

# PARKSIDE

HERMANN PARK CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER

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in the park

## Japanese Garden Restoration Begins Ahead of 25th Anniversary



Fundraising is underway for a new Japanese-style gate to be added on the Fannin Street side of the garden to provide convenient access from the west.

For nearly 25 years, Hermann Park’s Japanese Garden has offered an enchanting retreat from Houston’s fast-paced life.

The garden was created in 1992 when the City of Houston hired renowned Japanese landscape architect Ken Nakajima to design five acres of Park land for an authentic Japanese Garden. The garden was built to symbolize the friendship between the United States and Japan, and to recognize Houston’s thriving Japanese community.

Mr. Nakajima based his design in Zen philosophy, stating “We must work with nature to create a new space and a sense of beauty.” He designed ponds and streams filled with koi, a serene waterfall and large boulders to reflect a true Japanese-style garden in the midst of mature hardwoods and tall loblolly pine trees. Over time, the garden lost its Japanese character and began to look like a Texas-style garden due to a lack of specialized maintenance and resources. In 2006, the City and the Conservancy invited internationally recognized landscape architect Terunobu

Nakai to visit the garden to make recommendations for physical changes and maintenance techniques that would bring the garden back to the traditional Japanese style and reflect Mr. Nakajima’s original vision.

The Conservancy helped to form a Japanese Garden Advisory Committee to oversee a renovation of the garden. Mr. Nakai and distinguished Japanese gardener Hiroshi Iwasaki came to Houston to train Park gardeners and volunteers to maintain the garden in Japanese style. Every spring since 2007, a team from Japan has visited the garden to work and recommend improvements. Mr. Nakai passed away unexpectedly in 2011, but his vision is carried on by his assistant Aya Nakamura Hashimoto along with Mr. Iwasaki and the rest of the Japan team.

Continued on page 3

**MISSION**  
Hermann Park Conservancy is a citizens’ organization dedicated to the stewardship and improvement of Hermann Park—today and for generations to come.



Doreen Stoller, second from left, visiting Brooklyn Bridge Park, one of MVVA's projects with the firm's Jesse Nicholson, Matthew Urbanski and Chris Matthews



After an amazing Centennial culminating with the opening of the McGovern Centennial Gardens, it is natural to ask what is next for Hermann Park. Working with the City, the Conservancy has effectively completed the Master Plan developed with Laurie Olin 20 years ago. But as Houston rapidly grows and changes, Hermann Park needs an updated Master Plan to meet its needs for the next 20 years. Michael Van Valkenburgh and Associates will lead us through the process over the coming year.

I was on vacation and had the opportunity to stop by their office in Brooklyn. The team was happy to share their excitement about working in Houston and Hermann Park.

**DS:** Why does the Hermann Park project interest you?

**Chris Matthews (MVVA Associate Principal):** Hermann Park is one of the most fascinating projects I have worked on. It has a long and rich history, is hugely popular, and is a true melting pot of Houstonians. At the same time there are complex infrastructural issues that need to be solved, particularly related to traffic, parking and environmental performance. The Master Plan will need to be a blend of the poetic and the pragmatic, an exciting challenge.

**DS:** Our goal is to make all 445 acres engaging to Park visitors while enriching natural habitats. How do you approach this?

**Matthew Urbanski (MVVA Principal):** Houston's topography is famously flat, which is one of the things that makes places like the grassy slope behind the

Miller Hill really stand out, and has allowed it to become a magnet for children with a pent up desire for rolling downhill. This makes me think that other types of new topography like hills, ridges, and valleys might turn out to be powerful place-makers in our design. A little bit of unflattening could make the experience of Hermann Park even more fun, surprising, and ecologically varied while also helping us address important pragmatic concerns about flooding and water management.

**DS:** You work all over the world. What attracted you to a project in Houston?

**Michael Van Valkenburgh:** Houston had a great start with its park making and parks planning about 100 years ago, but this wonderful early work had a hard time keeping pace with the extraordinary period of city-building that followed. After much hard work on the parts of many, the City is now back to seeing green space as a way forward for the future. We're very proud to be building on Laurie Olin's work and also excited to be working in Houston at this pivotal moment.

The master planning process will last throughout the coming year. There will be a number of public meetings and I hope you will come meet the team and tell them what you love about Hermann Park. And what would make it even better.

See you in the Park,

Doreen Stoller, Executive Director

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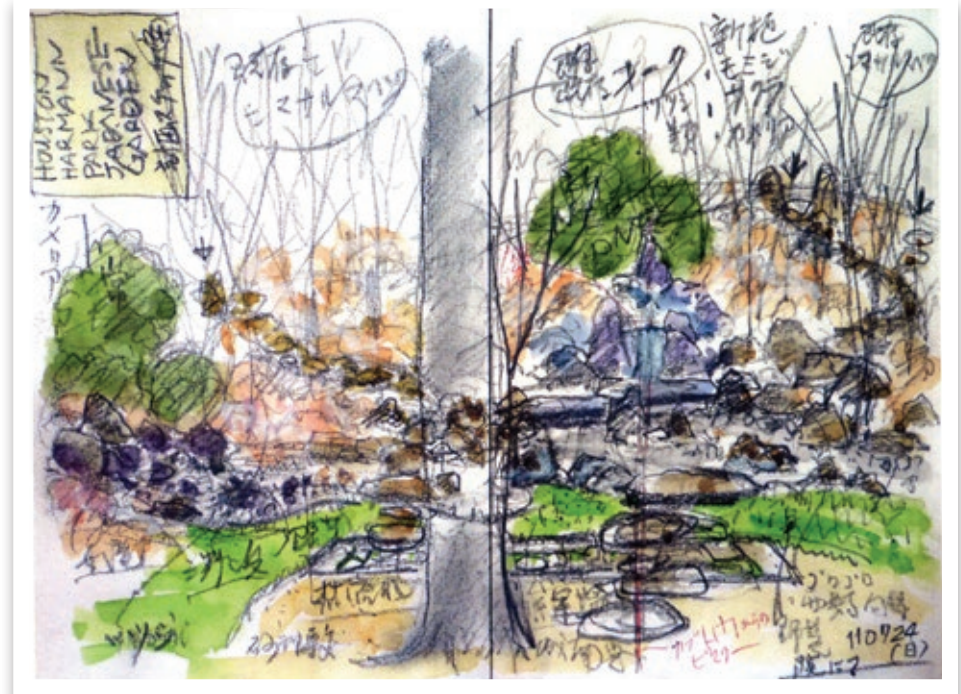
Charlotte and Frank Krecow –

In memory of Charlotte Langer

Leigh and David Leslie

Japanese Garden Restoration Begins Ahead of 25th Anniversary

*Continued from page 1*



Mr. Nakai's watercolor shows the design for the dry-stream garden, a waterless Japanese-style garden feature lined with specialty stones imported from Japan.

A new phase of garden restoration began in November 2015, funded by the City of Houston.

Structural and aesthetic improvements are set to be completed by early summer. In addition to funds provided by the City, the Conservancy and the Japanese Advisory Committee are actively fundraising to complete additional projects ahead of the 25th anniversary celebration in 2017 including an entrance gate on the Fannin side of the garden and new roofs for three structures.

Japan's Consul General for Houston, Tetsuro Amato, understands why the garden is so special to the community. "The Japanese Garden is a piece of Japan that Houstonians enjoy because of its carefully designed beautiful traditional style," he said. "When I see many happy faces strolling in the garden, the words 'peace and friendship' occur in my mind. What a special place the Japanese Garden is! I would like to express my appreciation to all of the Houstonians who have helped to restore and maintain the garden for its 25th anniversary."



After the koi were safely moved to a temporary pool, crews removed an average of 18 inches of muck accumulated over 24 years from the bottom of the drained ponds and streams.

To learn more about the Japanese Garden or to make a donation, go to [hermannpark.org/Japanese-garden](http://hermannpark.org/Japanese-garden).

# Hermann Park Named One of the Great Places in America

Tom Fox

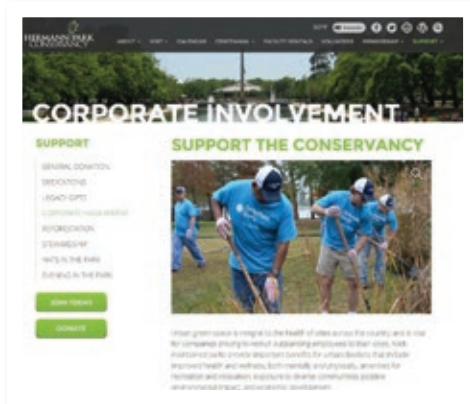


Pictured above, from left to right: Patrick Walsh, director, City of Houston Planning and Development Department, Doreen Stoller, executive director of Hermann Park Conservancy, Joshua Owens, AICP, representing the Houston office of the APA, Mayor Annise Parker, Kim Mickelson, AICP, president, APA Texas Chapter, and Joe Turner, director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department

The American Planning Association (APA) named Hermann Park one of six Great Public Spaces on its 2015 Great Places in America list. The APA's program recognizes streets, neighborhoods, and public spaces demonstrating attributes that enrich communities, facilitate economic growth, and inspire others around the country. Kelly Porter, AICP, a member of APA's education task force, described Hermann Park as "a fabulous urban green space that is getting better every year." Mayor Annise Parker and Joe Turner, director of the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, were on hand as the APA presented the award on October 23.

## Learn About Corporate Involvement in Hermann Park

Corporations understand that public green space is an important factor in the quality of life for their employees and their communities. There are a variety of ways for companies to be involved in keeping local parks well maintained. In Hermann Park, Bank of America volunteers helped out at the *Park to Port* Bike Ride while CenterPoint Energy employees planted trees in the Lake Picnic area of the Park. Visit the Conservancy's new corporate involvement web page for information about volunteering, sponsoring Conservancy events, booking corporate events and supporting reforestation and habitat restoration in Hermann Park. Learn more about corporate opportunities at [hermannpark.org/corporate-involvement](http://hermannpark.org/corporate-involvement).



## DONORS

### **Park to Port Bike Ride**

**\$5,000 – \$9,999**  
 Port of Houston Authority  
 The Williams Companies, Inc.

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- City of Houston
- Houston Parks & Recreation Department
- Houston Parks Board
- Luby's Fuddrucker's Restaurants, LLC
- Saint Arnold Brewing Co.
- Texas Medical Center
- TPRB Advertising

### **Run in the Park**

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#### Urban Green

\$5,000 – \$9,999

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Nikolaos Kapetanakis

Molly Keaton

## Conservation News

A healthy tree canopy is vital to the well-being of Hermann Park. Maintenance of the canopy continues with compost tea treatments of 26 live oaks along the Jones Reflection Pool and on Lake Plaza. The trees have visibly benefited from these treatments with an increase in foliage and improved vigor. In addition, deadwood pruning of live oaks on Lake Plaza and other areas has resulted in increased air circulation throughout the canopy, safety for the thousands of pedestrians that pass under these trees, and improved aesthetics.

Visitors who park in lot "A" near the Sam Houston monument have probably noticed the bed of jasmine beneath the live oaks encircled by construction fence. The jasmine, planted by volunteers from



ExxonMobil, has flourished due to this protective measure, so it is time to replace the unsightly plastic fence with Park standard steel posts and chain. Volunteers will take on the task of priming and painting the posts in preparation for installation by the Houston Parks and Recreation Department.

## Hermann Park Conservancy Volunteers



The Conservancy appreciates the time and effort donated by volunteers to keep Hermann Park looking beautiful. In November, the Conservancy hosted a Volunteer Appreciation Night to honor these dedicated community members. Staff and volunteers celebrated by sharing food, pictures and fun stories. Volunteers have many reasons for contributing to Park efforts, such as spending time outdoors, meeting new people or learning new skills. Volunteer Hollie Goddard shared, "I love spending time in the beautiful gardens and playing a small part in helping to maintain them. I also really enjoy using new skills learned from the McGovern Centennial

Gardens gardeners and the interaction with a great group of volunteers."

In addition to individual volunteers, Hermann Park regularly receives large groups that help with projects such as Park clean-up or restoration. It's often difficult for large groups to find an organization that can accommodate over a hundred volunteers at one time. Students from Yes Prep Northbrook sent thank you notes to express appreciation for being provided a rewarding volunteer project. Some students expressed gratitude by sharing comments including: "today I learned something new", "I had a great experience", and "thanks for making us better leaders".

# Urban Green Celebrates *Park After Dark*

Guests visit outside the Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion



Urban Green's *Park After Dark* on November 19 was a big success! The group's semi-annual fundraising event drew 400 young professionals to the McGovern Centennial Gardens and Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion. Raising almost \$32,000 for general operations, it was the most successful Urban Green event to date. Chairs Libby Burgher, Shelby Burgher, Connie Linn, and Jarrod McCabe, along with the Urban Green steering committee

led by Catherine Bradley, solicited donations from local businesses and restaurants. These donations ensured that there was a robust silent auction and food and drinks to keep party-goers happy. DJ Mav spun tunes and kept the party lively. Thanks to everyone who supported or attended the event and Urban Green. For information on how to join Urban Green, go to [hermannpark.org/urban-green](http://hermannpark.org/urban-green).



Chairs Connie Lin, Libby Burgher, Shelby Burger and Jarrod McCabe



Stephen O'Connell and Catherine Bradley

## DONORS

### Urban Green, continued

#### \$100 – \$499

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Houston Young Lawyers Association  
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#### Annual Fund/ General Fundraising

\$25,000 – \$49,999

The Clayton Fund

\$10,000 – \$24,999

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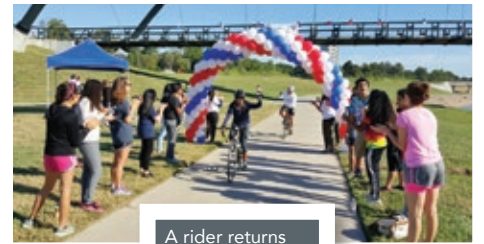
Michele Thompson and Bob Yekovich

Gerri Wood

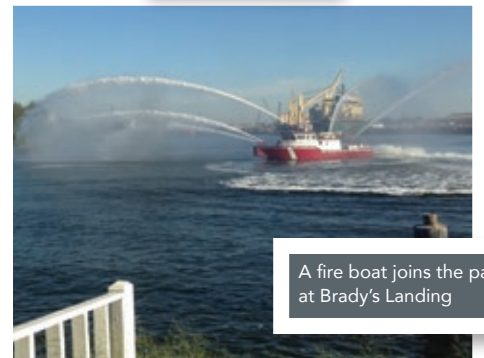
## Special Events

### Park to Port Bike Ride 2015

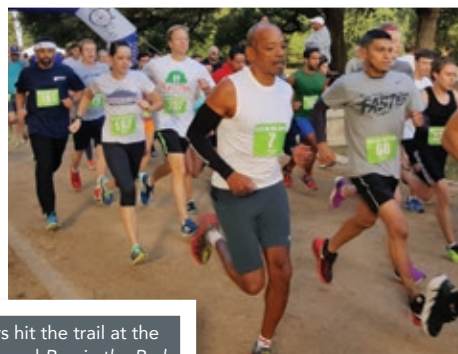
Cyclists rolled along the Brays Bayou trail from Hermann Park to the Port of Houston on Saturday, October 3, 2015 enjoying a unique view of Houston. Some riders had participated in the 2014 inaugural *Park to Port* Bike Ride while others were exploring the trail for the first time. The 20-mile round trip ride, chaired by David Ruiz, started in Bayou Parkland and rambled along the bayou trail to the ship channel where the Port of Houston sponsored an entertaining turn-around party at Brady's Landing. There were plenty of smiles as riders made their way back to Hermann Park for a post-ride party. Special thanks to sponsor St. Arnold Brewing Co. for providing their first canned Art Car IPA as well as the Port of Houston, Bank of America, Bike Houston, City of Houston, Friends of MacGregor Park, Houston Parks Board, Houston Parks and Recreation Department, Luby's/Fuddrucker's, Texas Medical Center, and TPRB Advertising. Stay tuned for information about the 2016 *Park to Port* Bike Ride to be held on Saturday, October 1.



A rider returns  
 to Hermann Park



A fire boat joins the party  
 at Brady's Landing



Runners hit the trail at the  
 12th annual Run in the Park

### 12th Annual Run in the Park

Hundreds of runners and joggers dashed off the starting line of the 12th annual *Run in the Park* followed by walkers who enjoyed a more leisurely pace. The event was held on Saturday, November 14, 2015 with participants winding around Hermann Park on the Marvin Taylor Trail. The 5K run/walk and a 1K kids' fun run has become a yearly tradition for many Houstonians. Family and friends cheered the runners and walkers on and joined them for the post-race party on Molly Ann Smith Plaza featuring food, music and fun activities. The overall male and female winners, Sean Wade and Lauren Smith received tickets from United Airlines. The run, chaired by Carolyn Robertson and Scott Dorfman, raised nearly \$30,000 to help the Conservancy's maintenance program for the Park. The 2016 *Run in the Park* is scheduled for Saturday, November 12.

### Holiday Party at Kinder Station

A sprinkling of rain didn't keep families away from the Conservancy's annual holiday party on Saturday, December 12, 2015. Kids enjoyed new crafts and yearly favorites that included coloring holiday pictures, creating doughnut reindeer, and trying their hand at Popsicle stick art. Free face painting was a hit with many of the young party-goers. No holiday party at Kinder Station would be complete without a ride on the Hermann Park train, decorated with garlands for the holiday season.

Kids enjoyed coloring holiday pictures



### Student Performances in the Park Presented by Macy's



Talented Houston-area students are entertaining Park visitors as part of the sixth annual Student Performances in the Park presented by Macy's. Performance groups range from choirs to bands to dance teams. The series will continue throughout the 2015-2016 school year. The performances are free and take place in Lake Plaza between Kinder Station and the Houston Zoo. For an up-to-date schedule, visit [hermannpark.org/calendar](http://hermannpark.org/calendar).

### DONORS

#### Annual Fund/ General Fundraising, continued \$100 – \$499

- Ann and James Allison –  
In memory of Bill Coats
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- Lois and Steve Zamora

#### Community Outreach

\$10,000 – \$24,999  
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## MCGOVERN CENTENNIAL GARDENS

featured plants

**Garden Conservancy Fund****\$100 – \$499**Margaret Goldberg and Bernard Fields  
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Estate of Jack S. Blanton

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Minnette and Peter Boesel

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Amy Chaisson and Marlin E. Sandlin, Jr.

The Clemmons Family

Kathryn and Hank Coleman

Kathryn Crowder

Freshly harvested vegetables  
from the Family Garden**Vegetables!**

The Family Garden is one of the most popular spots in the McGovern Centennial Gardens. Visitors of all ages and walks of life are fascinated to see food growing on the plant as opposed to on a shelf in a grocery store. In addition to fruits and vegetables, this garden has offered visitors a chance to see cotton bursting from a boll, fresh herbs and flowers that attract pollinating insects, and clouds of monarchs in all stages feeding on milkweed, laying eggs, hatching into caterpillars, and then leaving a jade-green chrysalis hanging from a stalk of lavender.



The Family Garden is a demonstration garden, and the main goal is to educate the public by allowing them to touch, pull a carrot out of the ground or a green bean off the bush, and taste a truly fresh, organically-grown vegetable. On a weekly basis, enough produce is grown to share with the community. The Conservancy donates produce to organizations such as the Emergency Aid Coalition (EAC) and Trinity East United Methodist Church. As many as four to five bushels per week of eggplant, okra, green beans, peppers, herbs, and melons, were donated over last summer and fall. Now into the winter crops, donation baskets include lettuce, chard, mustard greens, carrots, radishes, beets, and arugula.

The Family Garden is also the center for our garden volunteer activities. Individual and small groups are welcome to help plant and harvest in this garden and to participate in gardening throughout the McGovern Centennial Gardens.

## Join the Conservancy

Consider joining or renewing your Hermann Park Conservancy membership today to help support daily operations vital to the care and maintenance of Hermann Park. Conservancy members receive exciting benefits including free tickets to ride the Hermann Park Railroad and pedal boats, Member Express boarding lines, free unlimited rides on the train on the second Saturday of every month, a 10% discount in the Conservancy Gift Shop and Pinewood Cafe, and more.

Visit [hermannpark.org/membership](http://hermannpark.org/membership) for more information.

Become a member today!



## Save the Dates!

Please mark your calendar for these upcoming events! Visit [hermannpark.org](http://hermannpark.org) for more details.



**Hermann Park Dog Walk**  
Presented by the Houston Rockets  
Saturday, March 5, 2016  
8 a.m.



**Hermann Park Kite Festival**  
Sunday, April 3, 2016  
10 a.m.-5 p.m.



**Student Performances in the Park**  
Presented by Macy's  
Throughout the 2015-2016 school year

*Dates and times are subject to change; where date and time not listed, exact time is TBD*






**Hats in the Park Luncheon**  
McGovern Centennial Gardens  
Tuesday, March 8, 2016  
11:30 a.m.



**Evening in the Park Gala**  
Heart of the Park  
Friday, April 29, 2016  
6:30 p.m.

Details at [hermannpark.org](http://hermannpark.org)

-  [facebook.com/HermannPark](https://facebook.com/HermannPark)
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[lblack@hermannpark.org](mailto:lblack@hermannpark.org)

**Jane Curtis**, Director of Horticulture  
[jcurtis@hermannpark.org](mailto:jcurtis@hermannpark.org)

**Barbara Jo Harwell**, Conservation Director  
[barbara\\_jo@hermannpark.org](mailto:barbara_jo@hermannpark.org)

**Kimina Jamison**, Volunteer Coordinator  
[kjamison@hermannpark.org](mailto:kjamison@hermannpark.org)

**Mike Johnson**, Project Manager  
[mjohnson@hermannpark.org](mailto:mjohnson@hermannpark.org)

**Diane Kerr**, Manager of Volunteer Programs  
[volunteer@hermannpark.org](mailto:volunteer@hermannpark.org)

**Kristine Mall**, Development Coordinator  
[krmall@hermannpark.org](mailto:krmall@hermannpark.org)

**Becky Porteous**, Accounting Manager  
[bporteous@hermannpark.org](mailto:bporteous@hermannpark.org)

**Meghan Miller**, Director of Development  
[mmiller@hermannpark.org](mailto:mmiller@hermannpark.org)

**Jean Miracle-Whitaker**, Publications Manager  
[jmwhitaker@hermannpark.org](mailto:jmwhitaker@hermannpark.org)

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