



VAN CORTLANDT PARK CONSERVANCY



ANNUAL REPORT 2011



Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy

Our mission is to sustain and enhance the park as a destination for recreation, leisure and the enjoyment of natural landscapes.



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We have created the online Annual Report in such a way that donor names are unsearchable through internet search engines. An abbreviated version without the donor lists is available to any who visit our website. The full version is only available to those who have a direct connection to our community.

Dear Supporter of Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy,

It's amazing that a small non-profit can start to grow despite the economic downturn that our nation is in. While NYC Park's budget from the City continues to shrink, Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy becomes more and more important to the community. With feedback and encouragement from park users we are more committed than ever to provide great opportunities to enjoy the natural world.

For its third summer, VCP Conservancy provided quality cultural programs for children and their families. Barefoot Dancing, Summer Stage Kids, Imagination Walks, and weekend Bird Walks made the park a prime destination to learn and grow, play, or relax - all outdoors.

Our membership campaign has brought more parkies into the Conservancy's family. Membership provides the opportunity to attend special events, be personally notified of all events, and get important documents delivered right to your front door. In addition to all this, members are playing a vital role in supporting the park.

Two fantastic events brought supporters together at the Van Cortlandt Golf House and the Bronx Ale House. Each of these events brought more members to the Conservancy, and allowed supporters to meet one and other and converse about their love for the park. It was marvelous to see so many VCP fans coming together to share what Van Cortlandt Park does for them and what they can do for Van Cortlandt Park. We hope to continue the tradition of hosting great events to bring together everyone who calls VCP their park.

With our thanks,



Tony Perez Cassino, Chair



Margot Perron, President



Tony & Julia Cassino doing their part to plant saplings on Million Trees Day

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Cultural Programs

Barefoot Dancing

For the fifth year Barefoot Dancing was hosted on the lawns of the Van Cortlandt House Museum. Participants really enjoyed the dancing, music, and time to come out and be together as a group. Families picnicked on the lawn and joined in on the dancing, children sported Conservancy t-shirts and stickers, and adults were able to let loose. We've even been experimenting with involving consulates and active cultural groups in funding and promoting these wonderful evenings.



Red Steps

The Red Steps became an experimental performance space hosting two theater productions : *Much Ado About Nothing*, and an adapted *Lysistrata*. It was a great learning experience for us and park-goers. Everyone who attended loved this location for performing arts, most of whom never knew it existed in the park.

Imagination Walks

A young mother, Rossy Castillo-Almonte, wanted to know if we had creative walks for preschoolers. Since we didn't, she created Imagination Walks. On Saturday mornings in the summer, Bronx children ages three to seven made Van Cortlandt Park their imagination's wonderland. Early childhood educators guided youngsters and their caregivers through the park's trails and forests for fun and adventures.



Summer Stage Kids

Popular as always, children enjoyed engaging and educational programs that introduced them to varied forms of performance arts. The performers showcased their talents and allowed the children to experience and try out new ways to express themselves too. This year , in addition to the playgrounds, we began hosting shows at the Red Steps which proved to be an intimate and accessible venue.



Birding

Hardcore birders have known for generations that Van Cortlandt Park is a unique urban oasis for dozens of species, but this year we took steps to put the park on the map for birders from rookies to veterans. With help from NYC Audubon, we offered free guided bird walks through the park each Saturday morning. To raise money and excitement for our weekly walks, we held our first annual Bird-A-Thon in May. Supporters donated based on the number of species they spotted, and the star team won prizes.



Special Installations

Mask

This 12-foot tall aluminum and steel sculpture of a theatrical mask represents VCP Conservancy's commitment to the arts in the park. *Mask* is a collaborative work from a team of seven students in the Model to Monument Program, a partnership between the Parks Department and the Art Students League of New York. The location, just beyond the Red Steps, was chosen specifically in response to VCP Conservancy's desire to utilize this location as a proscenium stage for performing arts.



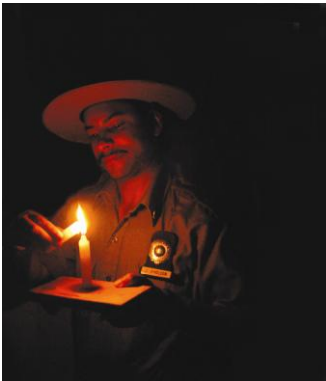
Skating Rink

The Conservancy identified the perfect location for an ice skating rink alongside Broadway, atop unused tennis courts. With the Mayor's approval Parks Department began the search for a concessionaire to design, install, and operate a rink, then de-install on an annual basis, using Bryant Parks' seasonal rink as a model. It will be the first public rink in the Bronx in 50 years, and will give families an exciting venue to enjoy outdoor activities during the winter months.

Holiday Events

Halloween Fun Run & Haunted Manor

The Halloween Fun Run occupied the Stadium track with flags and prizes. The Rangers helped people make scarecrows to decorate the fence, and parents cheered as their kids rolled pumpkins, hopped in sacks, and dressed in kooky clothes in their race to the finish line - every competitor won something. Older children ventured into the creepy tour through the VC House lawn strewn with scary skits and frights! For dogs, the Friends of Canine Court held its annual Howl-O-Ween, and this year the event raised funds for the Dog Run. Now these are lucky dogs – they have the largest run in NYC!



Winter Solstice & Candles

Winter Solstice Night Walks were extra special this year. Not only was the air crisp, the music joyous, and the candles glowing, but we added crafts and storytelling inside the Golf House so folks could warm up before their walks with the Rangers.



Donor Events

Golf Tournament

For its 13th year the American-Scottish Foundation held a day-long golf tournament and dinner to benefit the John Muir Trail. ASF helped create this east-west trail in the park back in 1997 and holds this annual event in honor of the great Scottish conservationist.

Cross Country Hall of Fame

Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy inducted Marty Liquori, Matt Centrowitz and Alberto Salazar as the inaugural class of the Van Cortlandt Cross Country Hall of Fame. The induction ceremony took place at the Millrose Games at Madison Square Garden on Friday, January 28th, 2011. The mission statement of the Hall of Fame is to create a network of athletes who have excelled on this historic course and want to preserve it for future generations of runners. These legendary men have three major accomplishments in common: they were Olympians; all have held the American record for 5000 meters; and all began their careers training in Van Cortlandt Park.



Bird-A-Thon

Our first Bird-A-Thon was created by a group of the park's long-time birders. The beautiful weather made this a fun day to both celebrate and raise funds for our weekly bird walks. Who's group won? Our bird walk leader's group of course – Andrew Baksh – with unstoppable zeal and enthusiasm. Fifty-six species in one day! His team will try to top that next year.



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT, REVENUE & EXPENSES	
FY 2011	Total
SUPPORT	
<u>INSTITUTIONS</u>	
High Schools	\$23,000
Colleges	1,025
Athletic Leagues & Fields	1,200
Corporations	3,000
Small Businesses	2,468
Grants & Foundations	-
Film Shoots	8,800
Community Programming	-
Advertising	2,100
Total	\$41,593
<u>INDIVIDUALS</u>	
Board of Directors	\$10,375
Non-Board Membership	-
Annual Appeal	50
Dedications	-
Other	1,360
Total	\$11,785
<u>FUNDRAISING EVENTS</u>	
Targeted Activities	\$5,967
General Funds	250
Total	\$6,217
TOTAL SUPPORT	\$59,595
EXPENSES	
<u>PERSONNEL</u>	
Program & Development Assistant	\$11,918
Other	-
Total	\$11,918
<u>OTPS</u>	
Athletic Leagues & Fields	\$103
Cross Country	3,508
Membership Gifts	650
Community Programs	25,978
D & O Insurance	772
Other	4,000
Total	\$35,011
<u>FUNDRAISING EVENTS</u>	
Targeted Activities	\$293
General Funds	135
Total	\$428
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$47,357
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	
	\$12,238
Net Assets Beginning July 1, 2010	48,807
Net Assets Ending June 30, 2011	\$61,046



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