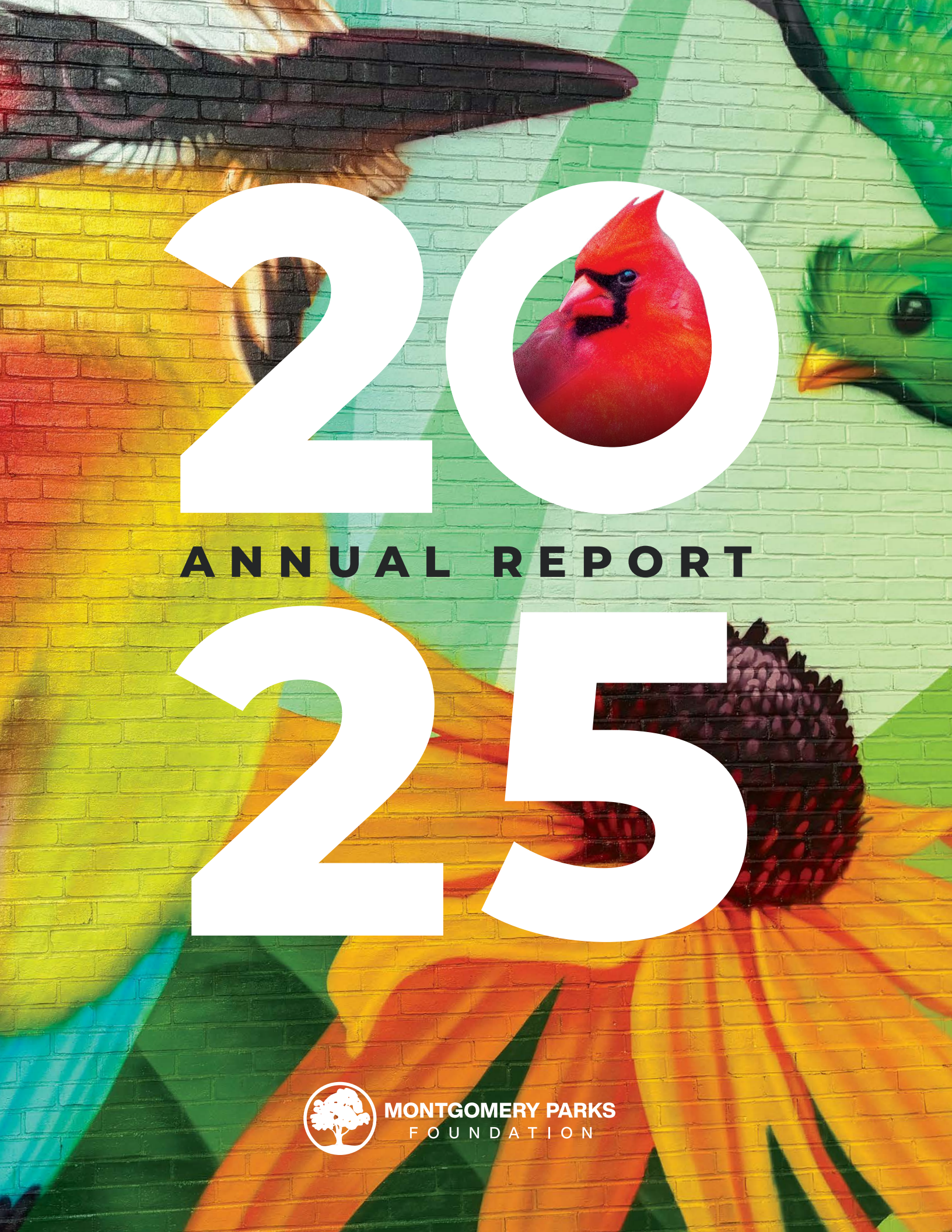




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ANNUAL REPORT

25



MONTGOMERY PARKS
FOUNDATION

Dear Friends of the Parks,

Did you know there are 416 parks in the Montgomery Parks system? Or that there are 274 athletic fields and 285.1 miles of paved and natural-surface trails? That's not even counting basketball courts, dog parks, playgrounds, tennis courts, picnic shelters, and countless natural areas that bring people together every day. From quiet neighborhood greenspaces to vibrant community hubs, there truly is a park experience for everyone.

Our 2025 Annual Report highlights many of the exciting park programs and initiatives made possible through your generosity. This year, we were proud to support projects including the Royce Hanson Conservation Park, the Glenmont Mural, and our popular Tribute Bench Program.

We were also delighted to bring supporters together through a series of memorable events showcasing the incredible diversity of our park system. Many of you joined us for the kayak tour at Black Hill Regional Park and a behind-the-scenes experience of the remarkable Pope Farm Nursery. Families and friends also gathered at Brookside Gardens for the Butterfly Experience and the beloved Garden of Lights, celebrating the wonder and joy our parks bring throughout every season.

As we look ahead, we are excited about new opportunities to expand our impact, deepen community partnerships, and continue investing in projects that connect people with nature and one another. We remain committed to supporting Montgomery Parks in ways that preserve our natural resources, celebrate our cultural diversity, and create vibrant public spaces for all.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, thank you for your continued support, enthusiasm, and commitment to the Montgomery Parks Foundation. We are honored to have you as part of this community, and we look forward to seeing you in the parks in the year ahead.

With appreciation,



Trish Heffelfinger
President, Montgomery Parks Foundation



Ally splashes around in a shallow creek, smiling as she proudly shows off her muddy handful—nature's messiest little treasure.

Making **SUMMER CAMP DREAMS** a Reality

YOUTH ENRICHMENT

Every child should have the opportunity, at least once, to experience the joys of summer camp. Thanks to the community-funded Marye Wells-Harley Dream Camp Scholarship, attending summer camp became a reality for many children in 2025.

Montgomery County siblings Warot (14) and Ally (12) were awarded the Marye Wells-Harley Dream Camp Scholarship last summer—and the experience sparked a connection to nature and the outdoors that's likely to last a lifetime.

Warot selected Outdoor Excursions Camp, where he dove into learning about wildlife and ecosystems. "We learned about different animals and birds and the types of bodies of water," he shared. "And we learned about eagles and falcons and what they eat in the wild to survive." His favorite activity? "I really liked the kayaking." With support from generous donors, Warot developed new abilities, self-assurance, and a deeper appreciation for the outdoors, all while having fun with new friends!

Ally attended Nature Girls Camp, which introduces campers to women who have built careers outdoors. To the young campers, these women were described as "girls who work and play outside." One of her favorite memories was visiting South Germantown Community Garden, where she tried cherry tomatoes straight off the vine for the first time—

something she never would have done otherwise. Experiences like these help Ally dream bigger and imagine a future connected to the natural world.

Each day brought new experiences and discoveries. Their mom shared that Warot and Ally couldn't wait to talk about camp on the drive home. "Camp allows all kids to blossom," said Christy Korzen, Nature Facility Program Manager and Summer Camp Director with Montgomery County Parks. She has seen firsthand how camp helps children build confidence, form friendships, and develop lifelong skills.

Marye Wells-Harley believed deeply in the power of parks, nature, and opportunity to shape young lives. Through her vision and generosity, children ages 3–18 with demonstrated financial need can experience the joys of summer camp.

Today, that legacy lives on through every child like Warot and Ally—kids who are exploring, growing, and discovering who they can become, all because someone believed they should have the chance.

COLORFUL MURAL REFLECTS

a Community's Pride and Diversity

Community members and talented artists transform an ordinary, functional building into a meaningful, welcoming and joyful site for all.

Public art creates a sense of connection, pride and identity. Recognizing this power, Samantha Shron, architectural supervisor for Montgomery Parks, with the help of her colleagues, carefully selected an ideal “canvas” for a mural—Glenmont Local Park’s activity building. “This one rose to the top,” Shron explained. “It’s highly visible from its location on Randolph Road, and it sits within a hub of community activity.”

Montgomery Parks decided the mural should reflect the history, values, and aspirations of the diverse neighborhood. But two questions remained. How would the project be funded? And, what design should the mural depict?

While Montgomery Parks Foundation was happy to provide the funding, it took “a village” to answer the second question.

Parks sought talented artists and community input to determine the mural’s design.

Great effort was made to encourage all local residents—including adults, Wheaton High School students and children, to vote for one of four mural design concepts prepared by four jury-selected artists. To promote voting, “We used bilingual materials, postcards, social media, boards and signs with QR codes. Plus, we tabled at a few events,” said Shron.

When voting closed in August 2025, there was a TIE! Ultimately, after a

tie-breaking vote, the community selected “Rooted and Radiant” by artists Hanna Moran and Lindy Swan of Red Swan, a Baltimore-based mural studio. Their mural blended plants and animals native to Maryland with those native to the Latin American countries most represented in the community—El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico.

“We wanted to choose species very specific to their (community members’) native countries so people would say, ‘Oh, I know that!’” said artist Lindy Swan.

“For Maryland, we chose the Monarch butterfly because it’s also native to Mexico, and makes the journey back and forth migrating,” explained artist Hanna Moran. “We thought this was a nice way to tie a creative bridge between the two places.”

Certainly, this beautiful mural deepens the sense of pride and identity among Glenmont area residents while making all park visitors feel welcome.

“The wonderful thing about this mural, similar to many of the other murals and art projects that have been recently installed in the Wheaton area, has to do not just with the art and beautifying the community, but really representing the diversity of the community.” – Jim Epstein, President, Glenmont Forest Neighbors Civic Association

Left: The national bird of El Salvador – the Torogoz, also known as the Turquoise-browed Motmot. The bird represents national identity, cultural pride, and freedom. Center: The national bird of Guatemala – the Resplendent Quetzal, known as a symbol of liberty, cultural pride and biodiversity.

“We wanted it to be colorful enough to see it from the road... We wanted it to be welcoming, joyful, uplifting and colorful.”

– Red Swan Artist Hanna Moran



UNIQUE PARK HONORING VISIONARY LEADER

Draws Great Support

The Royce Hanson Conservation Park (RHCP) at Broad Run is named for Dr. Royce Hanson, a heroic figure in Montgomery County whose work and passion for land conservation, education and recreation shaped the county's landscape and earned national recognition.

At the November 2025 opening of the park named in his honor, Dr. Royce Hanson beamed with delight. Surrounded by the Poolesville community, friends, Montgomery County Parks, and Montgomery Parks Foundation, it was clear his vision—for conservation, education, recreation, and preserving agricultural history—was fully embraced.

To help bring that vision to life, Montgomery Parks Foundation partnered with Hanson to launch a fundraising campaign. The response was overwhelming, breaking Foundation records and surpassing the \$100,000 goal.

"We were really thrilled," exclaimed Katie Rictor, Executive Director of the Foundation. "The (campaign) success was largely due to Royce's leadership and his friends, who helped spread the word and get people excited about this land. We are very grateful to him." Thanks to this outpouring of support, park facilities will be enhanced and educational programming expanded.

Today, the park is already woven into the fabric of the community. Students, birdwatchers, cyclists, equestrians, hikers, historians, and nature lovers are making it part of their weekly routines.

And students, in particular, are gaining something even more lasting.

"The opportunity for conservation education on this site is very powerful," said Christie Ciabotti, Division Chief for Park Planning and Stewardship at Montgomery Parks. Recognizing this, Poolesville High School has partnered with Parks to use the site as an outdoor classroom—helping shape the next generation of environmental stewards.

"It's been wonderful to have access to the park," said Erin Binns, head of house for the Global Ecology Program at Poolesville High School. "We are really trying to teach students about the environment. They can see how human interaction can change things both for the positive and negative."

She added, "They are the ones who are going to make changes in the future."

Perhaps one day, a student inspired by these experiences will follow in Dr. Hanson's footsteps—protecting natural spaces, honoring history, and ensuring future generations can learn, explore, and thrive.

“Royce Hanson is such an incredible, immense figure in Montgomery County. It wasn't hard to find supporters of Royce in particular, but then, as community members learned more about the uniqueness of the land, we had even more support come in.”

– Katie Rictor, Executive Director



Foundation Board members gather alongside Royce Hanson (center) to celebrate the opening of Royce Hanson Conservation Park.



BRINGING HIDDEN HISTORY TO LIGHT

How a partnership between Montgomery Parks and Montgomery Parks Foundation is helping preserve the legacy of Montgomery Chapel Cemetery.

With 16 cemeteries in their care, the Montgomery Parks' Cultural Resources Stewardship Team is responsible for preserving the past while improving access for today's visitors.

Historical cemeteries are more than resting places. They are quiet storytellers, linking us to the lives, traditions, and resilience of past communities. That truth guided Montgomery Parks' Cultural Resources Stewardship Team as they pursued critical funding to preserve and better understand Montgomery Chapel Cemetery, a site deeply connected to the historic African American community of Hyattstown.

Established in the years following post-Emancipation, Montgomery Chapel Cemetery served generations of African American families in Hyattstown and surrounding areas. Many of those laid to rest there were members of the Montgomery Chapel congregation. The cemetery remained in use until the early 1960s, when the congregation eventually disbanded, and the land was subsequently sold to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

Recognizing that this site represents the last remaining physical link to Hyattstown's historic African American community, the Stewardship Team sought support through the Maryland African American Heritage Preservation Grant Program. Jamie L. Ferguson, PhD, Senior Historian with Montgomery Parks, worked closely with partners, including Anna Joyce of Montgomery Parks Foundation, to strengthen the application.

"I knew that this might be our best opportunity to get really substantial funding to move forward on things we haven't been able to do for a long time," Ferguson shared. "I cannot say enough about the support provided by Montgomery Parks Foundation."

With grant funding secured, the team partnered with TerraSearch Geophysical, LLC, a firm specializing in geoarchaeology and

Montgomery Parks Foundation

"We were one of only two from Montgomery County to win funding, so we are very proud of that." — Jamie L. Ferguson, PhD, Senior Historian with Montgomery Parks

“If you only look at what is visible at the above-ground part of it, or what is physically there, you’re not really getting a good picture of what that community was and how much they represented,” Michaud explained. “When you tie all the elements together, you get a richer picture.”

– **Cassandra Michaud,**
Senior Archaeologist with
Montgomery Parks

It is common for cemeteries to include unmarked burials, particularly African American cemeteries.



historic preservation. Using Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR), researchers conducted a non-intrusive survey to better understand the cemetery's full scope—without disturbing the ground.

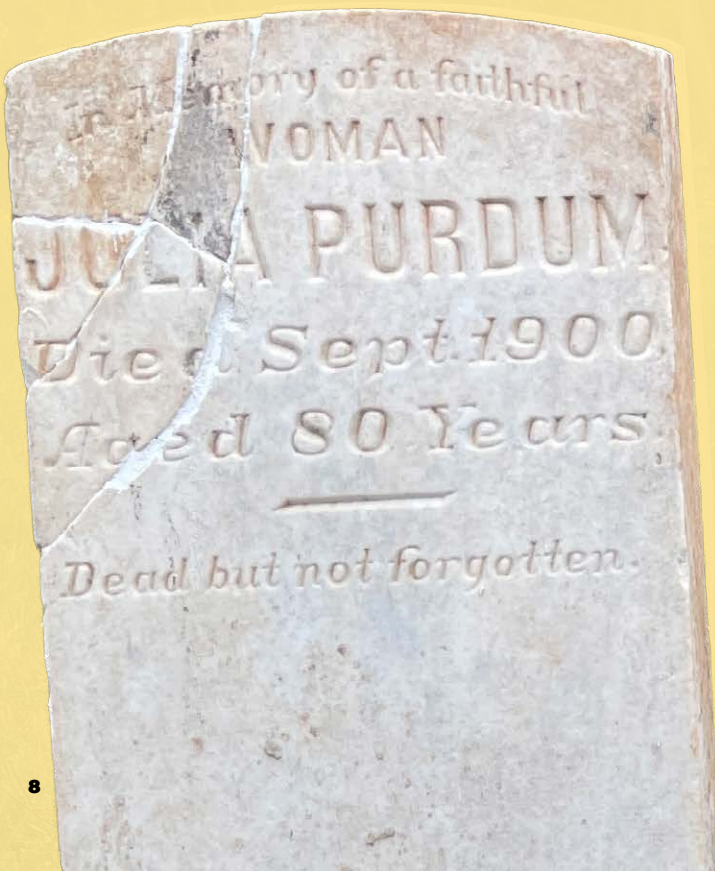
The results were striking.

"They were able to identify 104 additional graves that were previously unmarked," said Cassandra Michaud, Senior Archaeologist with Montgomery Parks. "The number is much higher than we expected! So, it was really a successful project for us."

By combining GPR technology with archival research, the team is beginning to reconstruct a more complete and respectful record of those buried at Montgomery Chapel. Beyond identifying graves, the findings revealed that the cemetery may extend beyond its previously understood boundaries. This insight is critical. It ensures that any future improvements—such as accessible pathways or interpretive features—can be designed with care, protecting all burial sites.

That deeper understanding is already shaping the future of the site. Additional GPR work is planned to further define the cemetery's boundaries, and efforts are underway to identify descendants and expand knowledge of the community connected to this sacred space.

Through this work, Montgomery Parks is not only protecting a historic landscape—it is honoring a community, restoring visibility to those who were once overlooked, and ensuring their legacy endures for generations to come.



NATURE STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Proves “Super Rewarding”

“**T**eens **E**ngaged and **E**mpowered in **N**ature **S**tewardship” (TEENS) internship program continues to underscore students’ dedication to the environment and desire to make a difference.

Montgomery Parks Foundation proudly supported the inaugural cohort of the TEENS program. Led by Katherine Atwill, Interpretive Naturalist, and Angela Yau, Program and Facility Manager at Locust Grove Nature Center, in partnership with Montgomery County Public Schools, this impactful program welcomed fourteen high school students from eight high schools in Spring 2025.

Selected for their knowledge and motivation, the interns worked after school, earned class credits, and learned new skills over the course of four months. They were taught about ecology, local flora and fauna, habitat restoration, trail maintenance, wildlife observation, and the fundamentals of park planning and management.

To showcase all they learned and to help increase the public’s knowledge around protecting the environment, the interns created learning exhibits to share at “nature pop-up sites.” Traveling in a 37-foot RV called “Nature on Wheels,” interns brought their exhibits to the public at Montgomery Parks events such as Sligo Creek Fest and GreenFest.

For their culminating projects, each intern created a proposal for an individual project addressing an issue they identified during the internship. Projects ranged from creating marketing content to launching a community garden to developing a nature center passport system.

What has been the impact of the program on these teens? “It’s been fabulous,” exclaimed Katherine Atwill. Some teens, totally unprompted, described the program as “the highlight of their week,” said Atwill. One intern called the program “a perfect fit,” helping fulfill his lifelong dream of becoming a park ranger one day.



The graduating class of the 2025 TEENS Program.

According to Atwill, interns are considering college majors like environmental science, environmental law, and biochemistry. Atwill said, “It’s exciting to see how dedicated they are!” By offering educational initiatives like the TEENS Program, the Foundation is thrilled to cultivate the next generation of park enthusiasts.



In Memoriam

A special ribbon-cutting ceremony at Brookside Gardens in April 2025 honored Joan O’Rourke’s legacy, whose dedication to the park spanned decades. As the founding president of Friends of Brookside Gardens, Joan’s passion for accessibility and natural beauty touched countless lives. Her passing in December 2024 at the age of 93 left a profound impact on all who knew her.

Thanks to the vision and kindness of Joan, visitors of all abilities can now experience a breathtaking new perspective from the Viewing Platform located next to Gude Garden Pond. Her unwavering generosity will continue to inspire and bring joy to future generations of garden visitors.

Exclusive Donor Events

Did you know that donors can receive special invitations to exclusive appreciation events hosted by the Foundation? These fun and informative experiences are led by Parks experts and offer our dedicated supporters behind-the-scenes access to areas of the park system that aren’t typically open to the public.

Our 2025 outings included:

- The Butterfly Experience at Brookside Gardens
- Kayaking at Black Hill Regional Park
- A Fall-themed tour of Pope Farm Nursery
- Demonstrations by Park Police Special Operations

2025 Highlights: A Year to Remember

From meaningful tributes to exciting new initiatives, 2025 has been a year of impactful milestones for the Foundation. We expanded opportunities for engagement, honored a lasting legacy, and created new ways for supporters to connect more deeply with Montgomery Parks. Together, these moments reflect a year defined by community, generosity, and a shared commitment to the parks we all cherish.

The Foundation’s Virtual Doors are Open

In November 2025, the Foundation launched the new MPF Online Shop in support of Montgomery Parks. You now have access to exclusive Montgomery Parks-branded merch—sweatshirts, totes, mugs, and more—that you can’t find anywhere else. Besides picking up some new gear, proceeds from each purchase are reinvested in Montgomery Parks!



The **Montgomery Parks Foundation** is grateful to all donors who contributed in support of better parks and programming in our community.

OAK LEGACY SOCIETY

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Linda Joy	Barbara Davis	Edward Lee	Nadine Wettstein
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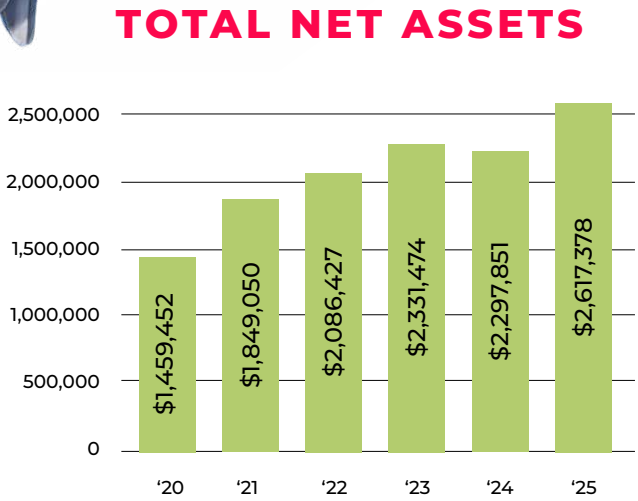
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STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION as of December 31, 2025

SUPPORT AND REVENUE	
Contributions and grants	\$622,280
In-kind support	\$499,388
Investment income	\$90,948
Other Income	\$548
Net assets released from restrictions	-
Total Support and Revenue	\$1,213,164
EXPENSES	
Program Services	\$501,721
Supporting services:	
Management and general	\$220,062
Fundraising	\$194,062
Total Expenses	\$915,845
Changes in Net Assets	\$297,319
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	\$2,297,851
Net Assets - End of Year	\$2,595,170



The complete Form 990 is available at www.montgomeryparksfoundation.org.

BY THE NUMBERS

Contributions Received
\$622,280

Support provided to Parks:
\$501,721

Projects completed for Parks:
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