revenues due to the drawdown of restricted endowed funds that had prior positive balances.



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