



FRIENDS OF WEST MILL CREEK DOG PARK

## Paw Prints



## Our Seventh Annual Meeting

On March 1, 2019 we held our Seventh Annual Meeting. **Ellen Briggs**, our President, started by introducing the rest of the Steering Committee: Secretary **Karen Detwiler**, who gave a wonderful presentation entitled “**What You Never Knew About the Plants of West Mill Creek Park.**” Michelle explained why native plants are far more valuable than imported plants for their contribution to our local ecosystem. With the aid of some beautiful photographs of native trees, shrubs and perennials that grow in our park, Michelle explained the important part each plays in the natural cycle and their unique benefits to our environment. For further information on this fascinating topic and on ways you can help safeguard our local environment in your own yard and garden, Michelle recommended two books by nationally known local entomologist and ecologist, Doug Tallamy: *Bringing Nature Home* (published in 2007) and his recently published book *Nature’s Best Hope: a New Approach to Conservation that Starts in Your Yard*—currently on the New York Times Bestseller List.

We were happy to welcome **Officer Dan Gilbert** of the Lower Merion Police who graciously took part of his Sunday afternoon to give us a report on an issue that concerns us all: car break-in and thefts in our parking lot as detailed later in this newsletter.

We then welcomed our speaker, **Michelle**





## Volunteer Work Days

In 2019 we held a total of 4 official work days – three dedicated to planting and maintenance, and one to cutting down our ever-persistent crop of invasive Japanese Knotweed. Many, many thanks to our wonderful volunteers, **Judy Argon, Yair Argon, Ellen Briggs, Chris Bushnell, Michelle Detwiler, Karen Hinckley, Craig Oliner, Leah Oliner, Linda Pitt, and Ellen Reese**. These volunteers donated a total of **47** hours to our ongoing efforts to keep our park green and growing! In addition, these and other volunteers donated many additional but uncounted hours to ad hoc efforts on general upkeep and maintenance such as weeding and invasive plant removal. An additional thank you to you unsung heroes!



## Planting Progress in 2019

With significant help from the Township on the heavy work (thanks **Dave DeAngelis**, and **crew!**) we planted 1 tree, 41 shrubs, and over 150 perennials in the wildlife garden and throughout the park. All plants chosen were natives, for best wildlife value and stormwater control. Some of these plants were added to existing beds or new beds along the trail, but our most exciting addition was the new raised bed around the blue welcome sign at the park entrance. **Dave** and his **crew** created the new bed at our request and did all the planting in it (we chose and purchased the plants). This new bed has received many delighted compliments from our members!

## Events

### Holiday Luncheon

All were invited to a festive Holiday Luncheon at Iron Hill Brewery in early December. Eighteen Friends of WMC members turned out for the event. Although the merrymaking participants once again forgot to take photos of the event, it was lots of fun. It's always good to get together with dog people!

### Santa Paws at the Park

Sadly, due the weather, Santa Paws was not able to grace us with his presence at the planned 2019 Santa Paws day. In past years, Santa Paws has come annually to pose for pictures with our dogs while their humans enjoy hot cocoa and cupcakes in our annual fundraiser for the Pennsylvania S.P.C.A. However, Steering Committee member **Karen Garbeil**, nothing daunted, welcomed all visitors to the park with cupcakes and best wishes from the Friends of West Mill Creek Park. (The cupcakes were generously donated to our event by **Giant Supermarket** in Wynnwood.) We will redouble our efforts to lure Santa Paws back to our park in December 2020 and hope the weather cooperates.





## 2020 and Beyond

### Car Break-Ins

Most of us are concerned about the all too frequent car break-ins in our parking lot. **Officer Dan Gilbert** of the Lower Merion Police reported that in 2019 we have had 5 car break-ins, plus two more in 2020 to date. Thieves tend to target dog parks because people are more likely to leave purses in the car in a situation where there is no shopping to be done. In all cases the cars were locked and the windows smashed. In all but one, valuables were stolen from the cars. In that one case, the car contained no valuables but the window was smashed anyway. Officer Gilbert told us that the best deterrent is to lock your vehicle and not to leave any valuables in the car; if you must leave valuables in the car, they should be well hidden. Also, the police will monitor our parking lot more frequently. Officer Gilbert also encouraged everyone to call the police if they see any suspicious activity.

Ellen Briggs noted that Friends of WMC has recently been in touch with both the police and the Parks Department to discuss the feasibility of installing either a security camera or a dummy security camera as a deterrent. **Donna Heller**, Director of Parks & Rec, told us that a dummy security camera was tried in another park in prior years, but it was repeatedly vandalized. She also said that last time she looked into this issue, she found that a live security camera would not be possible in a park such as West Mill Creek due to lack of infrastructure at the park to support it. However, it's possible that changes in technology may make a live security camera an option today. We will continue to explore the cost and feasibility of a security camera or dummy security camera. If any member has ideas or expertise to contribute to the resolution of this issue, please let someone on the Steering Committee know or contact us through our website.

### Planting Plans for 2020

Our current plans for 2020 focus on continuing our planting efforts and work days that target invasive plants. We will also ask the Parks department to step up grass seeding in the dog play areas.



### Survey

Please take a moment to fill out our annual survey (included in this newsletter). We value your ideas and suggestions, and of course we love it when you cheer us on with positive feedback!

### Treasurer's Report - December 31, 2019

**Beginning Balance** (1.1.19) 2082.58

Revenue Collected 4392.00

Donations 4392.00

#### Expenses

Annual Meeting (323.52)

Printing/Mailing (160.97)

Planting (1787.26)

Deer Fence Repair (797.90)

Total Expenses (3069.65)

**Balance Forward** 1.1.20 3385.03

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, Marsha Perelman, Maria and Ken Pollack, Ellen Reese and Gary Stein, Barbara, Dan, Katy & Sam Yody**

THREE PAWS (\$100-\$149)



**Diana and Lawrence Alpert, Yair and Judy Argon, Jill Cooper, Gary and Linda Dorey-Stein, Karen and Joan Garbeil, Richard Hamilton, Karen Hinckley, Michael and Selina Hoessly, Nora and Barry Kramer, Beth and David Mark, Karl and Dori Middleman, Craig Oliner, Shelly Phillips, Kay Sude, John Bryan III and Nancy Winkler**

TWO PAWS (\$50-\$99)



**Judy and Art Axelrod, Mary and Iain Black, Glenn and Jennifer Cooper, Mary Field, Robby and Judy Freeman, Susan Lichtman, Jay and Marya Margolis, Marjorie Paul, Linda Pitt, Craig and Cary Sellers, Helene Feinberg Walker, Rick and Karen Wilson**

ONE PAW (up to \$49)



**Lars Pace and Michelle Detwiler, David and Christine Hartzell, Hank and Barbara Holmes, June Lauer, Mary Anne Sheldon, Judith Thompson**

### **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
- Strategic Websites for hosting our website.

