



OLPA Receives Grants

OLPA recently received grants totaling \$275,000 from several foundations which puts it closer to its Deepdene rehabilitation goal. Donors include Robert W. Woodruff Foundation, Inc., Tull Charitable Foundation, Inc., R. Howard Dobbs, Jr. Foundation, Georgia Power Foundation, and Price Gilbert, Jr. Charitable fund.

Deepdene Report

As OLPA nears completion of its capital projects campaign, funds will still be needed to maintain Olmsted Linear Park in pristine condition by supplementing maintenance provided by the City of Atlanta and DeKalb County. This year's drought has been particularly hard on the Park's trees, both the older trees and those recently planted. OLPA is planning to replace trees as soon as weather conditions improve and funding permits.

The drought also is responsible for slowing the replanting in the interior of Deepdene, the last park segment to be rehabilitated. In 2006, OLPA was awarded a grant of \$1,000,000 federal funding through GADOT for the perimeter work in Deepdene. The approval process for this grant has been slow, but is nearing resolution so that work may begin on utility burial and lighting replacement along Ponce de Leon Avenue. Installation of a paved path and landscaping will follow.

(continued on page two)

"GREEN DREAMS" IS THEME OF 2008 PARTY FOR THE PARKS ON PONCE

Mark your calendars for the fourth annual Party for the Parks on Ponce to be held Sunday, February 24, 2008. This grand event to raise funds for the Olmsted Linear Park will be held from 6:30 p.m. until 9:30 p.m. in the atrium of Fernbank Museum of Natural History.

"The gala theme, "Green Dreams", captures the restorative vision of spirit and joy that those who visit the park enjoy," said Claire Sterk, who is chairing the event with her husband, Kirk Elifson. "The party, an annual celebration, brings together friends from the local and greater Atlanta community who appreciate the Park along Ponce de Leon Avenue and wish to contribute to its continued rehabilitation and upkeep," she added.

The couple and their party steering committee, plan a similar format to that created by their predecessors. "We are continuing both the live and silent auctions, along with providing great music, delicious food, beverages of your choice at an open bar and the opportunity to

make new friends and greet the old in festive surroundings. Everything is included in the price of the reservation," said Elifson. "Party reservations will make lovely holiday gifts," he suggested.

Reservations and gift certificates may be ordered at www.partyfortheparksonponce.org now or by sending a check for \$100 per person payable to Olmsted Linear Park Alliance and mailing it to OLPA, P.O. Box 5500, Atlanta, GA 31107. Deadline for ordering gift certificates is December 15. Invitations will be mailed in January.

Volunteers who are serving on the 2008 Gala Steering Committee include Jodi Buckley, Kathy Gunter, Jo Ann Herold, Julie Ralston, Claire Gotham, and past party chairs Judi Shur, Joni Winston and Gloria Seymour.

"We welcome other volunteers to serve on various committees, as well as donations of auction items," said Elifson. Those wishing to contribute or to volunteer may contact either Sterk or Elifson at Greendreams2008@Gmail.com.

Tax Benefits Go to Those Who Give

The Olmsted Linear Park Alliance is urging each Druid Hills resident who appreciates the results of ten years of rehabilitation in the Park along Ponce de Leon Avenue to consider making a gift in tax year 2007. In addition to providing critical financial support for the rehabilitation and maintenance of the Park, your gift can also result in appealing tax benefits for you.

The following is a partial list of the many forms such gifts can take. Please contact the Olmsted Linear Park Alliance for details on the tax benefits that may result from each. (cont. on p.2)



The new curved bridge across the creek in Deepdene Park is already popular with joggers and walkers .

(Deepdene, continued from page one.)

The lighting and landscaping along Ponce de Leon will replicate that found in the other park segments. The federal funding for Deepdene requires a committed match by OLPA and DeKalb County and donations to OLPA will be used for this match as well as for the completion of mulched paths in Deepdene's interior. Since Ponce de Leon is a state and national highway, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GADOT) is responsible for curb and drainage maintenance. In the near future GADOT is planning to replace curbing and improve drainage on Ponce de Leon Avenue and Scott Boulevard. The Olmsted Linear Park Alliance is coordinating its rehabilitation efforts with GADOT as it has done in the other park segments.

2008 OLPA Calendars Are Now Available

OLPA calendars for 2008 are available for \$15. The calendars are in full color. Each month features a different view of the Park, along with a quote or poem. The calendars will make excellent holiday gifts. To order, contact Jennie Richardson at 404-373-1837 or JJRlchar@bellsouth.net.

(Tax benefits continued from page one.)

1. Contributions of cash may be taken in the full amount of the gift and are tax-deductible up to 50% of your adjusted gross income. Contributions made in excess of that amount may be carried over to the next tax year and for up to five carryover years.

2. An income tax deduction for appreciated stock may be taken for the current fair market value of donated shares, and by transferring the stock directly to OLPA, one can avoid paying capital gains tax on appreciation.

3. Individual Retirement Accounts (and other qualified retirement plans) may be an advantageous way to bequeath or otherwise contribute the assets to OLPA. The Pension Protection Plan of 2006 allows rollovers from an IRA directly to OLPA and other qualified charities during the 2007 tax year. This opportunity is available to plan holders age 70 1/2 years or older and allows for transfers of up to \$100,000 per taxpayer for

each year. The amount contributed is not includable as income on your tax return but does count against the minimum distribution requirement. 2007 is the last year in which to take advantage of the Pension Protection Plan gift program. Guidance and copies of the documents needed to complete an outright gift from an IRA may be obtained from the OLPA office.

4. Several other gift possibilities include life insurance, gifts in trust, real and personal property, and bequests provided in a will. Contact the OLPA office for details.

The Olmsted Linear Park Alliance, Inc. is a 501-C3 organization and contributions to it qualify for the tax deductions allowed by IRS regulations and by law. For information, contact:

George Ickes, OLPA Administrator, 404-723-3118 or write OLPA, Post Office Box 5500, Atlanta, GA 31107 or visit the website at www.AtlantaOlmstedPark.org

doing either in the Park. Instead, I walked on the sidewalks, as did most everyone else. The "Linear Park" was just a weedy stretch of ground between Little and Big Ponce.

Deepdene wasn't even an option in those days. Overgrown with non-native plants and weeds, it was inhospitable and, in summer, nearly impassable. To a woman alone, it was also a scary and remote place where I'd rather not venture.

My memories may be somewhat vague after 37 years, but I honestly don't recall many residents using the park. I'd occasionally see a dog walker in the grass, or a Frisbee game underway, but that was it. In fact, I don't recall anyone actually walking through the Park until the paths were installed.

OLPA began its first rehabilitation ten years ago. What a difference a decade makes! I walk some portion of the park most every day, often collecting trash. It's not unusual to see walkers, joggers, mothers with strollers, and tykes on tricycles. The rehabilitation of the Park has made it an inviting place to visit. Something is always happening, whether it's a new bloom, school students having lunch, a hawk stalking a squirrel, or even the sighting of an Eastern Bluebird, as I did recently in Deepdene.

What used to be a rarely used eyesore is now prime public park land, used and enjoyed by many in the community. I still live a block away, and I'm glad I stayed long enough to see the resurgence of the Park and witness the many who enjoy it.

—Jennie Richardson

Remember When?

I moved to within a block of the Linear Park in 1970. Although I did a great deal of walking, I rarely walked in the Park. Why? It was decrepit and uninviting in those days. First, there was no path to tread. Second, the grass was weedy and rarely cut, making walking in it a nuisance. Third, it was littered with trash thrown out by passing motorists on Ponce de Leon Avenue.

I didn't bicycle or push a baby stroller but I couldn't imag-



DHCA President Bruce MacGregor presents a \$10,000 check from DHCA to OLPA board members (L-R) Doug Grimm, Kirk Elifson and President Tally Sweat.

NATURE'S RECYCLING

BY JENNIFER RICHARDSON, GEORGIA MASTER GARDENER,
DEKALB COUNTY

Composting may be the original form of re-cycling. Composting is the natural reduction or breaking down of organic waste into humus, aided by millions of bacteria found in organic materials. A more direct way of phrasing this is all organic matter will eventually rot. Most veteran gardeners compost because it improves soil, controls the PH and causes more vigorous growth of plant material. Other benefits of composting include saving money on fertilizers, garden soil and soil amendments, and allowing the homeowner to recycle a large portion of household waste, thus sparing our nearly full landfills.

Anyone can compost! The simplest way is to select an out-of-the way place in your yard on which to deposit kitchen and yard waste—the “compost pile.” If you wish to contain the pile, fence three sides of it with chicken wire nailed onto sticks or posts hammered into the ground. My favorite compost containment is both easy and free. Obtain four wooden pallets and set them on end in a square. Nail the back pallet to the sides. Wire the front pallet to one side and install a hook on the other side, making the front pallet a gate that you can open when you need to turn your pile. Pallets are available at home improvement stores, and in the outdoor sections of garden stores—and the stores are usually delighted to give you as many as you can carry away.

Now that you have your compost pile site, begin thinking of all the things you can put into it. High carbon material provides cellulose needed by

bacteria for conversion to sugars and heat; high nitrogen waste provides concentrated protein which allows bacteria to thrive. Autumn leaves, straw, dried weeds, sawdust and brown paper bags are good examples of high carbon materials.

Coffee grounds, green plant material, fruit and vegetable trimmings, and manure are examples of high-nitrogen materials. Eggshells, tea bags, freshly cut grass clippings, banana peels, stale bread, cantaloupe rinds and leftover vegetables from the family dinner table are all good examples of things you can compost. You can add shrub clippings if they are cut into very small pieces. Stagger layers of compost material with soil from your yard. Cheese and meat scraps, pet waste, and tree limbs are examples of things you do not want to add to your compost pile.

A passive compost pile requires very little effort. Just turn the materials over with a pitchfork a few times a year, and make sure the pile stays damp. (When the current water bans are lifted, you can wet your pile with a garden hose; during the outdoor water ban, use gray water from your home to wet your pile.) A compost pile should be about as wet as a damp sponge.

For the homeowner who wants intense involvement in composting, there are many options



Kitchen waste in a compost pile before it has been turned

including compost accelerators; turning the pile once a month; and taking the temperature to determine how hot the core of the pile is. (140 degrees F will kill most weed seeds.) For the compost



This compost drum must be turned daily with a crank (located on the opposite side of the drum) and can produce humus in as little as three weeks.

devotee, there are many commercial containers and drums that can be turned with a crank, resulting in humus in as little as 3 weeks. The drums make composting easy, but are expensive—around \$300 each. I have three compost areas in my garden: a pile for cut twigs, leaves and shrubbery trimmings; a pile for kitchen waste; and a compost drum that must be turned daily with a crank.

A passive compost pile will produce humus in from one to two years. This black, nutrient rich dirt can then be spread in garden beds, or tilled into the soil. Not only did you make it yourself, but you saved money, enriched your soil, saved a landfill, allowed the dirt surrounding your plants to hold onto precious water, and will enjoy bigger, greener, and healthier plants. It's nature's way of recycling.

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Olmsted Linear
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 (404) 853-7159
 WWW.atlantaolmstedpark.org

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MEET 2008 CHAIRS FOR PARTY FOR PARKS ON PONCE

Gala co-chairs Drs. Claire Sterk and Kirk Elifson have lived near Oak Grove Park in Druid Hills for eight years. Claire is Senior Vice Provost at Emory University and Kirk is a professor at Georgia State University. They volunteer for OLPA because they feel it's important to work with a community-based organization that contributes to the quality of life for all who use and enjoy the linear park. "We appreciate the magnificent contributions that Olmsted made to the urban landscape in the United States," said Claire. Kirk serves on the board of OLPA and can often be seen doing maintenance work in the park. Claire and Kirk appreciate the history of the park as well as its roll in softening the physical infrastructure and providing the social glue for the community.



Gala chairs Drs. Sterk and Elifson pose in front of a waterfall during an adventure in Patagonia, Argentina.

"The Party for the Paorks on Ponce is THE grand annual event where you celebrate the beauty of the park with neighbors and friends," said

Kirk. "Join us on February 24 and make your green dreams come true!" All proceeds go to complete the rehabilitation of the parks along Ponce de