

PARKSIDE

HERMANN PARK CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER

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George Hermann Society

happenings in the park

MISSION

Hermann Park Conservancy is a citizens' organization dedicated to the stewardship and improvement of Hermann Park—today and for generations to come.



The McWilliams Dog Park has tails wagging (page 6)



Japanese Garden gleams after annual visit from Japan Team (page 10)

letter from the president

My mother didn't hesitate when I asked her what she wanted to do for her birthday—have lunch in the Park and ride the train! She loves the train and it is a special occasion for her every chance she gets to ride it.

Although work is what generally brings me to the Park, I am constantly reminded that for most people a visit to the Park is a special occasion no matter how often they come. I regularly tell the Conservancy team that by coming to work on any given day, they are providing these visitors the special times shared with their families—like my mother on her birthday.

Not everyone can say that about their job, and my job this last twenty-one years has been a gift. Many of you know that I will be stepping down from my full-time role as president of the Conservancy on June 30. I hope to stay involved to help finish the master plan projects that I have been so involved in developing.

When I walk to the Commons construction site, I watch people participating in an amazing array of activities and imagine what it will feel like when I am in the Park just as a visitor and not concerned with each and every detail. I tell myself that I will finally be able to relax and enjoy the Park like any other civilian. Well, only the "relax" part will feel new. I already deeply enjoy the Park. This spring, I have enjoyed watching the succession of green shoots and exploding blooms as everything recovers from the freeze. I am ecstatic watching the wisteria take hold on the arbors in the McGovern Centennial Gardens. I am rooting for the new cherry trees, bred in Hunstville, along the Japanese Garden in the hope that they will thrive in our climate. I love stopping by the McWilliams Dog Park—not just to see who is frolicking, but to enjoy once again the rich borders of native plantings and the most romantic stand of oaks draped in Spanish moss.



Doreen and Lulu

I have been planning, fundraising and monitoring construction of the Commons for over seven years. As we prepared for the public celebration, I found myself obsessing over the details of everything that needed to be finished before the opening. But I regularly took a moment to step away from the minutia of construction and stand back to gaze over the Commons site, and every time it takes my breath away. I imagine the thousands of people who will come to love it almost as much as I do.

But before those thousands come, I am cherishing these quiet moments where I can also feel grateful for each person who has helped make this magic happen—from our dedicated staff, board and donors to the design team, construction crews and volunteers planting thousands of plants. You are creating an unsurpassed gift for everyone in the City.

But just for now, it is a gift to me, like my job over these many years with the Conservancy. I may be more relaxed when I visit the Park in the future, but it is not possible for me to love it more.

Doreen

DONORS

The names listed below and on the following pages include donors who made gifts or pledges of \$100 or more between June 1, 2023 and February 29, 2024, as well as all *Hats in the Park* donors and George Hermann Society members. *Evening in the Park* gala donors will be recognized in a subsequent issue.

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HERMANN PARK CONSERVANCY

What's Blooming?

Spring has sprung throughout Hermann Park! The various blooms and greenery are a welcomed sign of the changing season, and we love seeing the influx of visitors who come to enjoy it all.

Despite a winter with periods of freezing temperatures and constant downpours, our horticulture team worked diligently to care for plant life throughout the Park. It is thanks to the support of Conservancy members that we are able to continue these maintenance efforts and keep the Park blooming all year long. Learn how you can make an impact at hermannpark.org/membership.



Homestead Purple Verbena
(Verbena Canadensis 'Homestead Purple')



Texas Bluebonnet
(Lupinus Texensis)



Chinese Fringe Tree
(Chionanthus Retusus)



George Tabor Azalea
(Rhododendron)

Commons Close-Ups

After two years of construction, the Commons is ready for its debut! This grand idea was born from the desire to create more for our six million-plus annual visitors to enjoy. The Commons could not have been realized without the incredible dedication and support from our architectural team, construction crews, Conservancy staff and donors.

While we are proud of the big attractions, such as the Hildebrand Foundation Rocket Ship and Lott Family Carousel, the bountiful amount of smaller moments that will be had in this space are equally as significant. Take a look at some of the little joys you will soon find throughout the Commons.



The Lott Family Carousel is one of the most anticipated features of the Commons by both Park visitors and Conservancy staff alike, and we were delighted for the fun selection of animals to be delivered and ready for installment.



The statue of Park founder George H. Hermann made its return to this area of the Park, just in time to see the final stages of construction at the Commons.



The Conservancy horticulture team, with an abundance of help from volunteers, has worked tirelessly to transform the Commons with plenty of trees, flowers and other plantings.

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HERMANN PARK CONSERVANCY

The addition of new picnic tables around the Wortham Pavilion has us saying "Orange you glad you came to the Commons?"



The bright collection of daisies and dragonflies at the Thacker Family Dragonfly Island ensures that the Commons will be bursting with fun colors.

McWilliams Dog Park Ribbon Cutting

On October 13, 2023, the Conservancy and the Houston Parks and Recreation Department hosted the ribbon cutting for the McWilliams Dog Park. The smiles were abundant from humans and pups alike as they celebrated the official opening of this exciting amenity for the community.

A dog park was the most resounding request from the public as an addition to Hermann Park, and the \$2 million project was the first completed initiative of the *Play Your Park* campaign. Located between South MacGregor Way and Brays Bayou, the two-plus acre space features one of the largest interactive dog park water features in Houston, separate areas for small and large breeds, natural shade and beautiful plantings.



Namesake donors Brad and Laura McWilliams, Council Member Carolyn Evans-Shabazz, Council Member Sallie Alcorn, Conservancy president Doreen Stoller, Houston Parks and Recreation Department greenspace management deputy director Chris Carroll, Dog Park committee chair Kevin Bonebrake, Conservancy Board Chair Kristy Bradshaw, Bunny Radoff



Conservancy president Doreen Stoller with namesake donors Laura and Brad McWilliams plus Belle



Dog Park committee chair Kevin Bonebrake, Winnie Scheuer and Midas Bonebrake



Peter Morris and Sarah MacDonald



Cece Fowler and Lily



Dan Piette and Lulu



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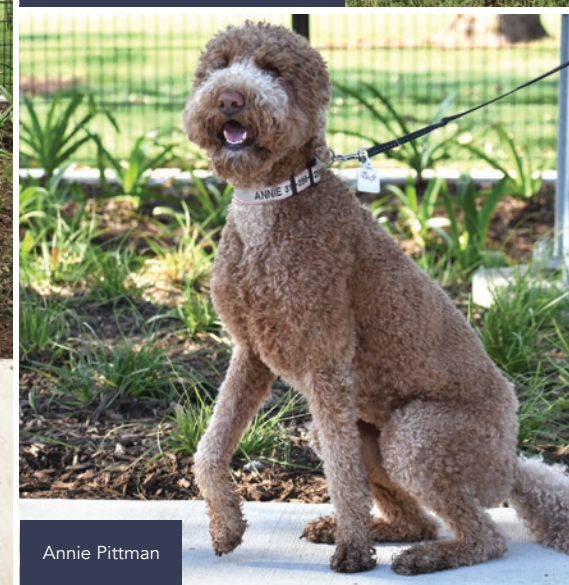
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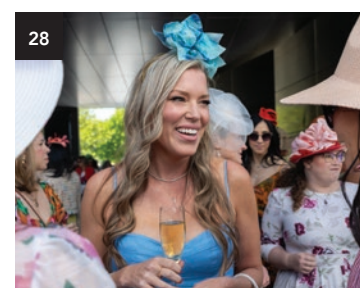
Hats in the Park 2024

It was a beautiful day for the 16th Hats in the Park. The luncheon continues to be a fabulous and fashionable fundraiser that makes an incredible impact on Hermann Park. Event co-chairs Julie Longoria Chen, Isabel David and Rishma Mohamed coordinated a wonderful day for the 480 attendees who were able to enjoy the return of spring in the McGovern Centennial Gardens. Through the incredible generosity of the event patrons, the Conservancy raised over \$480,000 for the care and improvement of Hermann Park.

This year's luncheon honored Paula Harris for her longstanding commitment to community engagement, and that dedication has driven her to be a continuous friend to the Park and supporter of the Conservancy. Through her roles with the Houston Astros and the Astros Foundation, she has made a significant impact on the Conservancy's mission, especially with the Commons which saw a \$1.5 million donation from the organization

To everyone that supported the luncheon, thank you for making a difference in Hermann Park.

Photos by Jenny Antill



1 Isabel David, Rishma Mohamed and Julie Longoria Chen 2 Phyllis Williams, Roslyn Bazzelle Mitchell and Lauren Randle 3 Alla Thomas, Paula Harris, Laura Murillo and Qiana James 4 Gracie Cavnar and Laura McWilliams 5 Mindy Hildebrand and Doreen Stoller 6 Ayesha Rashid, Brigitte Kalai and Alice Mao Brams 7 Y. Ping Sun and Mei Leebron 8 Monica Hoz de Vila 9 Paula DesRoches and Morgan Garvey 10 Kristy Bradshaw and Kelley Lubanko 11 Caroline Kelly and Phoebe Tudor 12 Ileana Trevino and Leigh Smith 13 Melissa Holman Juneau 14 Catherine Matthews and Elizabeth Abraham Colombowala 15 Demetra Jones 16 Allison Stasney and Ting Bresnahan 17 Stephanie von Stein Schusterman and Cheryl Byington 18 Hallie Vanderhider and Jennifer Allison 19 Neekie Kashani and Katherine Whaley 20 Brooke Bentley Gunst, Holly Radom and Carolyn Sabat 21 Lindley Arnoldy and Allie Fields 22 Stephanie Tsuru and Donae Chramosta 23 Kristen Berger 24 Susie Criner 25 Rebecca Martens, Lacey Dalcour Salas and Jennifer Cope 26 Jennifer Warren, Cheryl Ocansey, Roxann Chargois and Beverly Broussard 27 Holly Alvis

Valuable Visits to the Japanese Garden

In January, garden specialist John Powell visited Hermann Park to spend time with our horticulture staff in the Japanese Garden. An expert in Japanese Black Pine pruning, he provided instrumental guidance with his hands-on lessons focusing on pruning techniques for various key plants in the Garden, specifically Japanese Black Pines, as well as restoring the "Suhama" at the "Karensansui," or dry stream stone beach.

The gifting of wisdom continued in February when the Conservancy and the Japanese Garden Advisory Committee hosted the design and landscape team from Japan, including landscape architect Yosuke Uno and led by Hiroshi Iwasaki and his son Taiki Iwasaki, that makes annual visits to ensure the Japanese concepts are accurately upheld throughout this beloved space. The working partnership between this team, the Conservancy and the City of Houston has benefitted the Japanese Garden for over 15 years.

continued, next page

John Powell gives a hands-on lesson to the horticulture team in pruning Japanese Black Pine.



John Powell leads the horticulture team and a group of volunteers in restoring a portion of the dry stream stone beach, or the "Suhama" at the "Karensansui."



Another project completed during the two-week visit was the installation of a new screening "Koetsujini" fence adjacent to the Tea House.

Run in the Park

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Hats in the Park Luncheon

All gifts in honor of Paula Harris, honoree, and chairs Julie Longoria Chen, Isabel David and Rishma Mohamed

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The monument installed outside the Japanese Garden features a message etched in Mr. Minami's (left) calligraphy which translates to "friendship between cities." Also pictured are Conservancy president Doreen Stoller and the Japan Team leads, Mr. Hiroshi Iwasaki and Taiki Iwasaki.

Japanese Garden, continued

One of the highlights of this year's visit was the installation of a new stone monument featuring calligraphy from Kunio Minami, the former chair of the Japanese Garden Advisory Committee. Mr. Minami has had an incredible impact on the Japanese Garden over the past 20 years, so it was an honor for him to lend his hand to the monument.

If interested in supporting the care of the Japanese Garden, we invite you to join the newly launched Yotsuba Circle, whose members help fund the resources needed to ensure proper and traditional care of this space. Learn more at hermannpark.org/japanesegarden.



The Japan team and Conservancy staff planted cherry blossom trees, a crowd favorite, outside of the Garden's back gates.

Join the Yotsuba Circle



Photo by Houston First



YOTSUBA CIRCLE

We invite you to become a member of the newly launched Yotsuba Circle by making a donation towards this year's care of the Japanese Garden. The annual patronage of Yotsuba Circle members helps to fund the resources needed to ensure proper and

traditional care of the Japanese Garden. In addition to annual maintenance needs and ongoing stewardship programs, the Circle supports major capital improvements in an effort to preserve the Garden in accordance with Japanese tradition and to further develop the space into a lasting symbol of culture and community. Members enjoy annual Circle-exclusive benefits, including the opportunity to meet the visiting team from Japan, invitations to special events, annual recognition on the Conservancy website, general Conservancy membership perks and more.

If you would like to join the Yotsuba Circle or learn more about the different membership levels, visit hermannpark.org/japanesegarden.

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HERMANN PARK CONSERVANCY



Photo by Melissa Taylor

Every Membership Counts at Hermann Park Conservancy

Not only are Hermann Park Conservancy memberships an invaluable source of year-round support for Park maintenance and improvement, but they are also a demonstration of the amount of devotion that exists for this special place. Conservancy members come from all across the Greater Houston area, each with their own reason to patron the Park in this manner. Whether you join to enjoy the train-related perks of membership or simply for the knowledge that you are lending a helping hand to one of the City's most beloved parks, the Conservancy appreciates each and every member in its pursuit of preserving a space that so many Houstonians consider to be their own backyard.

Every membership counts as each one provides vital support for Park programs, from beautification to maintenance. Becoming a member is the best way to directly support the Conservancy's efforts to ensure Hermann Park is here today and for generations to come. Learn how you can help by visiting hermannpark.org/membership.

Community Events



Run in the Park

With more than 500 runners from the Greater Houston area ranging from ages one to 84 participating in the 20th annual *Run in the Park* presented by Reliant, the Conservancy was able to raise over \$40,000 for the crucial care needed to maintain the Park and its trail system.

A beautiful fall morning kicked off our longest-standing community event where a mix of runners, joggers and walkers followed the route that took them through several destinations, from the heart of the Park and through the canopy of the historic live oaks. Following the 10K and 5K was the 1K kids' run, sponsored by Sunnova, where young runners were cheered on by family and friends as they raced to the finish line.

"Even in its 20th year, we are no less proud of how the community continues to show up to support our treasured Hermann Park through this gathering," said Doreen Stoller, president of Hermann Park Conservancy. "As our most enduring event, we look forward to *Run in the Park* every year as it brings together so many people to this special haven within the City of Houston—a place that is in the midst of several exciting developments made possible by these devoted individuals here today."

Photos by Melissa Taylor

DONORS

Urban Green

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HERMANN PARK CONSERVANCY

Community Events, continued



Park to Port

At the ninth annual *Park to Port* bike ride, more than 450 cyclists embarked on the 20-mile round-trip ride from Bayou Parkland towards the Port of Houston and back. Over \$35,000 was raised for the Conservancy to continue its stewardship efforts throughout the Park, including Bayou Parkland.

At the halfway mark, riders enjoyed a turn-around party sponsored by Port Houston who continues to play an imperative role in this event, helping to give Houstonians a more-encompassing view of all the City has to offer. "Port Houston is proud to partner with Hermann Park Conservancy to encourage the community to get out and gain a new perspective of all the different locales nestled within their hometown," said Garret Berg, community relations manager of Port Houston.

After crossing the finish line, participants celebrated at the post-ride party under the Bill Coats Bridge where they reveled in the company of their fellow cyclists with music, snacks and more.

Photos by Voltz Photography



Houston Rockets Dog Walk

Park patrons, Houston Rockets fans and their canine companions enjoyed a brisk morning stroll around Hermann Park at the 11th annual *Houston Rockets Dog Walk*. The rambles, both two- and four-legged, enjoyed a scenic view throughout the pet-friendly trails followed by a post-walk party in Lake Plaza with music and refreshments—Tito's Vodka beverages for the humans and tasty dog treats for the pups!

Photos provided by Houston Rockets

Volunteers Honor Kathrine McGovern's Legacy

Kathrine McGovern



In honor of Kathrine McGovern, students from McGovern Medical School at UTHealth Houston came out to the Park to assist with a variety of gardening projects. Mrs. McGovern made an incredible impact in the community along with her husband Dr. John P. McGovern. We were honored to host this group of 158 volunteers from the McGovern Medical School who honored her memory through beautifying this place that she held very dear to her heart.

The McGovern Medical School volunteers spent the day in McGovern Centennial Gardens, helping to improve this Park destination that would not exist without the generosity that the McGoverns continuously showed the City of Houston and Hermann Park especially. Tasks included removal of invasive species, care of the paths throughout the Garden and cutbacks of grasses and other perennial plants. With a collective 474 hours of volunteer work, these students were an incredible help, and their contribution would have made Mrs. McGovern proud.



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HERMANN PARK CONSERVANCY

Interested in team building opportunities for your organization or looking for a place to complete school service hours?
Volunteer at Hermann Park!



It takes teamwork to keep the Park beautiful and healthy for the six million-plus annual visitors who spend their days at our trails, gardens and play areas. To learn more about individual and group volunteer opportunities at the Park, contact us at volunteer@hermannpark.org or at **713-524-5876**.



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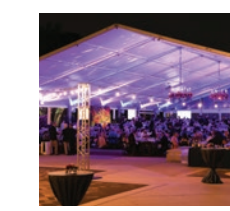
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Save the Date



Friday, April 26, 6:30 p.m. Evening in the Park
 This year, the Conservancy's annual gala will honor Cece Fowler and Stephanie Tsuru for their extraordinary efforts as the *Play Your Park* campaign co-chairs and corporate honoree H-E-B for their longstanding commitment to the Park. Chaired by Jay Jones and Terry Wayne Jones and Shawn Stephens and Jim Jordan, the occasion will be held at Molly Ann Smith Plaza overlooking McGovern Lake. We hope you will join us at the Conservancy's biggest, and most marvelous, fundraiser! Learn more at hermannpark.org/gala.



George Hermann Society—Leave Your Legacy

The George Hermann Society recognizes donors who have provided for the future of Hermann Park through bequests of life income gifts to Hermann Park Conservancy.



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**Thank you for
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Check out the campaign's
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the McWilliams Dog Park
and the Commons.

Learn more about these
projects at [hermannpark.org/
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