



## Celebration Purpose & Plan 2018

The Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy (BOPC) is engaging in a year-long celebration effort to recognize 150 years since the conception of the nation's first urban park system.

**Impressive History:** It began with a visit to Buffalo in 1868, at the request of young Buffalo politician and booster, William Dorsheimer. Landscape Architect Frederick Law Olmsted and his architectural partner Calvert Vaux, had just completed both Central Park and Prospect Park to great acclaim. Buffalo wanted the same. However after Olmsted visited that summer, he convinced city leaders that building an interconnected park and parkway system would better serve the entire community; essentially growing the city within a park framework. Over the next 40 years Olmsted, Vaux and Olmsted's sons would continue to develop Buffalo's historic system where today it has become an award-winning and internationally admired landscape. This exceptional system conceived in 1868 was the first ever to be designed in America, and continues to provide regional curb appeal for nine of Buffalo and Erie County's major cultural institutions.

**Since 1978:** The BOPC is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization committed to a dual mission of preserving while also sustaining the Olmsted park system as listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places. Through a unique and innovative public-private partnership with the City of Buffalo, the BOPC has overseen the maintenance and restoration efforts of the 850 acre park system since 2004. This partnership focuses city resources on the daily operational aspects of the dual mission. Guided by its 2008 master plan, *The Plan for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, the BOPC strives to fundraise not only for capital improvements, but organizational and operational funding to ensure the long-term maintenance and sustainability of these public assets and community investments.

**What 2018 Brings:** The 150<sup>th</sup> Celebration year will be targeting a cognizance of the system as a whole, to reinforce the community connection between our parks, parkways and landscaped traffic circles. Market research from both 2015 and 2017 consistently revealed that the public's understanding of the park system and its connectivity is limited, and that knowledge of BOPC as the system's steward is minimal. Thus it was determined that a concerted awareness campaign should be engaged in 2018 to activate park neighborhood alliances, increase volunteerism, enlighten the schools, and reinforce a point of community pride and quality of life value for this national and local treasure.

**Once Aware, Who Will Care:** With awareness built over the year in elevating the value, accessibility, pride and gift of the park system, the question should be who is caring for this incredible asset? That is where awareness for the BOPC will come into view. At the end of this Celebration year the BOPC's goal is to launch an **endowment campaign**. This fund will be housed within the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo with the core intent to sustain the BOPC organization, its mission and its park restoration investments.

At this time BOPC is one of the only major cultural organizations in Buffalo without a supporting endowment, which means that fundraising for 60% of its \$3.4 million annual budget occurs from scratch each year. After nearly 15 years of a successful public-private partnership, the encumbrance to maintain the parks is seeing a growing gap between what the City can afford and what the BOPC can raise. The BOPC has set an initial endowed benchmark goal of \$18 million; a modest and rational target for sustainability.

**A Year of Planning for the Future:** In addition to the Celebration aspects of the 150<sup>th</sup>, concurrently 2018 marks a year in which BOPC will be renegotiating its public-private partnership, as well as updating its 5-year master planning priorities. It is a positive opportunity to celebrate 15 years of collaboration and achievement, and to tout 10 years of BOPC master planning accomplishments with return on investment to the community. It is also an important chance to explore the future needs and aspirations of this park system with the many constituents and partners who advocate for a greater public good.

BOPC will be in active negotiations with the City on its future partnership for the parks, and will be working with the University of Buffalo, Dean Robert Shibley and the UB Regional Institute on the assessment and prioritization of capital and restoration projects. The University of Buffalo was instrumental in the development and publication of the BOPC's *Plan for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* in 2008.

**The Excitement of Olmsted:** The following is a list of 150<sup>th</sup> Celebration activities and events which support BOPC's objectives of community awareness and future endowment fundraising. We invite everyone to join us in making Buffalo shine with pride as we recognize our nation's first urban park system!

- April 20<sup>th</sup> Media Launch for "Olmstededucation Week" announcing:
- The Olmsted Park APP with wayfinding for park connectivity
  - Augmented Reality feature in bringing back a lost historic landscape: the Quarry Garden at Delaware Park; a digital restoration
  - Olmsted In-Park Project Days announced; goal of 500 volunteers
  - Main Library Exhibit and School Library donations of Olmsted books

Olmstededucation Week Runs: April 21<sup>st</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> various activities and receptions

- April 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup>: Earth Day activities and Clean Ups; Partnership with WaterKeeper, National Grid, NOCO, Delaware North and others. Plus the North Park Theater will run a double feature of Dr. Seuss: The Lorax
- April 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>: Urban Parks Institute Conference and Roundtables; Hotel Henry
- April 26<sup>th</sup>: Olmsted’s 196<sup>th</sup> Birthday; Book Signing with Frank Kowsky, Buffalo author “*Best Planned City in the World*”; VIP reception Rich’s Atrium
- April 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>: Arbor Day panel by Delaware North featuring: Dr. Ned Friedman of Harvard University and Olmsted’s Arnold Arboretum; Lucy Lawliss, Chairwoman of the National Association of Olmsted Parks; Doug Blonsky former CEO of the Central Park Conservancy; and Kyle Zick, Landscape Architect and South Park Arboretum feasibility study author. Moderator is David Colligan. On Saturday the 28<sup>th</sup>, WNY Arborists Association will be engaging tree care and plantings in South Park.
- May 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>: Buffalo Cherry Blossom Festival at the Japanese Garden in Delaware Park, near the Buffalo History Museum.
- May 11<sup>th</sup>: BOPC’s *Spring into Summer* Luncheon and Fundraiser; Kleinhans Music Hall at Symphony Circle.
- June: A BOPC Surprise Event!
- June 14: JP Morgan Corporate Challenge in Delaware Park; Conservancy named charitable beneficiary in honor of 150<sup>th</sup> Celebration
- August 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup>: Olmsted Grand Celebration Weekend  
 17<sup>th</sup>: Proclamation Day and lighting the City “Olmsted Orange”  
 18<sup>th</sup>: Picnic and Play in the Parks – Old fashioned picnicking, with unstructured and structured play in the parks and visits by local and collegiate sports teams. “My Olmsted Park” t-shirts will be sold as a fundraiser for awareness of the system and for 150<sup>th</sup> commemoration.  
 19<sup>th</sup>: Bark in the Park – Pet Expo and Parade at Hoyt Lake in educating about pet access in the parks, training, and fun.
- September 7<sup>th</sup>: The FLO Gala: A Sequin-Centennial for the 150<sup>th</sup> at Front Park
- September – December: Buffalo History Museum Exhibit of 150 Years of Olmsted
- Nov/Dec TBD: Closing Event 150<sup>th</sup> Celebration – Endowment Campaign Launch