Your parks are a true “treat” for all!

Lauren Henry and Ryan Grauer often spend their weekends visiting Pittsburgh’s parks with their Westie, Nigel. From venturing through the rolling hills of Highland Park to frolicking through Frick, Nigel and his parents are constantly on the move exploring Pittsburgh’s 165 park sites.

“Having so many parks available helps us to explore our community. Once we realized how many parks and trails were available, it got us out of our neighborhood and into different parts of the city,” Lauren said. “We’ve visited a lot of parks this summer and found walks that we love in Riverview and Emerald View Parks.”

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit the United States, ultimately leading Pennsylvania to implement a state-wide shutdown, Nigel and his parents took their adventures to new heights.

“Prior to the pandemic, we had only explored Highland and Frick Parks, as they are the closest to our apartment. Since it started, we have ventured further afield and found amazing hikes in Emerald View Park and Riverview Park,” Lauren explained. “These explorations have given Nigel a lot more exposure to wildlife: he got lucky and saw a bunny and a deer on our walk in Emerald View recently! He was also reunited with the goats at Clayton Hill in August. They were in Highland Park a few years ago, and, after seeing them there once, he spent more than a year looking for them every time we walked by the spot where they had been.”

Not only do their park visits help them become more acquainted with different parts of the city, but they also offered a light during the uncertainty of the pandemic.

“Getting outdoors and exploring the parks gave us a little bit of normalcy and an opportunity to be a bit more relaxed in the midst of the madness. In many ways, the most anxiety that I felt around the shelter in place and the closures and restrictions of the past several months was when it seemed as though the parks might be closed. I wasn’t sure what we would do for Nigel – or ourselves – without them, and we are so very grateful that you all have stayed open and accessible throughout,” Lauren said.

Throughout the past few months of the COVID-19 pandemic, parks and green spaces have meant so much to so many, but to Lauren, Ryan and Nigel, they meant everything.

It’s thanks to your ongoing support and commitment to ensuring that parks remain, safe, clean and accessible that moments like this are made possible.

Sir Nigel Underfoot enjoys visiting many of Pittsburgh’s 165 park sites with his parents!

Nigel loves exploring Frick Park during his weekend visits.
Celebrating the 2020 PNC Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy Picnic in Your Park

You made a big impact
Total Dollars Raised: $511,976
Total Baskets Sold: 280

For every basket purchase, we were able to provide a meal donation to the City of Pittsburgh and Community Kitchen Pittsburgh Grab and Go meal program to support children experiencing food insecurity.

Special thanks to this year’s sponsors

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First-Ever Picnic in Your Park Makes a Big Impact

On Saturday, September 26, many of our closest friends joined us for our newly imagined 2020 PNC Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy Hat Luncheon: Picnic in Your Park event, where we celebrated the power of parks in a safe, socially distant fashion. This year’s event was especially important as we honored our cherished parks and green spaces, which continue to serve as essential amenities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Not only did this year’s event further support the parks that you know and love but will also support children experiencing food insecurity. For every Picnic in Your Park basket purchased, in addition to supporting our mission, a meal donation will be made to the City of Pittsburgh’s Grab and Go meal distribution program.

The Grab and Go meal distribution program is a product of the City of Pittsburgh’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In late March, when schools began to close county-wide to keep students and educators safe from the virus, the City of Pittsburgh developed a program to ensure that all local children continued receiving their essential meals that are typically provided during the school day.

Event attendees enjoyed a one-of-a-kind, gourmet picnic basket filled with scrumptious picnic fare that they enjoyed at home or in the park. Baskets were prepared by local caterer, the Common Plea.

This year’s event raised nearly $511,976 for the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, which will support ongoing free educational programs for people of all ages, maintenance for various park sites, and general operating costs to continue the mission of restoring Pittsburgh’s park system to excellence.

We’re sending our sincere thanks to all who generously supported this year’s newly imagined event. 🙏
The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Funds Frick Park Restoration Work

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation awarded the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy with the Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program grant to support restoration work in the Clayton Hill section of Frick Park. The restoration project recently introduced a herd of 11 goats and one donkey to the restoration site to complete multiple, month-long periods of browsing. Goats began ‘working’ in areas around Clayton Hill, a three-acre area in Frick Park’s 155-acre woodland, in August and will return once again in October, and again in 2021. The target species of the restoration work is bush honeysuckle.

After the goats remove the honeysuckle, native shrubs and trees will be planted by staff and volunteers. These native plants are important to moths and butterflies; caterpillars being a primary food source for migratory and breeding birds. Removal of the bush honeysuckle will not only benefit the tree and plant communities at the site but also will improve the area as a breeding habitat for birds and a fuel source for migrants.

The Parks Conservancy is honored to partner with many local organizations on this exciting project, including the Allegheny Bird Conservation Alliance, Allegheny GoatScape, Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Powdermill Environmental Research Center, the University of Pittsburgh, and the Western PA Conservancy. Additionally, this project wouldn’t be possible without the support of the City of Pittsburgh Department of Public Works.

To learn more about this ongoing project, visit: pittsburghparks.org/ebird.

Plant a Tree

Your donation of a restoration tree will help to restore our urban canopy, clean our air, and keep Pittsburgh beautiful. Every year, Pittsburgh loses thousands of trees from its canopy. Give a gift to help Pittsburgh’s urban tree canopy thrive by donating a tree.

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