

## Friends of West Mill Creek Park Annual News Report

January 23, 2014

### *2013 In Review*

On October 30, 2013, the Friends of West Mill Creek Park began life under the direction of a Steering Committee consisting of Ellen Briggs, Jill Cooper, Karen Garbeil, Karen Hinckley, Tessa Lamont-Siegel, Ellen Reese, and Elaine Stern. Our mission is to help enhance amenities for park users while preserving the Park's essentially wild nature, and to beautify our Park with plants that support wildlife such as birds and butterflies. Our work in 2013 focused on signing up members, doing basic organizational set-up, meeting with Lower Merion's Department of Parks and Recreation and the Lower Merion Conservancy to obtain their advice and to coordinate with their needs and objectives, and to define our goals for the year ahead.

### *What's Happening in 2014*

**Talk by Lower Merion Conservancy.** On February 24, 2014, at 7 pm at Beth David, 1130 Vaughan Lane, Gladwyne, PA 19035, the Friends of West Mill Creek Park are sponsoring a talk by Patrick Gardner, Conservation Coordinator of the Lower Merion Conservancy. Patrick will present "Preserving Nature at West Mill Creek Park". He will explain the importance of West Mill Creek Park for wildlife conservation, along with a perspective on the park's past history and how we can help our dog park achieve its *other* mission: to provide food and habitat for many small but important animals. After the talk, Patrick will be available to answer any questions you may have.

**Wildlife and Respite Garden.** In the enclosed fenced area to the left of the path as you walk to the park from the parking lot, we are planning a combination wildlife habitat, garden, and retreat for park visitors who need temporary respite from exuberant dogs. We are fortunate to have obtained the services of Harriet Cramer, a professional landscaper with experience working with the Township and the Lower Merion Conservancy on similar projects, to assist with design and general advice. Our first work day for the garden is scheduled for Saturday, March 22, 2014 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. We will lay down newspaper and cover it with organic mulch to suppress weeds and nourish the soil. Bring work gloves!

**Path Improvement.** We have been communicating with the Township about the excessive muddiness of some areas of the path that circles the park. The Township understands the problem and has agreed to undertake improvements. They plan to use Parks & Rec funds for this. We will continue to monitor progress and advocate for this project.

**Beach Seating.** We are exploring the possibility of permanent seating at the beach area where currently the only seating is plastic chairs donated by park users. Note: If you are devoted to the plastic chairs, we are not planning to take them away, just to add another option that doesn't float away with every heavy rain.

## How you can help

**Who's a member?** If you are interested in our mission and have signed up to be on our mailing list, you are a member of our Friends group, whether or not you currently have the time or resources to contribute further. We encourage everyone who can, however, to become an **active member**.

There are three ways you can do this:

- **Pitch in on our work days.**
- **Join one of our Steering Committee members with a specific field of endeavor.**

Ellen Reese and Ellen Briggs (Gardening Committee Co-Chairs) are looking for dedicated gardeners to help with the ongoing maintenance of the fenced area; Tessa our Photography Chair is working on a 2015 Calendar featuring pictures of our dogs as a fundraising project and needs talented photographers to help; and as time goes on the other Steering Committee members will undoubtedly be soliciting member help on various projects. And of course, we welcome your suggestions.

- **Become a Contributing Member.**

We ask you also to consider becoming a Contributing Member for 2014 with a donation of \$25, \$50, \$100 (or more!) to help us with the purchase of plants and other items needed to further our mission. We do not yet have a 501(c) 3 designation so your contribution is not tax deductible. However, your name will be listed on the Our Supporters page on our website and in next year's annual newsletter to the members (unless you prefer to remain anonymous). Most important, your money will be applied to make our park an even more

wonderful place. Checks can be made out to Friends of WMC Park and either handed to any one of our Steering Committee members or mailed to Friends of WMC Park, c/o Ellen Reese, 727 Stradone Road, Bala Cynwyd PA 19004. Many thanks for your support!

And, take a look at our website--here's the link:

<https://sites.google.com/site/friendsowestmillcreekpark/> . By the way, one of our members who is a web site designer has recently generously offered to help us improve it, so stay tuned for better things to come!