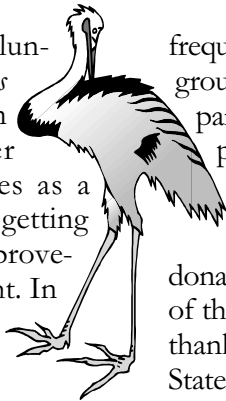




## FORTIFYING FRIENDSHIPS: FRIENDS OF BLUE HERON PARK

Last year, as part of the JPMorganChase Volunteer Greening Awards program, *Partnerships* chose Friends of Blue Heron Park as Staten Island's Group of the Year. Reaching over 15,000 students each year, this group serves as a model for other volunteers who may just be getting started. But the success of Blue Heron Park's improvement and maintenance did not happen overnight. In fact, it has been a process spread out over the last two decades.



Blue Heron Park and its Nature Center have thrived due in large part to the dedication of Friends of Blue Heron Park, Inc. The commitment of this community group has, over the years, created a ripple effect, resulting in lasting relationships that have been key in helping this park flourish.

It was almost thirty years ago that Jack Baird co-founded the Friends group with wife Lois. As the then president of the local civic group, he helped fight against zoning laws and the construction of three six-story buildings that were slated to go up where the Blue Heron Nature Center now stands. By reaching out and setting an example, he was able to inspire other community members to get involved and work together. They established a presence at local hearings and represented themselves as a caring group of individuals wanting to work with others to help their park and the surrounding community. Every project that Friends of Blue Heron Park coordinates has been made possible by the contacts they have gained and the relationships they have nurtured.

Friends of Blue Heron Park help fund the Nature Center and its extensive Research Library. They offer guided walks led by an on-hand naturalist, special events and education for youth of all ages, workshops for adults, and other seasonal series of hands-on environmental programs. The Blue Heron workshops are taught by Jack Baird and other volunteers who have expertise in areas that allow for such broad ranging topics as *Habitats for Backyard Birds*, *Jewelry Making*, *Animal Senses*, and the *Explorers of the Wild* series.

Certain programs and special events are facilitated by the Urban Park Rangers, as well as three part-time Board of Education teachers, a partnership made possible by funding from the local senator and councilmembers. The KeySpan Foundation also funded all of the nature workshops last winter and fall, allowing children and families to take advantage at no-cost.

Neighborhood parents, grateful for the contribution that the group has made to the area,

frequently donate food and materials and chaperone children's groups. According to Jack Baird, everyone involved in the park is there to help in whatever way they can. He calls the people who make up these partnerships "one big family".

Under the leadership of Ellen Pratt, the groups' Vice President, Second Command, volunteer gardeners donate their time to the tremendous display gardens in front of the Nature Center and recently had their jobs made easier thanks to the Richmond County Savings Foundation and Staten Island Bank and Trust Foundation which funded a new underground watering system. By encouraging others to come out and help clean and green and learn how to plant, the gardeners attract new members of all ages. Among this year's young volunteers were members the local Boys Scouts and students from Tottenville High School.

By working together with residents from all walks of life, each of whom are able to offer specific talents and assistance to meet park needs, Blue Heron Park and Nature Center is a thriving educational community within a community, promoting and preserving one of the City's greatest greenspaces. "We've met incredible people over the years," Jack says. "Making those connections has made all the difference."

*Awareness of Blue Heron Park is promoted in part by the Friends' bulletin, reaching more than 800 residents. Their website also helps keep people up to date on news and events. For more information about Blue Heron Park, call 718.317.1732 or visit [www.preserve2.org/blueheron/blueheron.htm](http://www.preserve2.org/blueheron/blueheron.htm)*

*To learn more about parks in Staten Island, call Partnerships' Staten Island Outreach Coordinator at 718.815.7194.*

## CREATING ALLIANCES FOR YOUR PARK

How do successful groups like Friends of Blue Heron Park do it? Here are some tips for *your* group on building alliances in the interest of your park.

■ Networking is key. Chances are you already know people who can help you, so go to them first. Everyone in your group has connections, and their connections have connections.

■ People will be more likely to help you if you help them. To earn a councilmember's goodwill, invite them to speak at one of your events. Thank merchants for donations by acknowledging them on a flyer. If your Park Supervisor has been especially helpful, say so in a letter to your Borough Commissioner or the Parks Commissioner.

■ Keep the momentum. Invite VIPs to your events and send them updates of your progress. Take people up on their offer to help. (Continued on back page)

**SAVE THE DATE**

Summer in the City  
Benefiting  
*Partnerships for Parks*

Friday, July 26, 2002  
5:30pm-7:30pm  
Cocktail Party in Central Park  
Followed by B-52's concert

*Tickets range from \$100 - \$2,500 packages.*

*For more information  
please call 212.360.8162*

## DROUGHT REMINDER

For drought emergency updates and tips on water conservation, visit the Department of Environmental Protection at [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep). To report leaks and water waste call **718-DEP-HELP**.

## THANK YOU FOR "IT'S MY PARK!" DAY

Many thanks to all of you who participated in "It's My Park!" Day this year. Special thanks to our giveaway sponsor SOBE Beverage Company and our paint supplier Benjamin Moore for their generous support. We would also like to thank Gap Inc, TMG, and Timberland for their donations of raffle prizes.

## CPF/MELLON GRANTS

Grants are now available from City Parks Foundation/Mellon Foundation. They will support organizations with annual operating budgets of less than \$100,000 who provide maintenance, operational support, or programming to Parks, Gardens, or Recreational Facilities.

Deadline to apply is **June 30**. For information or, to request an application, contact Jason Schwartz, Director of Grants and Special Projects at **212.360.8121**.

## 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.itsmypark.org](http://www.itsmypark.org)  
[www.nyc.gov/parks](http://www.nyc.gov/parks)

*Partnerships for Parks*, a joint program of City Parks Foundation and City of New York/Parks & Recreation, 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.

*Peter Crumlish, Director*

*Dana Litvack, Director of Operations*

*This issue of the Leaflet was edited by Blaise Alhysen Kearsley*

city parks  foundation

 City of New York  
Parks & Recreation

## CREATING ALLIANCES (CONTINUED)

■ Know the problem-solvers. If people seem to be unresponsive, it's often that they really can't do anything about the issue at hand. Be sure to ask if there is anyone else that you (or the person you're talking to) can contact in order to address the situation.

For more tips and other resources, visit our website at [www.itsmypark.org](http://www.itsmypark.org), or call **212.360.8180** and ask about our free workshops for community groups.

## PARK EVENTS IN FULL BLOOM

Park gatherings reserved for fairer weather are popping up all over this season. Don't miss out on the films, festivals, concerts, classes, and other special events in your local park.

Visit [www.itsmypark.org](http://www.itsmypark.org) for a listing of activities citywide. Call the Special Events Hotline at **1.800.NY.PARKS**, or contact your Outreach Coordinator.

Bronx: **718.430.1861**  
Brooklyn: **718.965.8993**  
Manhattan: **212.408.0214**  
Queens: **718.520.5913**  
Staten Island: **718.815.7194**

## QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Have a question about parks or community groups that you don't know how to find the answer to? Visit our Question of the Month section on our website to submit it. We won't be able to post every question on the site, but we will try to answer each one by email.

This month's question: "How can we expand our group's membership to include a more diverse representation of the community around the park?"


For the answer, visit [www.itsmypark.org](http://www.itsmypark.org) and click on green Question of the Month logo.

"Climb the mountains and get their good tidings.  
Nature's peace will flow into you  
as sunshine flows into trees.  
The winds will blow their freshness into you,  
and the storms their energy,  
while cares will drop off like falling leaves."

*John Muir*

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

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