

# Friends of Schuylkill River Park



## Fall 2013

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

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### Announcements

#### Markward Recreation Center Fall 2013:

- Ceramics Wednesday at 7pm
- After School Program M-F
- Youth Tennis (10 and under)  
Saturdays from 2pm-4pm

#### FSRP Board of Directors

Lynne Hopper, President  
Derek Freres, Vice President  
Sean O'Rourke, Vice President  
Carolyn Levine, Treasurer  
Susan Halpern, Secretary  
Carolyn Duffy, Membership  
Suzanne Reichwein

## FRSP Fall Festival:

### A Fantastic Celebration of Autumn and Our Park

With the crisp fall air it is time to start thinking about the 2013 Friends of Schuylkill River Park Fall Festival. This year's Fall Festival will be held October 19th 11-3pm (rain date October 20th). The event will include delicious food from Veg and Go and Gavin's Café as well as grilled options cooked by our FRSP Board and volunteers. We will have a DJ who will be providing music and games for all ages. Last year there were more vendor



tables than ever before, showcasing crafts, community services and local businesses. Many will be returning for another year. For the kids we will have many options including: a petting zoo with pony rides, cupcake making, and fun games. We will have a large moon bounce set up in the middle of the festival, which is a huge hit with the kids. New to the festival this year is a rainbow loom table and a Halloween Costume swap. So parents bring your old costumes and pick up a new one for this year's trick-o-treating. We also have several community programs performing including Metro Kids' Club and Macguffin Theatre and Film Company. The FSRP Fall Festival is a neighborhood tradition. For all you dog lovers the finalist for the Philly Water's Best Friend Spokesdog will be crowned. We would love to have more park members involved! If you have

any ideas or suggestions on how to make this year's event equally spectacular or would like to volunteer at the festival, let us know at [fsrporg@gmail.com](mailto:fsrporg@gmail.com).

#### Free Street Trees

Would you like a free tree in front of a property you own - a home or business? The Friends of Schuylkill River Park *Tree Tenders* covers the area bordered by the Schuylkill River and Broad between Walnut and South. We work with TreeVitalize to plant trees for free, including cement cutting, within our bounds. Support from CCRA allows us to also grind stumps for free. For more information and to download an application, visit: [www.fsrp.org/treetenders](http://www.fsrp.org/treetenders)



*The Friends of Schuylkill River Park is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The official registration and financial information of The Friends of Schuylkill River Park may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.*

## Volunteer Spotlight: Steve Slaterbeck

The Friends of Schuylkill River Park has been lucky to have Steve Slaterbeck on the board over the past 5 years; he has been the brains (and brawn) behind the Fall Festival. Read on and find out about our friend, neighbor and park volunteer!

Q: Do you live in the neighborhood?

A: I live close by...about five minutes.

Q: How often do you come to the park?

A: I walk along the park at least four times a week on my way to the gym or to run on the trail. It's amazing to see the myriad activities (baseball, soccer, playground, tennis, volleyball, bike polo, hoops, dogs, gardening, Frisbee, pickle ball and petanque) happening simultaneously! Attending monthly board meetings at Markward Rec Center also made me aware of the indoor activities that take place there like ceramics, yoga.

Q: What are your favorite features in the park?

A: I love the community garden. We – partner Raymond and I – just cycled out of the community garden after 7 years (1 year as “public” gardeners, then 6 years as member gardeners) where we evolved from growing mostly flowers to more herbs, and vegetables. We're on the waiting list for another 6-year plot. It's also entertaining to watch dogs play in the dog park.

Q: How do you think the park looks after the renovation?

A: The park has never looked more beautiful and inviting; the grassy “bowl” is green and as long as dog owners abide by the leash law, it should stay that way. I can't believe I'm saying this, but I also enjoy the view from the pedestrian bridge! (I was dead set against its construction.)

Q: Are there any additions you'd like to see in the park?

A: Since we aspire to be a green city, I'd like to see recycling containers. It would also be wonderful to have a secure shelter for bikes. It would really allow those of us with smaller houses to utilize our bikes more.

Q: Tell us about your park volunteerism.

A: I was an active FSRP board member for five years and the “go to guy” for the annual Fall Festival, which I loved. Cultivating and sustaining relationships with drink and food donors, silent auction and raffle prize donors, community groups, businesses, artisans, vendors, and of course volunteers, has helped to grow the festival from a few hundred attendees and a handful of vendors to a popular and anticipated community tradition with 2,000 attendees. Our 2012 festival was amazing with 40 vendors, 20 community groups, DJ, dancing, games, super moon bounce, petting zoo, tennis clinic, face painting, pumpkin and cupcake decorating and more. This event builds community AND raises funds that go directly towards funding park projects. I've also participated in cleanups, plantings and Eat, Drink, and be Green. Getting involved with the park is rewarding, fun, and a good way to make friends!

Q: What is your favorite season in the park?

A: Fall Festival captures the crisp, wholesome, outdoorsy, shorts-and-sweatshirts essence of autumn in one day. Spring... who doesn't like spring? There's also late summer in the community plot, when the tomatoes, zucchini, sage, basil, and rosemary are coming at you fast and furious. Too hard to choose **just one!**



## Sponsor a Bench

With the replacement of all Park Benches occurring as part of the Pedestrian Bridge Construction, the Friends of Schuylkill River Park has a limited time opportunity for perpetual bench sponsorships. Sponsorships are available for \$2,000 and include a placard with wording of your choosing. The benches can be for dedication, appreciation, memorial of people or pets, and other uses. If you are interested in a sponsorship, please contact:

[fsrporg@gmail.com](mailto:fsrporg@gmail.com)

We have sold several sponsorships thus far and many of the placards have been installed. Once all installed benches are sold, the opportunity

# FSRP presents at EPA Urban Sustainability Forum

The Friends of Schuylkill River Park was asked to present at the EPA Region III Urban Sustainability Forum earlier this year. The session's theme was Green Space is Safe Space. The following are excerpts from the presentation "What is the value of green space? How do you design it well? Lessons learned at Schuylkill River Park".

How do you translate a tolerant and inclusive society into physical space? We aspire to think of our culture, and the public realm that we live in, as reflective of the society that we aspire to. We think some of those admirable attributes of the public realm include:

- where people of different and diverse backgrounds can coexist,
- where social interaction provides value, and
- where a sense of community can both be nourished and flourish.

For designers and stewards of public space we think of communities as neighborhoods, as physical places. But we have to remind ourselves that communities are also defined as people who live in the same location, share common interests, and have mutual relations. And sociologists suggest that we are all generally attracted to, and more comfortable, around like-minded people. Familiarity will breed contentment. David Brooks, in the Atlantic, once argued that the study of Census Data over the years suggests that Americans have segregationist impulses. We follow our own kind, whether it's by race, by income or class or political/religious. I imagine this is so in our row house neighborhoods of Philadelphia. We like to look out our front windows and see another version of ourselves mirrored across the street. And in small doses this is probably ok. But a Philadelphian replied to Brook's observation that, "an appreciation of diversity-not as an abstraction but as a part of one's daily life-can demonstrably be the force that attracts people to a community and sustains its character." It is an admirable aim.

Urban parks are community assets that, as part of the public realm, provide passive/active amenities to the neighborhood. They should be an opportunity to raise social capital in the community. What is social capital? It is the attitude and willingness of people to engage in collective activities. Over time nurturing social capital returns a stream of benefits:

- safety and security,
- friendship and community,
- trust and tolerance,
- cohesive and inclusive civic identity,
- cooperation across social networks,
- and perhaps even creativity and innovation.

Schuylkill River Park is unique among the parks that serve Southwest Center City and South Philly in that it provides

space for very specific physical activities and also very informal passive activities-all in a very tight and limited amount of area. How do we serve such a diverse program of activities? Not easily, but we do think about a couple of things.

With imagination and empathy we envision the seasonal events but design for the daily activities. However important it was to provide sod on the baseball/soccer field for all the athletes, we had enough sense to empathize with all the spectators that watch the events from the small hill adjacent to the bleachers to remember to seed and nurture a nice lawn for them. And however easily it is to want to program the empty paved area next to the basketball courts with some prescriptive activity we try to imagine all the various users who share that space across the summer because it isn't designed: from bike polo teams, to novice bicyclists/tennis players, the volleyball league, and the informal kick ballers.

Accept the specificities but look for the generalities. We are always on the lookout for the synergies between the activities that allow for more intimacy or shared interests that with careful collaboration and coordination allows for increased value to the park. No board member wanted the Pedestrian Bridge to be built in the Park but once it was obvious that it was going to happen we tried very hard to make sure that it was integrated in the best possible manner. We worked closely with a range of stakeholders to represent everyone's interest as well as we could. And we were careful to advocate for the specific details/conditions that made for a good dog run, basketball courts, and a safe pedestrian bridge; while acknowledging that together they could make a great opportunity to encourage interaction across the range of park users.

Include all the stakeholders, whether they know it or not. We are constantly negotiating the differences between all the groups and individuals who use the Park. We understand that the board has to represent everyone and balance the needs of passive and active recreation in a natural, ever-growing, setting. We have more linear feet of fencing throughout the Park than you can imagine, but we are sensitive to how we separate but also link different spaces. We want to encourage the interaction of the various users of the Park, not to anyone's detriment but in the pursuit of diversity, empathy, and the investment of social capital.

And it is purposeful that where it matters most along the perimeter between the neighborhood and the Park, there is no fence. Except at the corner of the tennis courts the Schuylkill Park has no fences adjacent to the public streets and sidewalks of the community (Unlike every other park in the neighborhoods it serves.) We understand the Park as

# Playing It Safe at the Dog Park

By Leigh Siegfried & Michaela Grief, Opportunity Barks

an extension of the community both as physical space in the public realm and as an imagined extension to the community of

For that came out to the training session hosted by the Friends of the Schuylkill River Dog Park in early May with Opportunity Barks, we had great participation, lots of questions and an enthusiastic bunch in attendance- thank you! As dog parks have increased in popularity during the last two and a half decades, we dog owners/lovers/trainers have learned a tremendous amount about pet dog interactions in an enclosed environment. To be the best advocate for your dog and others, here are some guidelines to having the best experience at a dog park.

From the human point of view, we seldom think of our parks as places where “bad” or tragic things can happen, but they can and do. And sometimes the worst part is that either such events were preventable or were overlooked by owners as problematic. But here are few things to keep in mind:

**Not all dogs are dog-park dogs!** A dog park is like a crowded bar; some love the noise and social experience, while others would rather have coffee with a single friend, or go for a jog alone. Note: if your dog tends to hang with people only, ignore dogs or obsessively fetch, this can be a yellow flag that the park is a bit much for them or that they are stressed. Stick to off peak visits or pursue other activities with your pooch.

**Other things to do with your pup:** Take a long sniffing walk, get a long leash and hit the trails, play ball, get involved in dog sports and activities. Even if your dog loves the park now, don't count on it as a long term option, many dogs “age out” or become less dog tolerant over time and dog parks tend to be filled with rip, roaring adolescent and younger dogs.

**Active Supervision Folks!** Would you take your 2-year-old to the playground and then ignore him/her while you read, talk on the phone, text, etc; responding only when someone starts to scream and cry? Hopefully not! Same applies here, folks.

**Help Each Other Out!** The key hot spots where there can be drama at parks, often hinge making safe entrances and exits. Do your fellow park members a favor and call your dog off the entrance so there is no bullying at the gate as a new dog comes in. Also use that recall to interrupt heated play and take breaks. Take a break by walking your dog to the perimeter, petting them and allowing them some time to chill, this can drastically reduce dog park arousal and diffuse potential fights vs. allowing play to build to a critical mass and then you have play that may tip to aggression.

From the dog point of view, a park is truly highly complex environment that changes moment to moment, depending on who or whose dog is at the park. The mix of personalities, play style, temperament and the environmental change can be a lot for a confident dog, let alone a dog that may not be able to roll with the punches.

**Dog Parks Pros:** fun, exercise, social skills development and maintenance, learning, enrichment, and positive training experiences.

**Dog Parks Cons:** learned fear and aggression, social skills deterioration, a “Lord of the Flies” type scenario in which dogs handle things in a National Geographic style. Wild canid or a domesticated companion- you decide.

• **Bring your dog to the park in a quick release or break away collar**, so that should there be any collars that get tangled or caught, you can ideally get the collars off pronto.

• **Beware of leashing dogs within dog-park upon entrance/exit.** A leashed dog, surround-



# Save the date: October 19th-Fall Festival!!



## A Few FSRP Past Project Include:

- Purchase Many New Park Benches
- Paint Fencing and Bathrooms at O'Connor Pool
- Renovate and Maintain Schuylkill Pocket Veterans Memorial Field
- Replace All Markward Playground Equipment
- Coordinate Improvements to 25th and Delancey
- Invest more than \$50,000 into the Park's Urban Forest
- Renovate and Maintain Playground Landscape
- Install Drinking Fountains
- Plant Thousands of Spring Bulbs
- Plan major improvements to the courtyard outside Markward



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### Trinity Memorial Church

*I find great joy in our TMC community and the shared witness of our faith journeys! -- Teri*

### Community OutReach Partnership

*Communicare gave me the chance to set up a computer for Ms. J., who is 82 and blind. She was excited by her new toy and I was inspired -- I hope that I'm still eager to take on something new when I'm 82! -- Sharon*

### Trinity Center for Urban Life

*Trinity Center is a beating art-heart. I love it for bringing our neighborhood a world of artistic variety, expression and inspiration. -- Sue*

**The Center of Your Neighborhood  
at the corner of 22nd & Spruce Sts.**

2212 Spruce St.  
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215-732-2515

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trinityat22nd.org

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Studio Christensen  
Thrive Pilates  
Treat Me Good Dog Bakery  
Waterworks Restaurant

## **FALL FESTIVAL 2012**

### **Food, Drink, Prizes, Supplies**

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Just Dogs! Gourmet  
Sarah Hicks (cupcakes)  
Gavin's Café  
Pepsico  
South Square Market  
Tall Pines  
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### **Entertainment**

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United States Tennis Association

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