



White Plains Beautification Foundation, Inc. Beautification News

Spring/Summer 2024

Volume 47

UNIQUE GARDEN ADOPTION OPPORTUNITY!



We offer a rare opportunity to adopt one of WPBF's most beautiful and highly visible Gateway Gardens! Once sponsored by the Container Store, this spectacular three-season Gateway Garden has been a prominent feature in the White Plains landscape for many years. It includes colorful plantings in spring, summer and fall, and also winter interest with hardy purple and white cabbages.

The garden sits at the busy exit and entrance ramps connecting Bloomingdale Road to I-287. It is visible to traffic on Bloomingdale Road as well as traffic entering and exiting I-287 and shoppers traveling to and from The Westchester via Bloomingdale Road. It is very near the busy Stop and Shop supermarket and the popular Container Store, both on nearby Westchester Avenue.

That highly traveled Westchester Avenue corridor is undergoing redesign by the city and will soon display more greenery and provide for more pedestrian traffic.

This is a wonderful opportunity for a major sponsor who wants to adopt a beautiful, highly visible garden in a high-traffic area of White Plains.

To inquire about Gateway Gardens or other gardens up for adoption, contact Jean Bello at jeanbello@gmail.com

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In-Memoriam

We are saddened by
the passing of our friends.

Harry O. Bright
August 4, 2023

Rebecca Bright
May 21, 2023

John T. Kirkpatrick
November 11, 2023

Marie F. McMahon
November 25, 2023



White Plains Beautification Foundation, Inc.

P.O. Box 1614
White Plains NY 10602
www.wpbf.org

A Non-Profit Organization of Volunteers

Inquiries to the President:

Terry Hanson
e-mail: Info@wpbf.org

**A copy of our last financial report filed with
the State may be obtained by writing to:**

NYS Attorney General's Office
Charities Bureau
120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

WHITE PLAINS
BEAUTIFICATION
FOUNDATION



Dear Friends,

In early spring this year the City of White Plains was dazzled by the blossoming of thousands of daffodils. Fields of yellow blooms blanketed our medians, pocket parks and other public patches. We received phone calls and email messages with praise and thanks for the beautiful arrays that were soon followed by colorful tulip displays. We want to thank everyone who took the time and effort to express their appreciation and also thank everyone who noticed the prominent splashes of floral color.

The daffodil bulbs are funded by a joint effort of White Plains Beautification Foundation and the White Plains Department of Public Works which also does the planting. We are grateful to the Department of Recreation and Parks for allowing us to use public areas to plant these gorgeous living exhibits.

Our Daffodil Project began with the planting of bulbs in fall 2014 to time their blossoming in spring of 2015 with the 50th anniversary celebration of White Plains Beautification Foundation, Inc., as a not-for-profit organization. Enjoy the bulbs and know that your support is responsible for programs that bring such beauty to our city.

This year also marked the return of a favorite fundraiser; the Fall Gala. After the hiatus due to the pandemic, we are delighted to document the event inside these pages. We hope that you will join us on September 19 for our fundraising gala which combines fun, food, camaraderie and generosity.

This year is the 40th anniversary of the Edwin G. Michaelian Gazebo. Look inside for the story of how it was built by WPBF. It has stood in Tibbits Park throughout the years and has been called A Gazebo For All Seasons.

WPBF is also indebted to our three local nurseries that design, plant and maintain our gardens. Gedney Farms Nursery, Amodio's Garden Center & Flower Shop and Ridgeway Garden Center bring the floral displays that brighten our city. We appreciate their efforts to keep White Plains a vibrant showcase.

Help us maintain our standard by continuing your generosity. We depend on your support as we work with our city to keep our gardens blooming.


In your service,

Terry Hanson

President

WELL, SHUCKS, YOU LIKE TRUCKS?

City of White Plains
TRUCK DAY
SEPTEMBER 9, 2023
10AM-2PM
 Gedney Yard-87 Gedney Way



Fun was in the air at the 11th Annual White Plains Truck Day at the Gedney Way Recycling Facility on September 9, 2023. White Plains Public Works holds this popular annual event to showcase city vehicles and equipment so residents can learn how our Public Works and Public Safety departments serve us.

The city has long supported the efforts of the WPBF and Public Works vehicles are used to help maintain our 65-plus gardens. WPBF is invited to attend Truck Day and host an information table. Westchester County Master Gardeners also participate.

Truck Day showcases some of the vehicles owned by the city. Children are permitted to see, touch and even operate some of the equipment. Fire and Police units also bring vehicles, including a water-pump truck, an armored truck, and motorcycles. Food trucks and interactive displays have also joined the fun in recent years.

Don't miss this year's Truck Day on Saturday, September 7, 2024 from 10am.



The WPBF table at Truck Day is staffed by Bev Kahn, Buki Nezej and Bob Kahn. Nicole Mastrantonakis Yoshida stops by to chat.



Jeremiah Frei-Pearson (right) visits the WPBF table on Truck Day.

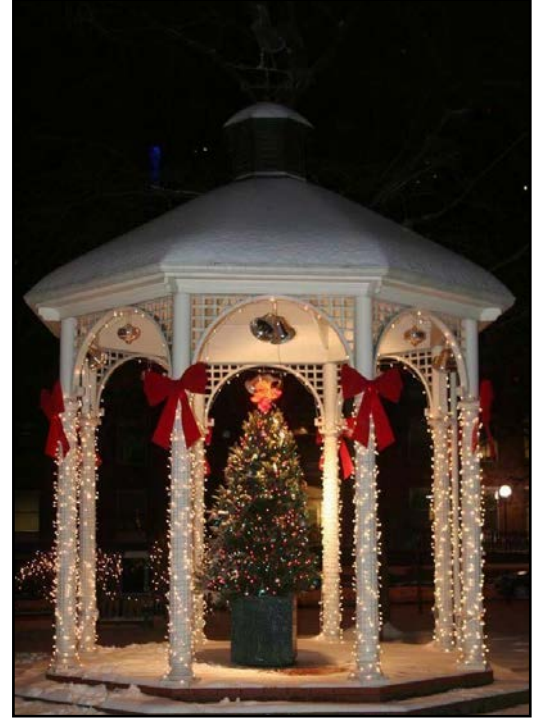
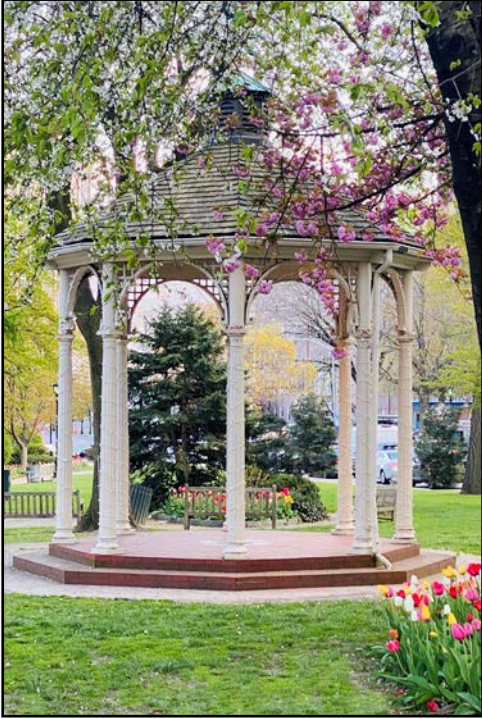


Children of all ages enjoy Truck Day. Mitch and Patty attend every year.



Lou Petralia and Blaine Levenson staff the Cornell Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Table at Truck Day

MICHAELIAN GAZEBO TURNING 40



The Edwin G. Michaelian Gazebo in Tibbits Park will turn 40 years old this year.

The gazebo, dedicated Oct. 14, 1984, is named for a former White Plains mayor and Westchester County executive who was a music lover and an ardent supporter of White Plains Beautification Foundation. He died in 1983, as WPBF was raising money for the gazebo, and the organization decided that it would be a fitting tribute to memorialize him with the Victorian structure.

Building the gazebo was a true labor of love.

Architect Robert W. Pollack, a WPBF board member, designed it pro bono. Contractors and artisans donated their time and talent to build it. WPBF raised some \$40,000 - much of it through corporate sponsors and Ed's many friends - to fund it. Ed's widow, Joyce Michaelian, provided the copper rooster weathervane that symbolizes eternal vigilance (*semper vigilans*) and that caps the gazebo.

In a light-hearted look at the time spent in planning and building the eight-sided edifice, former WPBF President Barbara Vrooman explained: "Well... you see... in essence... a gazebo is... well..., it's a 'state of mind' as much as a physical reality. At least as much time must be devoted to quiet contemplation and sweet reflection as to the actual construction."

And the gazebo has a legacy.

Those who attended a fundraising breakfast at Pace University, organized by then-President Brian Wallach, provided the money for the construction. This became the core and impetus for WPBF's Adopt-a-Park Program, the vehicle that provides more than 65 gardens and other plantings on public spaces across White Plains.

2024 ADOPT-A-PARK

Sincere Thanks to our Very Generous 2024 Adopt-a-Park Sponsors

DIAMOND SPONSORS \$10,000 & Up

Amodio's Garden Center & Flower Shop*
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We appreciate and value your gifts!

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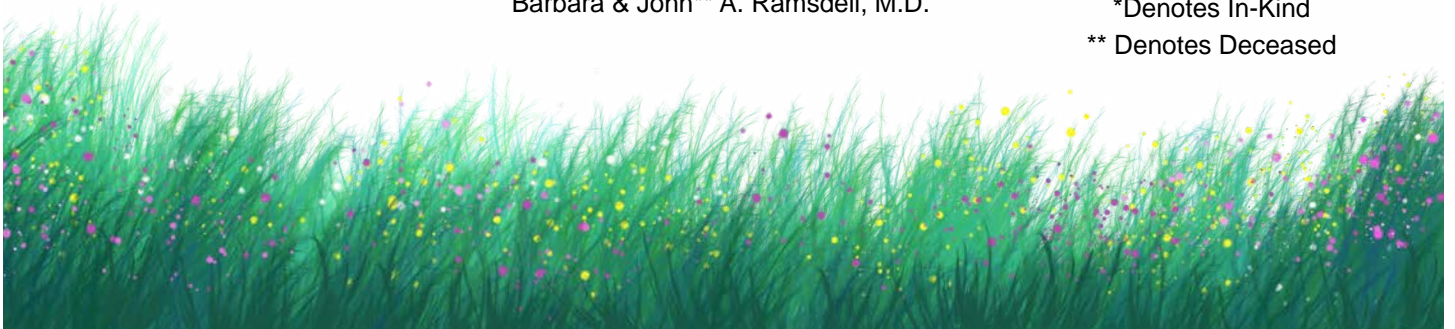
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as of 4/16/24

*Denotes In-Kind

** Denotes Deceased



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Hon. Richard Payne, *Councilmember*
Hon. Jennifer Puja, *Councilmember*

THE BRIGHTS HONORED AT ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION



Common Council Members and Public Officials present The Arbor Day Tree City Flag, left to right: Hon. John Martin, Hon. Vicki Presser, Mayor Tom Roach, WPBF President Terry Hanson, Hon. Jeremiah Frei-Pearson, Comm. Stefania Mignone, Hon. Justin Brasch, Hon. Jenn Puja, Hon. Richard Payne, County Executive George Latimer, State Senator Shelley Mayer

On a cool, yet sunny April 26, White Plains Beautification celebrated Arbor Day at Eastview School by honoring the many contributions to our community of Rebecca and Harry Bright who both passed away last year. A red maple tree was planted in their honor.

In the 60 years the Brights made White Plains their home, their impact was evidenced by those who came to honor them.

Westchester County Executive George Latimer and White Plains Mayor Thomas Roach presented proclamations from the

county and city. Attending were all six White Plains Common Council members; State Senator Shelley Mayer; State Assemblywoman Amy Paulin; County Legislator Ben Boykin; Matthew Paul, senior forester, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

WPBF Director Nick Wolff and others related personal stories about how the Brights had influenced their lives.

City Public Works Commissioner Stefania Mignone presented a flag indicating that White Plains has been a Tree City USA designee for 41 years. Other speakers included City Parks & Recreation Commissioner Wayne Bass, Eastview Principal Leroy Dixon and Schools Superintendent Dr. Joseph Ricca.

Nancy Giges, a Beautification Director and Arbor Day chair, opened the hour-long program and Beautification President Terry Hanson talked about the environmental significance of the red maple.

The Eastview Chorus, directed by Matt Hommez, sang "This Pretty Planet" and "Trees for America." Dana DeLorto's students created original pixelated Arbor Day art that was on display.

The maple tree was a gift to Beautification from the friends and relatives of the Brights.

Mike McGowan, arborist at Bartlett Tree Service, supervised the planting pro bono and is providing follow-up care for the tree. Both Bartlett and Consolidated Edison provided red maple seedlings for attendees and students.

The efforts of Assistant Principal Suzanne Lasser, who was also instrumental in creating the event brochure, ensured the program ran smoothly. Blaine Levenson, also a Beautification Director, played an important role behind the scenes.

See a video of the ceremony at wpcf.org. When the Arbor Day celebration photo appears on the home page, click on it to watch "This Blooming City" on White Plains Community Media, hosted by Beautification director Marie Silverman Marich.

Please join us next year for Arbor Day, Friday, April 25, at Mamaroneck Avenue School.



WPBF Director Nick Wolff shares his memories of being Beckie Bright's student.

TRIBUTE TO THE BRIGHTS



Rebecca and Harry Orlo Bright Jr. were extraordinary, each in their own way, in giving back to the White Plains community.

Harry held many leadership positions throughout his life – in the U.S. Army and U.S. State Department, as a public school teacher, a marketing expert with a Fortune 500 company and, especially, as an advocate for human rights – earning the admiration and respect of all those around him.

He was the first African-American to serve on the White Plains Common Council. He served as president of the White Plains Rotary Club, president of the Association of Local Human Rights Agencies of New York State, was president and co-founder of the White Plains Coalition for Cultural and Racial Harmony, a board member of the White Plains YMCA, the Greater White Plains Council of Community Services, United Way of Westchester and Putnam Counties and more.

A stalwart supporter of her husband, Beckie's accomplishments were equally impressive. An accomplished musician, she toured Europe as a classical singer and became a much beloved music teacher at Eastview Middle School for more than 30 years. She influenced thousands of students by conveying that music education provides young people the opportunity to share the experience of working together to achieve a specific result, in addition to learning to sing and to appreciate the art of music.

She was a board member and ardent supporter of White Plains Beautification, and active with the White Plains Woman's Club and Chatterton Hill Church.

Beckie died in May 2023 at the age of 92 and, only a few months later, Harry left us, too, at the age of 94.

Together they made life better for anyone whose lives they touched.



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ADOPT-A-PARK BREAKFAST 2024 WE APPRECIATE OUR SPONSORS!



*Photo Credit: Kate Collins
Invitation Design by: Minuteman Press,
formerly Alloy Printing*

It was a beautiful morning in May when White Plains Beautification Foundation officers, along with Westchester County Executive George Latimer, White Plains Mayor Thomas Roach, members of the White Plains Common Council, County Legislator Ben Boykin, and county and city commissioners gathered to personally and publicly thank WPBF Adopt-a-Park Sponsors for their commitment to the beautification of our fine city.

Chaired by the dynamic trio of Sue Brennan, Kate Collins and Mary Merenda, and held at the lovely La Provence Restaurant at Bloomingdale's in White Plains, the morning featured delicious breakfast fare prepared by restaurant manager Anthony Capone and his staff served amid a buoyant air of mutual appreciation and community.

Guest speaker Lucia Chiochio, WPBF counsel and partner at Diamond Sponsor Cuddy & Feder, spoke of her commitment to the foundation and the joy she experiences each year with the first signs of spring sprouting in our gardens throughout the city.



Adopt-a-Park Chair Jean Bello introduced 24 new and elevated sponsors, bringing the total number of AAP sponsors to 126! In her words, they are "the heart of the Foundation" for, without their support, WPBF would cease to exist.

Event expenses were underwritten by Gold Sponsor AKRF, Inc., and Major Sponsors DeRosa Builders and Minuteman Press White Plains.

If you would like more information about the Adopt-a-Park Program, how you can have a personalized sign placed in one of our gardens, or how to honor or memorialize a loved one, please contact Jean

Bello at jeanmbello@gmail.com or 914-584-1650.

KUDOS TO GENEROUS MAJOR SPONSOR MATTHEW FIORILLO OF BALLARD-DURAND FUNERAL HOME



WPBF relies on two main groups of supporters: Volunteers who keep our organization running smoothly and Garden Sponsors who provide financial support for our many gardens around the city. Major Sponsors are especially generous in helping us achieve our beautification goals.

Here's a shout-out to Matthew Fiorillo of Ballard Durand Funeral Home, a Major Sponsor, for supporting the lovely Hosta Garden on Maple Ave. and South Broadway.

Ballard Durand has been a WPBF sponsor since 1999, initially under a different director/owner. Matthew Fiorillo took over sponsorship in 2003 and has been donating ever since.

The Hosta Garden is so-named because it remains in shade most of the day and many shade-loving hostas thrive and are planted there. Originally planted about 25 years ago, the garden is a triangular oasis of quiet beauty where beauty didn't exist previously.

We are grateful for the ongoing generosity of Major Sponsor Matthew Fiorillo of Ballard Durand Funeral Home for supporting this special garden on Maple Ave.

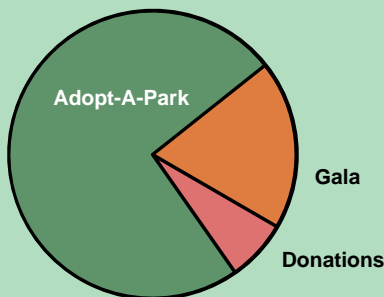


Matthew & Sara Fiorillo at the Adopt-A-Park Breakfast.

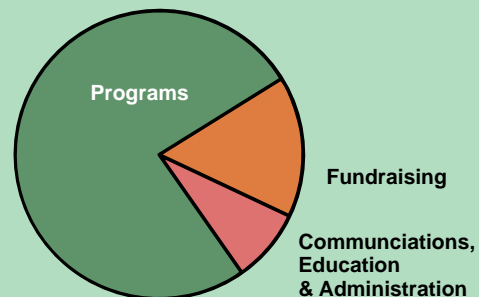
FINANCIAL REPORT WPBF Funds for 2023

2023 Operating Income: \$211,407

2023 Operating Expenses: \$220,127



Adopt-A-Park program (74%)	\$156,530
Annual Newsletter/Gala event (19%)	\$40,251
General Donations (7%)	\$14,626



Programs: Garden Planting, Care & watering, Schools Garden Programs (76%)	\$167,020
Fundraising incl. Gala (16%)	\$34,892
Communications, Education & Admin (8%)	\$18,215

THE GALA RETURNS



It was like a reunion.

About 100 guests gathered at Westchester Hills Golf Club on October 19 to enjoy a delightful buffet dinner and longed-for social engagement at the WPBF Fall Gala. We had not been together for this so-called annual event since November 2019. The huge hugs, broad smiles and hearty elbow bumps (the new hand-shake) indicated how happy everyone was to socialize in-person.

Our beloved honoree, Jean Marie Bello, was presented with proclamations for her tireless dedication to WPBF and to our community by White Plains Mayor Tom Roach, Westchester County Executive George Latimer and Westchester County Legislator Ben Boykin. A heartfelt introduction of Jean was given by former president, Mary Merenda.

We were tickled by a surprise visit from Barbara and Bill Vrooman. Barbara served as Director and Adopt-A-Park Chair and is awarded the status of Honorary Director along with Brian Wallach. Her ebullient charm is still felt by many WPBF supporters.



Jean Bello, Gala Honoree, flanked by her two brothers, John Lolis to the left and Leonard Lolis, right.



Bello Family: Robin, Peter, Katie, Frances, & John



GOING GREEN! ST. PATRICK'S DAY 2024



Deb Donahoe, Cecelia Spilotros and Terry Hanson assemble the materials used to decorate the DPW truck.

The fun began even before the first marchers arrived at the parade route. A small team of WPBF volunteers joined forces to decorate the White Plains Department of Public Works vintage truck. Their design was intended to mimic a sponsored garden in the back of the truck. Here is a look into the behind-the-scenes process.

As in years past, the St. Patrick's Day Parade in White Plains was full of fun and good cheer. Despite the chill in the air on March 9, the atmosphere was warm and inviting. Marchers proudly displayed the WPBF banner. It was followed by Nick Wolff's convertible carrying WPBF founder Brian Wallach. Bringing up the rear was the DPW vintage 1959 Ford F600 rack body truck driven by city employee Danny Cisterna.



The DPW truck bed at the parade

Jean Bello



WPBF Director Nick Wolff with residents Eros and Leah Corpus before the parade begins



From left, driver Danny Cisterna, WPBF Directors Deb Donahoe and Cecelia Spilotros and DPW Commissioner Stefania Mignone.



From left, Cecelia Spilotros, Deb Donahoe, Nick Wolff and Brian Wallach (in car) Jean Bello, Nancy Giges and Terry Hanson.

LIKE WHAT YOU SEE?

We hope you have enjoyed reading our latest newsletter and catching a glimpse of White Plains Beautification Foundation's activities around town, but what you see herein is merely a snapshot of WPBF's investment in the community.

We LOVE our work and are thrilled to see the fruits of our labors enjoyed by so many. We appreciate ALL our donors! Our Adopt-a- Park Sponsors generously support the lion's share of the planting and maintenance of all our public gardens, but traditionally we have not passed on to them the burden of our watering costs – which is no small burden.

General donations – large and small – help fill the gap, but like so many these days, we're finding it hard to make ends meet. How can you help?

Make a donation – any amount is greatly appreciated – and don't forget to check with your employer about a matching gift program.

Create a legacy of beautification through planned giving. Your legacy can live on through your life-changing gift to WPBF. Your contributions help us fulfill our mission, while providing income and capital gains tax relief to make your donation even more valuable.

Become an Adopt-a-Park Sponsor. You can become a Friend of the Park with a minimum \$250 annual donation or a Benefactor for \$500. Friends and Benefactors are not eligible for a personal sign in a garden (that requires at least \$1,000 per year), but their contributions are vital to the program and the foundation. They also receive special recognition on our website, in the newsletter, in all event programs, and at the annual Adopt-a-Park Appreciation Breakfast as our guest.

Any donation can be made in honor of or in memory of a loved one and will make a lasting impact on the lives of those who work and live in the city and travel by our many parklets and gardens.

Share in our elation when the gardens come alive each spring and summer knowing they bloom because of YOU!



2023 BUSINESS AWARDS



*The Landscaping at the
New York Power Authority building*

Our Business Awards Committee scours the City to identify attractive gardens that catch the eye of passersby.


Recipients of WPBF's 2023 Business Awards are:

Anasa Greek Kitchen, 287 Central Avenue, Proprietors Stevia and Bobby.

Grace Episcopal Church, 33 Church Street, The Rev. Adolfo Mormont and Mrs. Sorraya Sampson.

New York Power Authority, 122 Main Street, Mr. Justin E. Driscoll, President and Chief Executive Officer.

The awards were recognized at WPBF's winter brunch on Sunday, January 7, 2024 at North Street Tavern, Maple Moor Golf Course.




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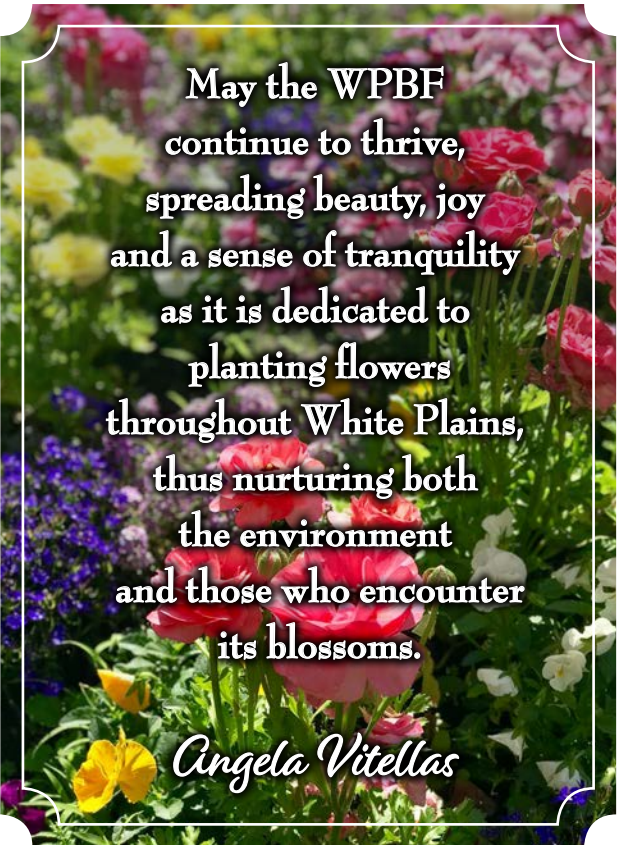



Over a century of commitment to our community!

Thank you!

White Plains Beautification Foundation

for making White Plains so beautiful!

May the WPBF continue to thrive, spreading beauty, joy and a sense of tranquility as it is dedicated to planting flowers throughout White Plains, thus nurturing both the environment and those who encounter its blossoms.

Angela Vitellas



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Thank you White Plains Beautification Foundation for your part in making our community so special.



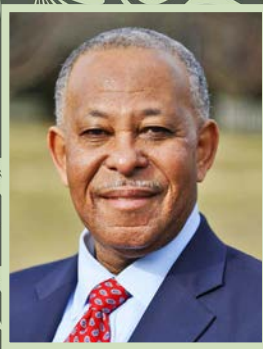

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**Congratulations to
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Beautification Foundation
for continuing to
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County Legislator Ben Boykin



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*In loving memory of
Syd and Jan McNally Silverman
And their many years of
steadfast volunteer commitment to
White Plains Beautification Foundation
and its mission of making
White Plains a splendid place
to live, work and play.*



*With love from,
The Marich Family
Robert, Marie, Nicholas*

**CONGRATULATIONS
TO THE
WHITE PLAINS
BEAUTIFICATION
FOUNDATION**

Keep close to Nature's heart... and
break clear away, once in awhile, and
climb a mountain or spend a week in
the woods. Wash your spirit clean.

- John Muir

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*Our blooming city
truly
the city in a park.*

*Beth & Brian
Wallach*

***~ In Loving Memory
of Bobby Barnes ~***

With appreciation and
heartfelt thanks to the
White Plains
Beautification Foundation
for continuing to enhance
the life and beauty of our
"City Within a Park"

***Barbara & Barry
Wenglin***

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The Daffodil Project



Inspired by **Joanna**, Our Daffodil Lady



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VOLUNTEER TO BE PART OF WPBF

Help us keep beautiful gardens and spaces in White Plains.

Can you:

- ◆ Help boost our social media presence?
- ◆ Write an article on WPBF events?
- ◆ Find new ways to promote membership?
- ◆ Encourage sustainable gardening practices with Pollinators of White Plains?

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**Thank you to all the foundation volunteers
for your tireless work and dedication.**

IT'S A TIME OF THE SIGNS



One of the first new signs at the Rotary Garden in Tibbits Park.

Same design, stronger structure, larger faceplate. WPBF has begun to replace the Adopt-A-Park-sponsored signs with new legs and a new faceplate. The new leg posts are metal, replacing the wooden posts that tended to deteriorate over time and had to be replaced every three years. The metal posts will also be 4" taller and will be placed in gardens that will benefit from more height. The face plate is 4" longer, allowing for larger lettering of the sponsor's name. Older signs will be replaced as they wear out.

SAVE THE DATE

WHITE PLAINS BEAUTIFICATION FOUNDATION, INC.

OUT OF THIS WORLD GALA

Thursday, September 19, 2024

Westchester Hills Golf Club
401 RIDGEWAY AVENUE, WHITE PLAINS, NY