



*If you are thinking a year ahead,
sow a seed. If you are thinking ten
years ahead, plant a tree.
If you are thinking one hundred years
ahead, educate the people.
-- Chinese Poet, 500 BC*

January 2017

JANUARY 2017

Jersey City Parks Coalition Year in Review

As we embark on the New Year, the Jersey City Parks Coalition (JCPC) reflects upon its accomplishments of 2016 and looks forward to an outstanding 2017. Our success would not be possible without the consistent effort and dedication of our many volunteers; the hundreds of residents who participated in our City of Trees initiative and other planting efforts, the Parks and Neighborhood groups that are stewards for their local parks, and the Board of Directors that keeps the organization focused and on track. We are thankful for the strong partnership forged with the City of Jersey City and specifically the Department of Public Works, Division of Parks and Forestry, the Mayor's Office and the Division of Health and Human Services. Behind the scenes but no, less important to all of these projects is the support of our donors & sponsors. Therefore, here are some highlights of our year:

CITY OF TREES: On Earth Day 2016 the Jersey City Parks Coalition announced plans to plant 5,000 trees across the city over the next five years. What was originally dubbed the Bigger Dig in October 2015, and grew out of the Parks Coalition's annual "Big Dig", became the "City of Trees" as we collaborated with JC Street Trees. The City committed \$60,000 for each year of the five-year project and we were fortunate to have Goldman Sachs as our Education & Engagement Sponsor and Dixon Advisory as a Sustainable Sponsor with a three-year commitment to the project. Although the count of new trees planted throughout Jersey City in our first year of the project will not be finalized until later this month, we are thrilled to report that we have exceeded our year one goal of 1000 trees. Equally important were the educational components of our initiative and Open Tree Map that help to ensure the sustainability of our project.



GOLDMAN SACHS ANNUAL ART PROJECT - It was a wonderful experience to collaborate with Goldman Sachs on their Annual Art Project for 2016 themed "City of Trees". Through this project, we immersed students in creative writing, yoga and art and other nature based activities at the JC Reservoir as part of Goldman Sachs Community Teamwork's. Their artwork is currently displayed on the esplanade at 30 Hudson St in Jersey City.

CENTRAL AVE STORE FRONT PAINTING PROJECT - An offshoot of the art project was the Central Ave storefront window-painting project in May, which engaged 85 public school children to design and execute their vision of City of Trees on Central Ave. This project was done in coordination with the Central Avenue Special Improvement District (CSAID), Frogs Are Green and the Jersey City Board of Education.

TREEKEEPER WORKSHOP - On May 7, JCPC collaborated with the New Jersey Tree Foundation and Sustainable JC to present a Treekeeper Workshop. This FREE hands-on daylong training session taught 53 local residents how to maintain and enhance the health of our community's trees. All attendees received free tools, educational materials, and lunch and were invited to join in our JC Tree Lover Crew (TLC).

COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP INCENTIVE PROGRAM - In August, Jersey City was awarded a \$300,000 state grant from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection for the preservation and promotion of forestry - the maximum amount given to individual towns specifically to promote stewardship of community forests and trees through the implementation of Community Forestry Management Plans. Working with the Jersey City Parks Coalition, JC Parks & Forestry will conduct a citywide tree-planting program over a four (4) year period of performance as part of the "City of Trees Initiative." Nine (9) parks throughout Jersey City were part of a summer 2015 Park Tree Survey Study conducted by JC Parks & Forestry with support from the Jersey City Parks Coalition. This study identified 1,052 existing trees (an average of 116 per park), of which 71% (or 747 trees) had major pruning needs as observed by NJ Certified Tree Experts. An additional 173 trees were recommended for removal. The study recommended 284 planting opportunities across the 9 parks, or more than 31 trees on average per park. Additionally, as part of the City of Trees Initiative, tree specialists from JC Parks & Forestry completed a large-scale tree inventory effort to identify 444 empty tree pits near parks and public properties. Together, these efforts combine to provide a comprehensive inventory of tree planting locations throughout Jersey City, one of New Jersey's largest and most densely populated urban communities.

FROM PARIS TO JERSEY CITY: MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE – We partnered with the Embankment Preservation Coalition for a special talk with Dr. D. James Baker that was presented on May 14, at New Jersey City University School of Business. The focus of the talk was on the role of landscapes in mitigating climate change. Dr. Baker has an extensive background in science and science administration, having served as president of the National Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia and Under Secretary of Commerce in charge of NOAA in the Clinton Administration. In his current position, Dr. Baker works with forestry programs in developing countries. He was scientific advisor on Al Gore's film An Inconvenient Truth, and he is a co-founder of The Oceanographic Society. The author of Planet Earth: The View from Space, he has contributed to numerous scientific publications. Over 100 people attended.

NAR PLACEMAKER GRANT – In June, the Liberty Board of REALTORS received a Placemaker Grant from the National Association of REALTORS to help in the planting of 10 trees on the south side of Manhattan Ave between Summit Ave & Central Ave. The JCPC collaborated with the residents of Manhattan Ave who generously contributed to this planting. A shining example of the value of partnerships for the betterment of our community.

OCTREEBER - A month long series of tree planting workshops to teach residents how to select the right tree and planting location, best practices for planting, pruning, tree maintenance, and how to properly plant their tree for success. Attendance at any of the workshops entitled residents to apply for a FREE tree as part of City of Trees 2016 FREE Tree Giveaway - made possible through a grant we received from the Arbor Day Foundation and the Alliance for Community Trees to distribute 150 trees for front & backyards. We are thankful for the NJ Tree Foundation & the TD Bank volunteers who collaborated with the Bayside Park Neighborhood Association in planting 30 trees in and around Bayside Park.

PLAYS IN THE PARKS - The Jersey City Children's Theater (JCCT) proudly collaborated with the Jersey City Parks Coalition (JCPC) in its third annual Plays in the Parks (PITP) series featuring This Land is Your Land - AMERICAN STORIES AND TALL TALES with JCCT'S COMPANY of professional adult actors and live music. Pershing Field and Lincoln Park hosted the two productions, which were FREE and open to the public!

BUILDING A CULTURE OF HEALTH IN NEW JERSEY - Communities Moving to Action: A four-year grant provided by New Jersey Health Initiatives (NJHI), a statewide grant making program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, was awarded to the City of Jersey City in 2015 with JCPC being the non-profit partner. The RWJ group created and presented their Blueprint for Action to create a healthier JC. The group identified the top five health concerns, based on County and City rankings, and identified action steps to address the issues over the next few years. The group is in the process of creating a HealthierJC website that allows partners to add contact and program information and list upcoming events. This platform will encourage organizations to improve their outreach and coordinate events and services across the city. The site will launch in 2017.

OPEN SPACE REFERENDUM: The Jersey City Parks Coalition advocated for the creation of a Municipal Open Space, Recreation and Historic Property Preservation Fund to create dedicated funding for our municipal parks, open spaces and preservation of our historic resources. This non-binding referendum, which was passed on November 8th, will now pave the way to an important first step in being able to improve and add to our City's Parks and Open Space as well as preserving our precious Historical Sites. It is now up to us to work with the City to construct the best possible ordinance addressing those concerns that have been an essential part of our dialogue.

It has been a fruitful year for the Jersey City Parks Coalition. As we turn our attention to 2017 and plan what is to come, we hope to have opportunities that make you eager to participate, with a few hours or days of your time, a monetary donation, or through your encouragement and moral support; keeping our parks and open spaces beautiful and safe for everyone to enjoy. Wishing you and yours a happy, healthy New Year!

Laura Skolar, President

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