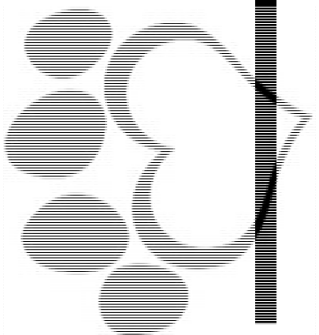




FRIENDS OF WEST MILL CREEK DOG PARK

# Paw Prints



## Our Sixth Annual Meeting

On March 3, 2019 we held our Sixth Annual Meeting. **Ellen Briggs**, our President, started by introducing the rest of the Steering Committee: Secretary **Karen Hinckley**; Membership Chair **Karen Garbeil**; Events Chair **Judy Argon**; and Treasurer **Ellen Reese** (in absentia). She also introduced our Communications Maven, **Jill Cooper**, who curates our FaceBook page, provides graphics design support, and through whose good offices each year we are able to take advantage of Beth David's lovely meeting space. Ellen went on to report on accomplishments in 2018 and plans for 2019 and beyond (as described in the remainder of this newsletter).

We then welcomed our guest speaker, **Marsha Perelman**, who gave an excellent presentation entitled "**Beyond Shelters.**" Her talk focused on recent success stories of improvements in animal welfare, including not only dogs and cats but also a wonderful project that provides a preserve for chimpanzees formerly used as pets and laboratory animals to live out their lives in peace. If you are curious about the chimp project, check out the Project Chimp website: <https://projectchimps.org/>.

### Volunteer Work Days

In 2018 we held a total of 7 official work days – three dedicated to planting and maintenance, and four to cutting down our ever-persistent crop of invasive Japanese Knotweed. Many, many thanks to our 14 wonderful volunteers, **Judy Argon, Karen Barsotti, Ellen Briggs, Helen Chen, Art Gold, Karen Hinckley, Gary Kinghoffer, June Lauer, Orsi Lazar, Linda Pitt, Ellen Reese, Mary Ann Sheldon, Christel Urmenhazi, and Helene Feinberg Walker** who donated a total of **84** hours to our ongoing efforts to keep our park green and growing!

In addition to our official work days, ad hoc volunteers donated many uncounted hours to general upkeep and maintenance (mostly weeding and invasive removal). An additional thank you to you unsung heroes!

Marsha also discussed a recent rescue operation that brought 19 dogs in dire straits from Louisiana to Pennsylvania. About half of the dogs have been adopted, and a few are currently coming up for adoption at Doggie Style in Narberth, along with others waiting for their forever homes. And there are some cute ones there! (FYI Park members Marsha Perelman and Karen Hinckley, and Howard Nelson of local rescue Saved Me, worked together to bring this special group of dogs here for a chance for a better life.) Check out the Saved Me website (<https://savedme.org/>) for more information on available dogs and on other ways to support the effort.



And last but not least, **Matt Berk, Rich Cutshall, and Gary Stein** were consistently there to help with skilled projects such as gate latch repairs and affixing signage.





## Planting Progress in 2018

With significant help from the Township on the heavy work (thanks, **Donna Heller**, **Dave DeAngelis**, and **crew!**) we planted 7 trees, 56 shrubs, and over 300 perennials in the wildlife garden and throughout the park. For best wildlife and stormwater control value, all plants chosen are natives. Trees and shrubs included sweetbay magnolia, pawpaw, native maples and oaks, ninebarks, gray dogwoods, buttonbushes, hydrangeas, deciduous hollies, inkberry hollies, and more. Perennials included native sedges, golden ragwort, blue iris, Autumn Bride heuchera, blue mistflower, and black-eyed susans. Some newly planted areas are enclosed in low rabbit wire fencing to give them a chance to grow. We chose only plants that can tolerate wet conditions, but Mother Nature gave us record breaking rainy weather last year so everyone keep your fingers crossed that our new plants survive the extreme soggy conditions!

## New Garden Picnic Table

Most of you have noticed the handsome new picnic table in the Wildlife Garden. The former red table and benches crafted for us by the Boy Scouts unfortunately developed rot, so we were delighted that member **Chris Bushnell**, an accomplished carpenter who has helped us out on prior projects, agreed to build us a new table of rot resistant wood. It is very handsome and comfortable, and all are invited to make use of it when the weather warms up.

## Pruning Workshop

In early March, we offered a free pruning workshop at the Wildlife Garden, taught by pruning expert **Orsi Lazar** of local landscape design firm **Learn.Do.Thrive**, who donated her services to this event. Thanks, Orsi! Even though the workshop took place during the famous March ice storm that created long term power outages throughout our local area, a band of intrepid pruners showed up and received some really valuable instruction on the fine points of this important garden skill.

## Dog Memorial Log

In October, we dedicated a new dog park feature, our Memorial Log. Over the years a number of people have requested some way to memorialize former canine dog park regulars who have passed away. The large fallen cherry tree near the park entrance is now available for this purpose--you can attach your dog's tags to the trunk so he or she will have an ongoing presence in the park.



Fittingly, though fallen, this tree puts out green leaves every year.

p.s. A can of nails is available near the log. You'll need to bring your own hammer – or, if you need help, just contact someone on the Steering Committee and we will help you.





### Holiday Luncheon

All were invited to a festive Holiday Luncheon at A La Maison in Ardmore held in early December. Eighteen Friends of WMC members turned out for the event. The food was excellent, the ambiance pleasant and welcoming, and a good time was had by all – in fact, we grew so absorbed with the good food and good fellowship that we forgot to take any pictures for this newsletter!

### Howl-o-ween

Another October event was our first ever Howl-o-ween parade. Our dogs donned an amazing variety of creative costumes, and each one received a special Halloween themed biscuit as “Who Let the Dogs Out” and “Monster Mash” played in the background. More pictures are available on our FaceBook page!



### Santa Paws at the Park

Later in December, Santa Paws once again visited our Park to help with our annual fundraiser for Pennsylvania S.P.C.A. An unending stream of good dogs each got a dog biscuit and a photo op with Santa while the owners enjoyed hot cocoa and holiday cupcakes generously donated by Giant Supermarket in Wynnewood. Most important of all, we are happy to announce that we collected \$680 in donations for the P.S.P.C.A.



### 2019 and Beyond

The number one concern of many people who love our Park is the increasing mud and erosion. One major cause is that we love our park too well. Heavy foot traffic, both of humans and dogs, compacts the earth, which kills plants. The lack of plant roots holding and softening the soil causes erosion. This is a vicious cycle: as more and more people walk through the park without keeping to the original trail, more of the earth packs down, plants are killed from compaction, and mud and erosion increases.

We are extremely concerned about this problem. In 2019 we will be stepping up our efforts, with the help of the Township, to reduce mud and erosion through replanting and trail improvement. In 2019 the following projects are scheduled:

- Due to extreme poor soil quality near the blue park sign, we will be creating a large raised bed and planting it with native shrubs and perennials.
- The township will be seeding sunnier areas with a blend of tough grass seed.
- We will explore options for trail improvement.

Meanwhile, we ask for your understanding of the problem, your ideas, and your help. We will be soliciting your ideas as usual in the survey form included with this newsletter. We also ask for your help:

- **Stay on the trail as much as possible** – i.e. avoid shortcuts. But you still need to pick up poop wherever it falls! See our Poop FAQs brochure on our website or in the kiosk for further information.
- Encourage others to stay on the trail by explaining the problem.

#### Treasurer’s Report

<b><u>Beginning Balance</u></b>	(1.1.18)	3646.95
Revenue Collected		3281.50
Donations		3281.50
Expenses		
Annual Meeting		(327.55)
Printing/Mailing		(630.86)
Planting		(3610.39)
Picnic Table		(226.72)
Memorial Plaque		(50.35)
Total Expenses		(4845.87)
<b><u>Balance Forward</u></b>	1.1.19	2082.58

Respectfully submitted, Ellen Reese, Treasurer

### Thanks to Our Contributing Members

Many thanks to our Contributing Members--we couldn't do it without you!

FOUR PAWS (\$150 or more)



Peter & Ellen Briggs, Anne Hamilton, Beth & David Mark

THREE PAWS (\$100-\$149)



Judy & Yair Argon, Jay Bryan & Nancy Winkler, John & Jessica Cassimatis, Linda & Gary Dorey-Stein, Richard Hamilton, Karen Hinckley, Michael Hoessly, Joan Logue, Ellen Reese & Gary Stein, Eileen Rosenau, Kay Sude, Sherry & Lewis Wexler, Karen Zimmerman & David Preefer

TWO PAWS (\$50-\$99)



Arthur & Judy Axelrod, John & Barbara Barr, Iain & Mary Black, Karen & Joan Garbeil, Jill Cooper, Hazel Murphy, Jay & Marya Margolis, Jill & Eric Sussman, Christel Urmenyhazi, Mark & Sonya Wassmansdorf, Mark & Sonya Wassmansdorf

ONE PAW (up to \$49)



Janice Asher, Amy Cohen & Tom Waniewski, Michelle Detwiler & Lars Pace, Mary Field, Helene Walker

### Thank You to our Corporate/Organizational Friends!

- Beth David Reform Congregation for the lovely meeting space
- Giant Supermarket, Wynnewood, for cupcakes at our Santa Paws event
- Learn.Do.Thrive, for the wonderful pruning seminar
- Strategic Websites for hosting our website.
- Lower Merion Township Parks & Recreation Department – thanks for everything!



Learn Do Thrive

