

Celebrating one big, tightknit family

Pine Brook's 2nd Family Arts Festival draws crowd

BY JIM LOCKWOOD
STAFF WRITER

SCRANTON — Margarite Hernandez attended the John Adams Elementary School, one block away from where she grew up on Capouse Avenue.

On Saturday, she brought three of her four young daughters to the school playground for the second annual Pine Brook Family Arts Festival hosted by United Neighborhood Centers of Northeastern PA. The girls came away with balloon animals and smiles on their painted faces and their mother got to bring home some small plants.

"It's really nice to see something happening here in this area," Hernandez said. "A lot of people see it as bad, in the Pine Brook area, but it's starting to come back."

UNC leads a long-term revitalization plan underway in Pine Brook, a neighborhood known for industry, businesses, tight housing and diversity.



SEAN MCKEAG / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

JIM LOCKWOOD / STAFF PHOTO

Left, Tannis Kowalchuk, of Damascus, founding artistic director of the Farm Arts Collective, teaches children creative drama Saturday as they mimic her movements during the second annual Pine Brook Family Arts Festival at John Adams Elementary School in Scranton. Right, Scranton resident Margarite Hernandez, who as a young girl attended the school, with daughters, from left, Arian, 7, a first grader at the school, Kiani, 5, a kindergartner at the school, and Legacy, 3.

Saturday's festival doubled the number of activities from the inaugural session last year and drew a large crowd on a chilly, overcast afternoon. Rain held off and over 100 people walked through

the wrought-iron gate of the schoolyard in the first hour of the event, which ran from noon to 4 p.m., said Holly Yorkonis, UNC's community revitalization coordinator.

The school at 927 Capouse

Ave. at Ash Street has long been a Pine Brook anchor.

"This school is a centerpiece of the neighborhood and we partner together all the time," Yorkonis said. "If they have an event where

parents are coming, UNC is there. They've just been a wonderful partner throughout the revitalization plan in the neighborhood."

Hernandez had moved to Florida for a time before

moving back to Scranton. She now lives on North Washington Avenue and has fond memories of attending Adams Elementary.

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CHRISTINE LEE / STAFF PHOTO

Greenfield Twp. Community Park and Veterans Memorial project manager Patty Apostolakes, left, and township Supervisor Chair Susanne Totsky look over the site of the future township-run park. The park will feature a walking trail, parking lot, playground and memorial to veterans and first responders.

Greenfield Twp. looking to develop first municipal park

Work to start this spring on the 4.5-acre, township-owned site.

BY CHRISTINE LEE
STAFF WRITER

GREENFIELD TWP. — A new park will give township families a chance to make memories while preserving the memories of those who have served.

Township officials are developing a 4.5-acre tract along Route 106 into the Greenfield Twp. Community Park and Veterans Memorial. The land, owned by the township, would be Greenfield's first municipal park.

The nascent park already features a 100-foot-by-100-foot enclosed dog park, which opened in late March. Residents David and Michele Nicoteri donated the money and materials to build the dog park, which is dedicated to their son, David.

Township Board of Supervisors Chair Susanne Totsky said the dog park is already popular with area pooches, including her Maltese Shih Tzu mix, Sammy.

"People are using it, which is nice to see," she said.

Plans call for the park to be developed in phases.

The first phase, with an estimated cost of \$110,000, will include a parking lot and a paved walking trail encircling the park. The township will use a \$70,000 grant from the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources it received last

year, as well as an \$8,000 donation from the Greenfield Twp. Historical Society. The township will fund the remaining \$32,000.

Township supervisors in March awarded an \$83,000 contract to Rock Bottom Construction of Jermyn to build the paved trail, access road and parking lot, with construction expected to start this spring.

A second phase would include a playground. Plans for the park also call for a memorial to township veterans and first responders; park committee members have begun fundraising for this already. In the future, officials hope to add a pavilion to the site.

Funding mix

Patty Apostolakes, the park's project manager, submitted an application for a \$60,000 grant from DCNR earlier this month to cover the second phase of construction, with the township supervisors providing an additional \$30,000. She expects to hear in September whether the township was selected for the grant. Officials are also hoping businesses sponsor the park.

It's not the first time the land, which the township has owned for eight years, has drawn crowds. It used to be home to a banquet

facility that hosted dances and bands and a swimming pool. Bringing new life to the site has been Totsky's dream since she joined the board in 2014.

"We wanted to give back to the community," she said.

While the township's baseball field is named in honor of Sgt. Eric Slobodnik, who was killed in action in Iraq in 2005, Totsky said there hasn't been any place in the township to recognize veterans.

"I always thought it would be nice to do something for our veterans," she said.

Park committee members are discussing selling bricks or benches listing veterans and first responders' names. Information can be found at greenfieldtownshipsupervisors.org/park, the park's Facebook page, by calling the township at 570-282-7000, option 2, or emailing supervisor@greenfieldtownship.org.

With younger people making their home in the township, Apostolakes and Totsky hope the park will be a fun space for a new generation of residents.

"I think this park will help bring the community together," Apostolakes said. "With each phase, it will get better and better."

Contact the writer:
clec@timeshamrock.com;
570-348-9100 ext. 5365;
@Cleespot on Twitter.

A dance that keeps its own time



SEAN MCKEAG / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Above, Elenor Bilz, of Gettysburg, and John Caputo, of Highland Park, N.J., dance to Civil War-era songs Saturday night during the 17th annual Grand Civil War Ball at the Waverly Community House in Waverly Twp. Below, guests dance to the music. This year's event included pre-ball dance lessons.



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