



## UNITING INTERESTS IN RUFUS KING PARK



Fall 1999 Clean Up Day

If you ask anyone in downtown Jamaica, Queens to describe Rufus King Park, the adjective “overused” is often employed. The only green

space for several miles, the park has many complementary (and occasionally competing) constituencies. These include: youth from a local soccer school, who use the park for instruction and pick-up games; workers from the many nearby office buildings, who want to relax in the park during their lunch hour; music lovers, who enjoy an open-air jazz festival sponsored by a local arts organization; social-service organizations, which sponsor activities for children in the park; visitors to the King Manor Museum; and local residents, who want a safe, clean space for their families.

For many years, various groups scheduled events and activities in Rufus King, without a central organization overseeing, or taking responsibility for, the needs of the facility and community members. As a result, those attending the jazz festival often heard the whiz of soccer balls in the background, and no one could effectively voice concern about security problems that plagued the park after dark. Nor was there any real coordination with the historic King Manor Museum, which lies within the park. Equally important, after years of neglect, sections of the park were bereft of grass and pleasant greenery, making it a less-than-desirable place to play and appreciate nature.

To address these needs and concerns, a group of local business, civic, and community leaders, known as the Greater Jamaica Development Corporation’s Downtown Committee, began to discuss ways that they could help

the park last summer. With technical assistance and small grants from Partnership for Parks, the group continued to meet and discuss solutions, and in the fall, formally established the Friends of Rufus King Park.

Joelle Ballonzoli, the founding chair of this new organization and former Program Director of the Jamaica Neighborhood Center, says that the Friends have been able to bring a better sense of order to park usage. By developing a calendar, she says, the group has been able to ensure that non-complementary events, such as the open-air concerts and soccer practices, are held on different nights. Also, by marshaling the support of many different organizations that use the park, the group has been able to create new activities that are designed to build community support for the green space. This month, for example, the Friends will sponsor a clean-up day, in June they will hold an anti-gang youth rally, and in August they are scheduled to run a health fair, and take part in the National Night Against Crime.

One strength of the group is its unusually broad array of volunteers, which includes the soccer-school students and their families, adolescents sentenced by the Queens Family Court to do community service, and neighborhood volunteers. In addition, the group gets a boost from its broad membership, including corporate leaders, local politicians, community organizations, a local hospital, and city agencies, all of which allow it to speak with greater authority when it confronts problems in the park.

The most important function of the group, Ms. Ballonzoli says, is to provide a forum for the various institutions that care about the park to voice their concerns and to coordinate their efforts. “Before Friends was established, people didn’t know where to go when there was a problem,” says Ms. Ballonzoli. “We provide a forum for trouble-shooting.”

For more information on the Friends of Rufus King Park, contact Outreach Coordinator Brian Aucoin at 718-520-5913.

### SPRING INTO SPRING!

May is a prime time for activities that celebrate and improve our city’s green spaces. Hope to see you at one of these events!



Join the City of New York/Parks & Recreation, *Partnerships for Parks*, and the thousands of New Yorkers who volunteer to clean and green their neighborhood parks on **It’s My Park! Spring Clean-up Day** on Saturday, **May 20**. Last year, approximately 4,000 people participated at 200 sites across the city. Contact your Outreach Coordinator, Carrie Grassi, at 212-360-8126 or [knoll@parklan.ci.nyc.ny.us](mailto:knoll@parklan.ci.nyc.ny.us), or visit [itsmypark.org](http://itsmypark.org).

**You gotta have Park!** is a celebration of the city’s parks the weekend of **May 20-21**. Join in the fun at Prospect Park, Flushing Meadows Park, Forest Park, and Clove Lakes Park. Contact your Outreach Coordinator for more information.

### EVENTS ALONG WATERWAYS & TRAILWAYS

#### WALK A TRAIL

Celebrate **National Trails Day** and the first day of National Rivers Week on Saturday, June 3 - build a trail and float a river! Join over 16 groups on the Bronx River as they take part in this national event by celebrating **Bronx RiverFest 2000**. To find out more about this event or how to host your own contact 718-430-1846.



#### BY THE BAY...



Come celebrate the maritime life at Sheephead Bay at **BayFest2000!** Sponsored by the Bay Improvement Group, BayFest2000 on Sunday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, will feature the eighth annual blessing of the largest recreational party boat fishing fleet in the city, an arts and crafts show, live entertainment, special programming for children, and plenty of boat-based fun. For more information, contact BIG at 718-646-9206 or [www.members.aol.com/bayimpgrp](http://www.members.aol.com/bayimpgrp).

## IT PAYS TO HAVE THE CARD...

That's the *ParksCard*, of course. New benefits include:

- **Affordable Culture:** Get \$2 off admission to the **Queens Theater in the Park**, and free admission to the **Museum of Chinese in the Americas** in Manhattan.
- **Economical Fun:** Receive a 2-for-1 discount on admission to **Wave Hill** in the Bronx, and one free admission for every ticket purchased of equal or greater value at the **Staten Island Zoo**.
- **Cheap Eats:** Receive a free glass of wine or non-alcoholic beverage with the purchase of an entrée at these two Manhattan eateries: **American Park Restaurant** in Battery Park, and **Park View Restaurant** at the Boathouse in Central Park. Correction from April *Leaflet*: the **Grand Bay Restaurant** is located on the marina in Flushing, Queens; where you can enjoy a complimentary salad with entrée.
- **Book Bargains:** Get a 10 % discount on suggested titles at the **Urban Book Center** in Manhattan.

*ParksCards* are free affiliation cards that recognize and thank park supporters for their efforts. If you support parks in some way and would like a *ParksCard*, please call our hotline at 212-360-1357. For a complete list of *ParksCard* benefits, please check out our website: [www.partnershipsforparks.org](http://www.partnershipsforparks.org).

## HELPFUL NUMBERS

<i>Partnerships for Parks</i>	212-360-1310
To volunteer or to join your local parks group:	212-360-1357
For recorded information about special events:	888-NY-PARKS
To report graffiti, vandalism, or crime:	800-201-PARK

[www.nycparks.org](http://www.nycparks.org)

[www.partnershipsforparks.org](http://www.partnershipsforparks.org)

*Partnerships for Parks* believes that parks are essential to the life of New York City, and that community involvement is essential to the life of a park. We work to start, strengthen, and support neighborhood park groups; to link them together so that they can learn from each other and be stronger collectively; and to promote parks in general so that people will be more likely to join in efforts to restore and preserve them.

*Tim (Sailfish) Tompkins, Director*

*This issue of the Leaflet was edited by Dana (Violet) Litvack.*



CITY PARKS FOUNDATION



City of New York  
Parks & Recreation

Rudolph W. Giuliani, Mayor  
Henry J. Stern, Commissioner

## PARTNERS OF THE MONTH

Every month, *Partnerships for Parks* holds a luncheon with Commissioner Stern, at which he presents certificates to the "Partners of the Month" for their outstanding efforts. March's partner from the Bronx, **Frances "Boulevard" Lewis** was saluted for her longtime service Parks and for her efforts to improve **Henry Whalen Park & Williamsbridge Oval Park**. A resident of the Norwood section of the Bronx for more than 50 years until she left New York last month, Francis had been actively involved in helping to solve neighborhood concerns. A large part of her efforts had been dedicated to maintaining Henry Whalen and Williamsbridge Oval Parks. She helped secure grants for supplies and materials to maintain these green spaces, and taught children from P.S. 56 about nature and planting. Frances, who received the Mayor's Voluntary Action Award in 1993 and was selected as "New Yorker of the Month" by New York One in August 1998, will be sorely missed.

Thanks to everyone who makes a difference in New York City Parks, and a special thanks to the other March partners listed here. Brooklyn: **Kath "Pups" Hansen**, P.U.P.S, Ft. Greene Park • Manhattan: **Maggie "Gem" Lee**, Grandparent's Empowerment Movement, Morningside Park • Queens: **Ken Seaford Sattler**, Bulova Park • Staten Island: **Betty "Beanstalk" van Stolk**, Friends of Hero Park.

## MAYOR'S CUP SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT

The United Athletic Association is holding qualifying rounds in all five boroughs this year, making the 2000 Mayor's Cup Softball Tournament a true city-wide championship. The qualifying rounds will take place on Saturday, September 9, and the championships will be held in Central Park on Saturday, September 16. A portion of the funds raised will be used for field maintenance and youth programs. If your team is interested in registering by the June 1 deadline, please call 212-645-6488.

## GRANT DEADLINES

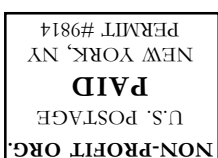
**July 1, 2000: City Parks Foundation Quarterly Grants Program.** Supports projects developed by community groups for parks and playgrounds with grants of up to \$5,000. For an application, please call 212-360-8121.

"No tears  
Dim the sweet look that Nature wears."



— *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, "Sunrise on the Hills,"  
Poetical Works, Vol.1, 1857*

ATTENTION: FOR ADDRESS CORRECTIONS CALL 212-360-1357.



Partnerships for Parks  
CITY PARKS FOUNDATION



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