



**MONTGOMERY PARKS**  
FOUNDATION

**ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2023**



MESSAGE  
FROM THE  
EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR



## Dear Friends of the Parks,

**WE ARE THRILLED** to share our 2023 Annual Report with you. It is because of neighbors like you that these pages are filled with inspiring stories and heartwarming tales of patrons who embraced their local parks and made sure everyone could enjoy them.

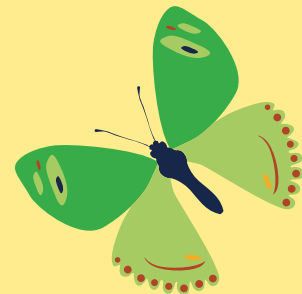
Thanks to the generosity of our community, the Foundation was able to award several grants that helped make a difference in our local park system. From transforming dying trees into beautiful works of art to ensuring everyone can enjoy kayaking at Black Hill Regional Park, your contributions have a ripple effect throughout your county.

The power of community shines brightly in the following pages as you learn about all the ways you and your neighbors make an impact. I hope you walk away from this report feeling proud of the part you played in protecting our parks. Whether you are a donor, an advocate, or a park patron—you are the special ingredient that makes our parks great!

I'm lucky to be a part of a community that comes together to ensure our kids, our neighbors, our friends, and our family can enjoy the best park system in the state. Together, we join in the mission of preserving our precious green spaces for generations to come.

Gratefully,

Katie Rictor  
Executive Director



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

# Going the Distance for Our Trails

Raised in Rochester, New York, Colin Alter recalls the unique experience of listening to opera under the stars with his parents at a local park. Visiting parks often, his parents taught him the value of enjoying and protecting parks. Years later, that lesson remains close to his heart...in more ways than one.

A MONTGOMERY COUNTY resident for over thirty years, Colin Alter, loves walking through our county parks – especially along Maryland’s 14-mile-long Rock Creek Trail. “Parks are a major source of activity. It’s a great way to meet people,” he commented. He also enjoys the peacefulness and surrounding beauty.

Some time ago, Rock Creek Trail became even more meaningful to Alter; it served as part of a rehabilitation program. “As things would have it, I would have a heart attack and the way to get well from a heart attack is walking. And then, walk some more,” Colin explained.



Colin Alter made the above kiosk/trail map possible, as well as two others. The trail map pictured marks the distance on the Rock Creek Trail at Aspen Hill Local Park. “This will be especially useful for those who don’t use the park as much as others,” stated Colin Alter.

“I was supposed to walk a certain amount of time or distance,” Alter said. But what became apparent was an absence of trail maps. *How do I keep motivated if I don’t know the distance?... wondered* Alter at the time.

Recognizing this need, Alter made a generous donation to the Montgomery Parks Foundation. Today, Rock Creek Trail visitors will find three new kiosks each filled with a trail map to show the distances between various trail legs.

Alter is a strong supporter of our parks and believes their preservation is important. “The parks have always been there (for us), but they don’t get the recognition (budgetary) they should,” he explained.

In 2024, Colin Alter is looking forward to seeing two new benches installed along the Rock Creek Trail, thanks to his generosity. He knows that visitors will appreciate relaxing on those benches, while taking in the peaceful, natural surroundings of the trail.



Colin and Hilde Alter walking the Rock Creek Trail.



Exhibition game with Team Israel on July 18, 2021 at Shirley Povich Field.

#### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## Bethesda Big Train Baseball Celebrates 25-Year History

Thanks to one man's vision, a supportive Parks Department, and countless supporters, for the last 25 years, Bethesda Big Train Baseball has brought summer collegiate baseball games and family entertainment for Montgomery County residents to enjoy. The Foundation is proud to have played a small part in the very early days...before the crack of a wooden bat.



**Bruce Adams and six members of Princeton's championship basketball team at Shirley Povich Field on June 21, 2022 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Title IX.**

**IN THE MID-1990s**, Montgomery County resident and avid baseball fan, Bruce Adams, recognized a need for better quality youth baseball fields in the community. So, he came up with an idea—"simply" build a ballpark, organize a baseball team, and improve youth baseball fields with the money made from ticket, food, and t-shirt sales. *No problem!*

"We were able to move quickly with this idea because the Montgomery Parks Foundation was there to be our fiscal agent," explained Bruce Adams, with deep appreciation. "We were in the process of starting our organization and we did not have our 501(c)(3) approval yet from the IRS that you need to be able to give donors tax deductions on their contributions."

With a bit of luck, endless community support from donors large and small, a wonderful partnership with Montgomery Parks, extraordinary business leadership from business executive John Ourisman, and good timing, Adams' vision became a reality on June 4, 1999. With the crack of a wooden bat, the first game was played at Cabin John Regional Park on Shirley Povich Field.

Bruce Adams ensured that "genuine baseball" was intertwined with each ballpark element. For example, as many may know, the field is named after Shirley Povich, a premier sports journalist with *The Washington Post* for 75 years. And, the team's name—Big Train—honors legendary pitcher Walter Johnson, a member of the first class of players inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown in 1936. Known for his size and pitch speed, sportswriter Grantland Rice nicknamed him "The Big Train."

Over the last 25 summers, residents and visitors have enjoyed watching Big Train summer collegiate players hone their skills playing other summer teams on Shirley Povich Field.

Thanks to their partnership with Montgomery Parks, Shirley Povich Field is kept in pristine condition and continues to attract great talents to play. As many as twenty-three Big Train players have gone on to Major League Baseball Teams.

*Who knew back then that one idea would enrich the lives of so many?* Thanks to a helping hand from the Montgomery Parks Foundation, the Big Train organization sprung to life a quarter-century ago and continues to have an impact on their community. Now summer's here; *let's play ball!*



**November 6, 2021 unveiling of the "Shirley & Walter" sculpture at Povich Field.**



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

# Stepping Up the Clean-Up Efforts in Our Parks

Some people look for seashells; others look for antique coins—Dawson Pennypacker looks for trash hotspots in Montgomery County parks. Why? Let this Montgomery County native explain.

**“NO MATTER** where you are in Montgomery County, *everyone* should be able to access their local park or local trail system and be able to enjoy a very clean and beautiful park,” said Dawson Pennypacker.

With this in mind, in May 2023 Pennypacker joined Montgomery Parks’ Volunteer Services Office (VSO) as part of the “Step-Up Clean-Up” project, an effort supported by the Montgomery Parks Foundation. Concentrating on Equity Focus Areas (EFAs), he identifies trash-ridden spots in our parks and then coordinates volunteer-driven clean-ups.

According to Pennypacker, engaging the community is key. Clean-up volunteers often come in groups – scouts, students, and corporate employees, for example; individuals are welcome too. “I’ve had a ton of repeat volunteers. It is great to see,” commented Pennypacker.

Many high school students volunteer to fulfill their Student Service Learning (SSL) hours.

“It’s great working with them because you *do* see how much they enjoy it. You also see how this could potentially be something they do in the future that isn’t just for SSL, but because they genuinely want to help out,” Pennypacker explained.

One clean-up really stands out for Pennypacker. He’d found an area in Parklawn Park that, as he described, “desperately needed a clean-up. It was really bad.” In December 2023, with Pennypacker at the helm, 24 volunteers gathered 39 trash bags, 30 recycling bags and 130 pounds of oversized trash. “In just two hours, there were more trash bags than volunteers!” exclaimed Pennypacker.



**Dawson Pennypacker,**  
Volunteer Services Assistant,  
Montgomery Parks, at one  
of his clean-ups.

**“...Dawson’s role is not only extremely valuable for our volunteers, but it is greatly appreciated by park managers, staff and partners,”**

—ACCORDING TO **VALERIA ESPINOZA**, WATERSHED CLEANUP, VOLUNTEER PROGRAM COORDINATOR, MONTGOMERY PARKS.

## Montgomery Parks Clean-up Stats (as of October 25, 2023)

**121** clean-up events  
held in equity focus areas

**534** bags of  
trash removed

**1,001**  
volunteers  
participated in  
clean-ups

**210** bags  
of recycling  
removed

**192.5** hours  
worked by volunteers



**Students from Liberty's Promise Northwood High School cleaning Breewood Neighborhood Park last November.**

Reflecting upon the Parklawn Park clean-up effort, Pennypacker said, "It was great being able to see this area that was completely littered with trash now much cleaner... especially for environmental reasons. This spot connects right to a creek and could have deteriorated the quality of our watershed."

"The trash piles that they created are visual indicators that show the progress," said Pennypacker, so pleased with the hard work of his Parklawn Park clean-up volunteers.

At the end of every clean-up, Pennypacker explains to his volunteers how much they've helped their local community. "I tell them it's now a cleaner, healthier environment because of what **they** did."

## Grantee Spotlights

IN 2023, the Montgomery Parks Foundation awarded several grants to enhance unique projects and special programming that make our park system so special. This was only made possible thanks to supporters like you who are committed to keeping our parks and community thriving. Here are a few highlights from the year demonstrating what you helped make a reality.

Proudly partnered with Program Access staff to enhance programming specific to our community's senior population. Activities included active aging events, fitness workouts, and special events!



Sponsored the first-ever Fall Twilight Concert Series at Brookside Gardens. Music lovers enjoyed a free concert every Wednesday during the month of September.



Sent 35 children to summer camp via the Marye Wells-Harley Dream Camp Scholarship Fund.



The Foundation commissioned two sculptures that were carved from fallen trees. One sculpture was created out of the 100-year-old Linden Oak which fell earlier in the year.





## ACCESS FOR ALL

# Chariot Launches New Possibilities for Kayakers

In ancient times, horse-drawn chariots enabled Romans, Greeks and Egyptians to travel, hunt, and engage in battle with greater speed and mobility. Today, Montgomery County kayakers with physical limitations and adaptive needs can take advantage of a special, modern-day chariot—creating paddling possibilities for all.

**“This equipment offers independent mobility. ALL family members can participate in the activity of kayaking, regardless of physical limitations.”**

—AMANDA ESPINOZA, INCLUSION & ADAPTIVE SPORTS SPECIALIST, MONTGOMERY PARKS

**MONTGOMERY PARKS** remains as committed as ever to serving *all members of the community*, including aging members and park patrons with disabilities. With the support of the Montgomery Parks Foundation, in 2023 the Parks “Program Access” office introduced a new Kayak Launch System, complete with a Kayak Chariot and a Kayak Transfer Bench. The system, developed by Creating Ability, has proven to be immensely beneficial.

*How does the system work?* Simply stated, the Transfer Bench allows paddlers—especially those in wheelchairs—to get into the kayak with far greater ease. The Chariot, with its large balloon tires, then enables the paddler seated in the kayak to be rolled into the water by another individual. The kayak is then floated off the chariot and the paddling fun begins!

Kathy, a forty-year resident of Montgomery County, explained how this new kayaking equipment enhanced her experience. “Well, it actually *made it possible* to go kayaking. I was not able to do it without the equipment,” she said.

“As you get older, you don’t have to give up on the things that give you pleasure,” Kathy reminds people. “With the right adaptive equipment, you can continue to be out in nature, be physically active, and meet new friends. It’s just a really valuable service the county is providing.”

Jennene Blakely, CTRS, CPRP, Program Access Manager, at Montgomery Parks, explained, “You lose confidence early if you can’t get in the boat. With this equipment, individuals can safely access the water with confidence and dignity.”

Efforts continue every year to provide increased access to boating opportunities in the parks. The Foundation secured a \$25,000 grant from the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation, which will be used to construct an adaptive kayak launcher at Black Hill Regional Park in 2024.



**The Kayak Chariot in use.**

**“What I love about kayaking is just being out in nature, breathing the fresh air. I like to be on the water.”** —KATHY,

PARTICIPANT, MONTGOMERY PARKS  
ADAPTIVE KAYAKING PROGRAM

## Donors

**THE MONTGOMERY PARKS FOUNDATION** is grateful to all of our donors who made a contribution in support of better parks and programming in our community. Every effort was made to properly and appropriately identify donors who made a gift of \$250 or more in 2023. If an error or omission was made in these listings, please notify the Montgomery Parks Foundation at [parksfoundation@montgomeryparks.org](mailto:parksfoundation@montgomeryparks.org).

### \$50,000 +

Dr. Marc Watzman  
Friends of Brookside Gardens

### \$20,000 +

State of Maryland - Treasurer's Office

### \$10,000+

Anonymous  
Friends of Black Hill Nature Programs  
Helen Nolan

### \$5,000-\$9,999

Gustavo Adolpho  
Colin Alter  
Hilde Alter  
Margaret Antonisse  
Emily M. Davidson  
Gary Emanuel  
Rachel Forester and Omar Hishmeh  
Kona Ice  
Clara M. Lovett  
David Maier  
Pamela Nee and Steven Babin  
Susanna Sammons  
Gretchen Schwartz

### \$1,000-\$4,999

The American Gift Fund  
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Marlene Cianci  
Benevity Community Impact Fund

Blackbaud Giving Fund  
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Susan Marks  
The Martin Family Charitable Foundation  
Lenore Moskowitz

Norbeck Manor Garden Club, Rockville, MD  
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POGO  
Potomac Horse Center, Inc.  
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Michael Riley  
John M. Robinson  
SEI Giving Fund  
Jill Shaffer  
Marc Silverman  
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Silver Spring Garden Club  
Silver Spring Justice Coalition  
Judith Smith  
Michael Sobalvarro  
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Warner Bros. Discovery  
Marye Wells-Harley  
Jeffrey Zyontz and Wendy Rothman

### \$500-\$999

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Roberto DePaz  
Phoebe deReynier  
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Michael Goltzman  
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Christina Johnson  
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Vallerie King  
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Alfonzo Leon  
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Robert Shoenberg  
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Tech Terra Environmental  
Kathryn Toffenetti  
Vy Tran  
Angela Tseng



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Eliot Waxman  
Wild Ones Nation's Capital  
Region  
Kathryn Williams  
Pamela Winbourne  
Lauren Winter  
Barbara Zimmerman

#### **\$250-\$499**

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Mark Aebig  
K/C Amos  
Vanessa Andrews  
Sally Belcher  
Stacie B. Benes  
Brady Birdsong  
Mary Bradford  
Cherri Branson  
Susan Brobst

Richard and Mallory Bulman  
Matthew Bundy  
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Lou D'Ovidio  
Lawrence Eldridge  
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Preeti Pinto  
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Christopher Zammarelli

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Cathy Feingold

*In Memory of Ulla Bogdan*  
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*In Memory of Charles R. Brader*  
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Anonymous  
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Clarke Miller

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Linda Kreitlow

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Rachel Forester

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William Hawkins  
  
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and Larry Karacki*  
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Kathryn Butler  
Joannie Chin  
Matthew Hoehler  
Steven McCabe  
NIST

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Wang*  
Sylvia Wang

*In Memory of Dr. JiMing  
Wang*  
Wanghua Gong

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Wigmore*  
Robert Wigmore

*In Memory of Carleen Rule*  
Donald Rule

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Dr. John and Martha Giovannelli  
Jill Shaffer  
Cynthia Tootle  
Marc Watzman, M.D.

# Financials

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION as of December 31, 2023

## CURRENT ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	\$467,685
Pledges receivable - current	\$7,832
Accrued interest	\$40,635
Prepaid expenses	\$988
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$517,140</b>

## OTHER ASSETS

Pledges receivable, long-term	\$39,858
Investments	\$1,822,642
<b>Total Other Assets</b>	<b>\$1,862,500</b>

**Total Assets \$2,379,640**

## LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

### Current Liabilities

Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$48,166
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$48,166</b>

### Net Assets

#### Without donor restrictions

Operations	\$302,439
Board designated	\$75,000
	<u>\$377,439</u>

*With donor restriction* \$1,954,035

**Total Net Assets \$2,331,474**

**Total Liabilities and Net Asset \$2,379,640**

## REVENUE

Contributions	\$583,125
Contributed nonfinancial assets	\$488,427
Investment income	\$93,333
Other income	\$5,209
Net Assets released from restrictions	-
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$1,170,094</b>

## EXPENSES

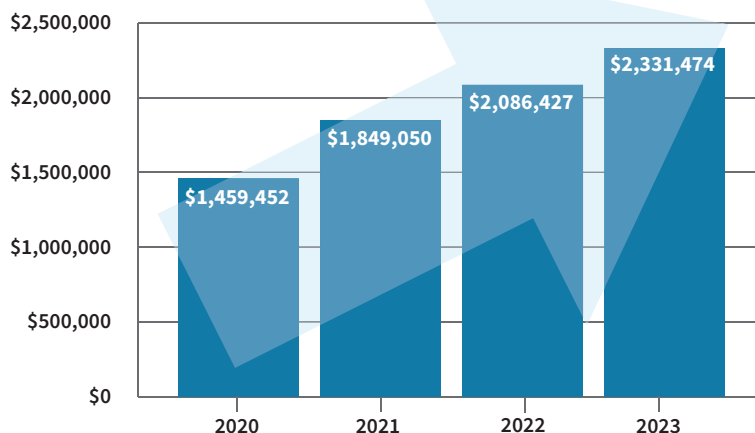
Program expenses	\$508,535
<i>Supporting services:</i>	
Management and general	\$209,158
Fundraising	\$207,354
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$925,047</b>

Changes in Net Assets \$245,047

Net Assets - Beginning of Year \$2,086,427

**Net Assets - End of Year \$2,331,474**

## TOTAL NET ASSETS



## By the Numbers



**\$583,125**  
Contributions Received



**\$350,000**  
Support provided to Parks



**11**  
Projects completed for Parks

# Board of Trustees

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Clara Lovett, Secretary  
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