

# FRIENDS OF PEACH HILL PARK

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EXPLORING THE SEASONS: A  
YEAR IN REVIEW AT PEACH  
HILL PARK FOR 2023



# BOARD PRESIDENTS STATEMENT

Dear Friends of Peach Hill,

I recently took a stroll through our beloved park in the Town of Poughkeepsie and marveled at its natural wonders - from iridescent bluebirds to coyote tracks in the mud. The snow-covered Catskills beckoned, and the glistening quartz conglomerate of the Shawangunks added to the scenic beauty. The Mid-Hudson Bridge rose gracefully from the valley where the Hudson flows below.

These experiences, along with your shared stories, continually inspire the Friends of Peach Hill Board members and volunteers. Our mission to maintain this oasis and its trails is a labor of love, fueled by the passion we all share for this special place.

To ensure Peach Hill remains accessible and well-maintained, we rely on your support through hard work and donations. Your contributions help us mow miles of trails, clear invasive vines, and enhance the park's amenities, such as benches for respite and bridges over watery areas.

Whether you have time to volunteer or the means to donate, your involvement makes a powerful impact. Join us in preserving Peach Hill's highest elevation in the Town of Poughkeepsie - a place where community, nature, and joy converge.

Become or remain a member, and let's continue to create and cherish the moments that make Peach Hill a source of happiness for us all.

Warm regards,



**MARIBEL PREGNALL MUELLER**  
FOPH President

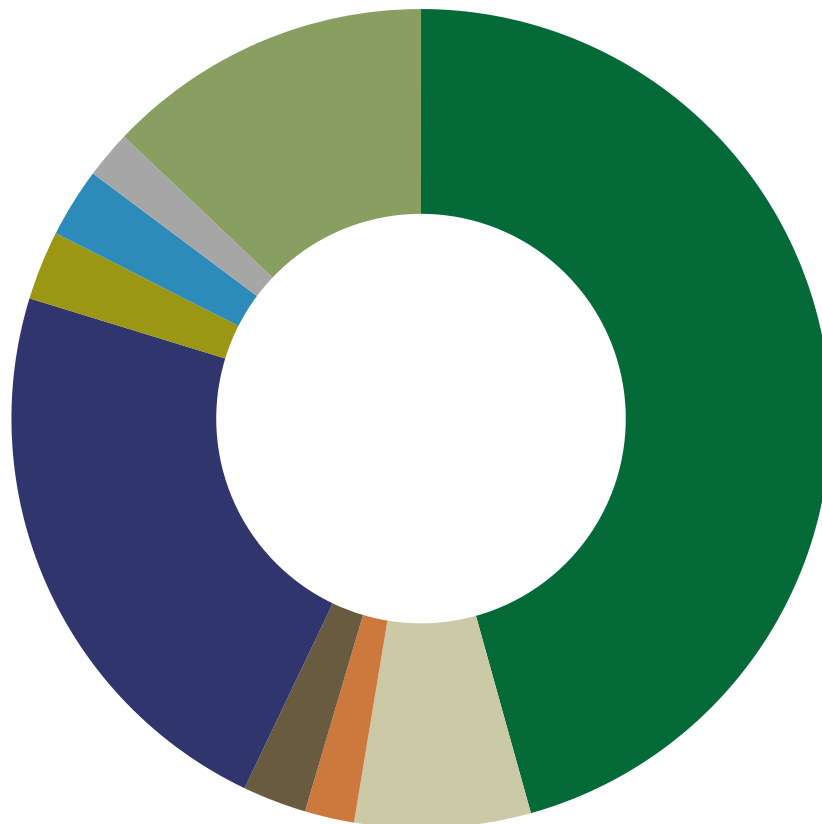


P.S. Give easily and safely online by scanning our QR code!

# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

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Maintenance of the park – mowing, picnic tables, insurance and work on the new pavilion takes up the bulk of the budget! Funds directly go into supporting your park.





A winter scene featuring a large, dark tree trunk on the left side of the frame. The ground is covered in a layer of snow, with some dry grass and small plants visible. In the background, there are more trees and a bright sun shining through a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The overall atmosphere is cold and bright.

# 2023 A REVIEW

A Beautiful and busy year.



## **JANUARY**

### **A Pavilion Unveiled**

The new year brought not only frosty mornings, but also the completion of our brand new pavilion. Thanks to a DC Learn, Play, Create grant and furnished with new tables, chairs, and educational materials, the pavilion set the stage for a year of community gatherings.



## **FEBRUARY**

### **Winter Workday with Marist Fraternity**

Embracing the cold, members of Marist Fraternity Theta Delta Chi and FOPH board members joined forces for a winter workday. The focus was on pruning trees and maintaining trails, a testament to our commitment to the park's year-round upkeep.



## **MARCH**

### **A Snowy Education**

We celebrated a late winter snow and the first official educational lesson in the Pavilion! We explored animal tracks and scat samples and then went out into the park to search for evidence.



## **APRIL**

### **Blossoms and Work Days**

As April unfolded, Peach Hill Park blossomed in more ways than one. Volunteers, including the dedicated Theta Delta Chi, saved 14 trees from invasive vines, ensuring a flourishing habitat for both beauty and wildlife. We also obtained a Free Little Library where folks can take a book and leave a book when visiting the Park.

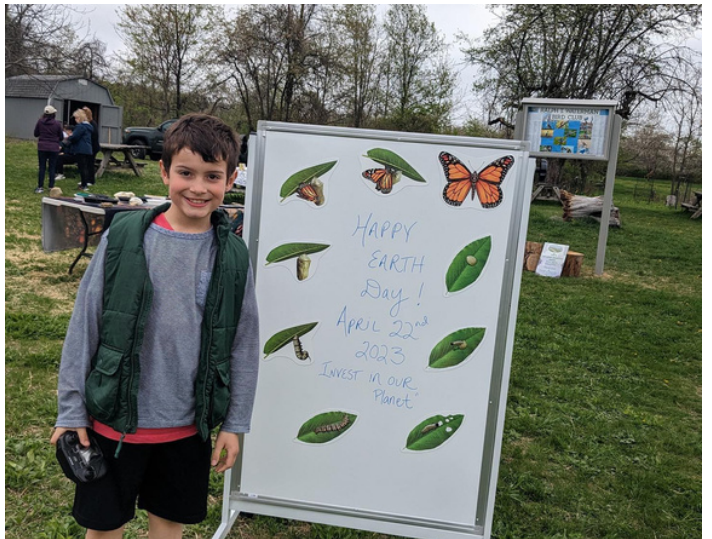




## APRIL Earth Day Celebrations

The month culminated with a joyous Earth Day celebration, marking the official opening of our outdoor learning pavilion.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony, attended by County, State, and Town officials, echoed the commitment to environmental education for Dutchess County's youth.





## MAY

### Moonrise Hike and Nature Exploration

May brought enchantment with a special Moonrise Hike to view the Flower Moon. The park transformed after dark, with owls flying, the bridge aglow, and the moon gracing us when we reached the model orchard. Plans are in place for more such events in 2024 to continue showcasing the park's beauty.



## JUNE

### "Run for the Hill of It" 5K

June marked the return of the annual "Run for the Hill of It" 5K—an event that brought runners and walkers of all ages and abilities to the park. With its challenging course, the 5K showcased the park's natural beauty, attracting the most participants to date. Generous support from Adams Fairacre Farms and Stewart's Shops, along with dedicated volunteers, made the day memorable for all.





## SEPTEMBER

### Young Engineers Empowerment Program

Showcasing our commitment to education, September featured the call for students for our Young Engineers Empowerment Program. Made possible by a grant from DC Youth Services, this free program offered 10 engaging classes led by regional engineers. The goal? Building a rain garden to mitigate runoff into our parking lot—a hands-on project shaping future environmental stewards.



## OCTOBER

### Cider Fest Extravaganza and Engineer Empowerment

The crisp air of October ushered in our 17th Annual Peach Hill Park Apple Cider Fest—a celebration that reverberated with the spirit of community. In conjunction, we also hosted our 2nd Aquablitz in partnership with Vassar Barns and Scenic Hudson. Local businesses, including Adams Fairacre Farms and Stewart's Shops, played a pivotal role in the festivities. The Roundabout Ramblers and The John and Vince Band added a musical touch, making it an unforgettable day.





## Friends of Peach Hill Park

Our heartfelt thanks to Marist Fraternity Theta Delta Chi volunteers, Vassar Barns volunteers, our amazing hot dog donors and volunteers—the Logan's and Albano's—for making the Cider Fest a resounding success.

Simultaneously, our Peach Hill Engineer Empowerment Program took flight, with 12 future engineers learning everything from flying drones to creating topo maps—an exciting initiative supported by DC Youth Services and dedicated volunteers from HVEA.





## NOVEMBER

### Pre-Winter Cleanup and Accessibility Projects

Almost coming full circle, November marked a pre-winter cleanup, laying the groundwork for accessibility improvements and enhanced signage in 2024. Our volunteers, with special thanks to Marist Theta Delta Chi Fraternity brothers, have been working tirelessly to make the park more accessible and welcoming.



## DECEMBER

### A Call for Gratitude and Support

As we approach the end of the year, we pause to express our gratitude. Peach Hill Park has been a source of peace and enjoyment for all who visit. Your presence and support have contributed to maintaining the park as one of Poughkeepsie's finest gems. As we reflect on the past year, we also extend an invitation to consider supporting the park financially. Your contributions, regardless of size, play a crucial role in preserving the essence of Peach Hill Park.





# Looking to 2024

As we embark on a new year, we're excited about the possibilities that lie ahead. Plans include improving accessibility, enhancing signage, and introducing innovative educational initiatives. Anticipate more special events, like Moonrise Hikes, offering unique opportunities to experience the park's beauty.

## 1. Join us as a member!

Anyone who loves the Park can be a member. Learn more at [peachhillpark.org/be-a-member](https://peachhillpark.org/be-a-member)

## 2. Be a volunteer

As you can see, volunteers are the backbone of the Park. Email [info@peachhillpark.org](mailto:info@peachhillpark.org) to get involved.

## 3. Give

The work we do couldn't be done with the support of many. Please support YOUR park and keep it thriving.





# You make a difference.

In closing, we want to express our heartfelt thanks. Whether you've attended events, volunteered your time, or contributed financially, you are an integral part of our community. Your support ensures that Peach Hill Park remains a cherished and thriving haven for all.

As we turn the page on 2023, we eagerly await the next chapter of Peach Hill Park's journey, and we invite you to be a part of it.



## Give via check:

Please make the check payable to "Friends of Peach Hill Fund" and mail to:

Friends of Peach Hill  
P.O. Box 2964  
Poughkeepsie, NY 12603

Give securely  
online via PayPal



[peachhillpark.com/donate](https://peachhillpark.com/donate)



# ABOUT US

## **The Friends of Peach Hill (FOPH)**

The FOPH started as a group of concerned citizens who wanted to preserve the vital nature of the park in light of rapidly growing pressures for housing and commercial development in the late 1990's. This group began working with the nonprofit, Scenic Hudson, and the Town of Poughkeepsie to find a way to acquire and maintain the property.

These negotiations came to fruition in March 2004 when the Town of Poughkeepsie formally dedicated Peach Hill as public parkland for passive recreation, with the provision that it would not be an additional burden to taxpayers. The acquisition was made possible by a private contributions, and grants from Dutchess County and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

## **Then and Now**

The Friends of Peach Hill organized to become a not-for-profit volunteer organization whose primary mission would be to make Peach Hill available for public enjoyment. Peach Hill is formally owned by the Town of Poughkeepsie, but is jointly managed by the Friends group and the Town Recreation Department. Under the terms of an agreement with the Town, the cost of the improvements to the park and its maintenance are borne by the FOPH or by grants.

## **Currently**

Since 2004 the top priority of the Friends has been to protect the site and to open up more and more portions of Peach Hill for public use. Through donations, grants and a lot of volunteer effort, the Friends have laid out several miles of hiking trails, constructed interpretative overlooks and picnic areas, kept trails and meadows mowed, battled invasive species, and pruned key sections of the orchard.

The Friends are always working to ensure that the unique historical landscape of Peach Hill will always be there for the enjoyment of future generations.

## **Be a Friend**

We are always looking for people who love the park to join our efforts! Learn more about how you can become a Friend of Peach Hill at **[peachhillpark.org](http://peachhillpark.org)**.



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## **Board Officers\***

Maribel Pregnall Mueller, President

Maureen Logan, Vice President

Claudius Feger, Treasurer

Jim Challey, Secretary

Roy Budnik

Christina DaCosta

Barbara Heiles

Scott Ilker

Peter Jensen

Mary Lunt

Bill Lunt

Jess Lunt

Tom Meyering

Tom Rinaldi

Janet McHugh, Member at Large

\*As of 12/15/2023