# The Park Hill Residents' Association

# The Park Hill Reporter

Volume 40, Issue 2 | Fall 2020



Park Hill neighbors cleaning up Leslie Sutherland Memorial Park.



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Let's stay safe together, Park Hill Remember your mask

# Message from the President



Dear Park Hill Residents,

Happy Fall! My name is Lucy Vigilant-Smith, and I am pleased to be the leader of the Residents' Association of such a beautiful and unique community. I hope

that you and your family are well at this time. As a community leader, no matter our differences, politics or ideology, we are one community. I believe we must celebrate the things that make us unique and give us our identity, while acknowledging our commonalities.

This year, with the challenges of Covid-19, many families and communities had to make unexpected changes. The PHRA embarked on its Park Hill Beautiful and Safe Project to let our neighbors know that we understand and care, despite these challenges. The neighborhood cleanup started with individual streets, including Rumsey Road/Saw Mill (with Yonkers Land Conservancy), Courter Avenue, and Park Hill Avenue, and ended with a cleanup of Sutherland Park October 17-18. The locations cleaned were where we received complaints and found trash to accumulate regularly. With every cleanup event, we invited the neighbors on that street to join us. The PHRA believes that in order to protect our investments, we all must make a greater effort to keep the neighborhood cleaner and safer.

We invite you to become a member of PHRA to help support the work we are doing in the community. You can sign up for membership, or to be on our email list, at our website (www.parkhillyonkers. org). Please remember to check the website regularly for news and events. Signing up as a member or for the email list allows you to receive e-blasts with advance notice of special news and events. Feel free to share articles and photos of special events taking

place in your family or in the community. And we invite local businesses and service providers to advertise with us! Your ads help support the printing of this newsletter and our community events. The rates for advertising are also listed on the website.

As we move forward, we hope to continue to engage safely in many of our beloved community events: picnics, house tours, holiday events, spotlighting neighbors, book clubs, meetings with the mayor and other political representatives, garden tours, etc. This year, we have held several online and socially distanced, in-person meetings with our elected political officials and police representatives to share in discussions about community issues and concerns. Your participation in these events and membership in the PHRA helps to increase our visibility to City leadership and gain leverage in solving the issues we care about.

We continue to add new families into the association membership. Please let us know of new neighbors whom we may have missed. Our Welcome Wagon is on the move, visiting and welcoming neighbors with a basket of goodies and helpful information!

The PHRA board is run solely by volunteer time and effort. If you are interested in joining the team, or would like to give a helping hand with a project, please let us know. We would also like to hear from you with new ideas for events and projects.

I am a public school teacher and librarian. I love working and talking to 'little people'. I believe in loving what you do and being kind. (We do not have to accept any negative behaviors from others, but we can make an effort to respond in kindness, and keep it moving.) I look forward to working more with our dynamic PHRA team and our great neighbors.

LVS

# "Park Hill Beautiful"

One of the goals of the Park Hill Residents' Association is to see every street and corner in Park Hill free of litter.

Since the beginning of September, the PHRA has adopted the cleaning of various areas in the neighborhood: at the McLean Avenue exit and entrance off the Saw Mill River Parkway, Courter Avenue, Rumsey Road at the entrance to the various parkways, Leslie Sutherland Park, Park Hill Avenue and along part of Van Cortlandt Avenue.

To accomplish this goal, our community needs to work together. If every resident of Park Hill actively cleans and polices their respective areas, we can keep the neighborhood free of litter and trash.

If you encounter an issue that you do not know how to approach, you can reach out to the PHRA for advice in how to solve the issue at parkhillyonkers@gmail.com

The PHRA will continue to help clean various public areas which the Department of Public Works is not able to keep up with due to personnel shortage.

We ask our residents to join us in taking care of our surroundings.

Thank you for caring and making our PARK HILL community a model place to live.

-Martha Mercedes







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# "Park Hill Beautiful"

Uno de los objetivos de la Asociación de residentes de Park Hill (PHRA) es ver que toda calle y esquina de Park Hill se mantenga sin basura.

Desde principios de septiembre la asociación PHRA ha adoptado la limpieza de varias partes del vecindario: en la salida y entrada de McLean Avenue al Saw Mill River Parkway, Courter Avenue y Rumsey Road en la entrada hacia las carreteras, Leslie Sutherland Park, Park Hill Avenue y parte de Van Cortlandt Avenue.

Para lograr este objetivo, nuestra comunidad debe trabajar junta. Si cada residente de Park Hill limpia y vigila activamente sus respectivas áreas, podremos mantener el vecindario libre de basura y desperdicio. Si Usted duda cómo abordar algún problema, comuníquese con la PHRA, quien le aconsejará, en parkhillyonkers@gmail.com

La PHRA continuará asistiendo en la limpieza de áreas públicas que, debido a la escasez de personal, el Department of Public Works no alcanza a mantener.

Pedimos que nuestros residentes se unan con nosotros en el cuidado y mantenimiento de nuestros alrededores.

Gracias por la atención y por hacer de nuestra comunidad de PARK HILL un lugar modelo en dónde vivir.

---Martha Mercedes













# Be a Good Neighbor

What does it mean to be a "good neighbor"? Simply put, to consider how your behavior affects others. To be part of a community, it means working together with your neighbors to achieve common goals.

The Park Hill Residents' Association has been hearing from many residents with questions and concerns about disturbances in the neighborhood. Most often the issues are about noise, trash and litter, traffic and illegal dumping. In order to give our community clear information about homeowners' responsibilities and rights, we checked with the City of Yonkers. The city has established several ordinances to help facilitate "Good Neighbor" behavior.

Listed here are the City of Yonkers ordinances that address the most common concerns:

#### Noise disturbances

Chapter 66 of the City of Yonkers Code regulates noise. Noise measurements are used to define and control some noises. Specific thresholds, in the form of duration, time of day, and audibility at property lines, are provided. Sources of noise include sound systems, pets, loading and unloading operations, vehicles, construction, and a variety of other activities.

Below are the noise measurement thresholds for sounds considered nuisances in residential areas:

—A sound-level reading taken at a residential

property, arising from another residential property, above 55 dBA between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.

- ✓ We all have construction projects going on from time to time, but be aware of the grating noise those electric saws create...not a good sound to put a baby to sleep.
- —A sound-level reading taken at a residential property, arising from another residential property, above 50 dBA between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. the next day.
- ✓ The party music needs to end at 11:00pm—sound travels far and wide.

### Garbage and storage

Every owner of a lot or parcel of land must keep and preserve it, at all times, clean and inoffensive, they must prevent the accumulation of garbage, rubbish, refuse, inoperable motor vehicles or other materials. Owners must also keep lots and parcels of land free from any

overgrowth of weeds, brush and other baneful plants.

✓ Keep your property tidy or at least store your collection of stuff in the back where it is not visible from the street or in full view of your neighbor's windows.

# Leaf blowers

There is a seasonal ban on gasoline-powered leaf blowers. The operation of a gasoline-powered leaf and garden blower is prohibited from June 1 through September 30 of each year. During times of emergency caused by storms, the Commissioner of Public Works may declare a temporary moratorium on the operations of this provision.

✓ But be kind—don't start too early in the morning and keep it as brief as possible. Volume 40 | Issue 2 The Park Hill Reporter Fall 2020



### Curb your dog

Except for guide dogs, hearing dogs or service dogs accompanying a person with a disability as defined the Public Health Law of the State of New York, it is the duty of each dog and animal

owner to remove any feces left by his or her dog on

any sidewalk, gutter, street or other public area. A violation can bring a fine of up to \$1,500.

✓ And leaving your dog poo bags on the street OR in the storm drains is a really BAD NEIGHBORLY gesture. Nobody wants to clean up after you and your dog!!

### Sidewalks in front of your home



As a property owner/renter/business owner, you are responsible for keeping the entire sidewalk abutting your property free of litter, debris, high grass and weeds as well as any

high grass or weeds covering a fire hydrant in front of your property. The area to be kept clean extends 18 inches into the roadway. Failure to comply can bring a fine of up to \$1,500.

All sidewalks abutting your property must be

kept in good repair and free of tripping hazards. Owners must obtain a permit from the Engineering Department (914-377-6210) prior to any sidewalk repair or replacement. A violation can bring fines that range from \$250 to \$5,000.

✓ As we have been confined to working from home and taking walks around the neighborhood these last few months, the value of sidewalks has become much more apparent...so thank you for keeping them clear and for the lovely flowers, well-kept yards and yard art.

### Snow Removal and Garbage



As a property owner/renter/business owner, you are responsible for keeping sidewalks and fire hydrants clear and clean from snow and ice. Snow and ice must be removed from the

sidewalks and fire hydrants within six (6) hours after every snowfall, that ends in the daytime and before 12:00 p.m. (noon) of the day after any snowfall that occurs during the night. It is a violation to shovel,

blow and plow snow into a city street. It is illegal to place cones, cans or other objects in the roadway to save parking spaces.

It is the responsibility of the owners of any vacant lot to keep the sidewalks in front of the premises clear and clean from snow, ice and dirt.

✓ And if you really want to be a "Good Neighbor," help clear your elderly neighbor's sidewalk.

# Illegal Dumping



Dumping is illegal and punishable by a fine of up to \$5,000. If you witness illegal dumping, call 914-377-DUMP (3867). If your call leads to a conviction, you could receive a \$1,000 reward.

Local contractors seem to view vacant lots and open

green spaces (such as the area along the entrance to Rumsey Road and Sutherland Park) as "wasted" land and rather than pay the fees required at local dumps, empty their trucks and vans wherever they see open space.

✓ Use your cell phone, get their license plate numbers and report them to the city.



#### Bulk Trash Removal

If you have large items to dispose of, City Code requires that residents place all garbage and bulk at the curb NO

EARLIER than sundown the evening prior to your scheduled pick-up. Please do not put garbage in

supermarket shopping bags. Small bags may break causing garbage to be scattered on or around your property. Failure to do so could result in a \$1,500 fine.

✓ Residents can schedule a bulk pick-up appointment by calling the 914-377-HELP (4357).





It is illegal to place any advertising on public property. This includes posting signs for yard, tag or garage sales, political signs or any other event on telephone poles, traffic posts, bus stops or in the City's right-of-way. A violation can bring a fine of \$250 to \$5,000.

✓ There are several other issues that the city has not mandated, but that GOOD NEIGHBORS need to be aware of.

## Exterior lights



Exterior lights need to be placed so that they do not shine into your neighbor's windows. Motion sensor lights in particular, that come on and off all night are very disturbing.

Mount lights so that are they are directed downward

and do not shine into your neighbor's windows.

✓ Lights that respond to every car or person that passes on the street next to your property do not necessarily make you safer, but it does annoy all your neighbors.

### Littering



There are several sources of the litter that we find all over our streets and sidewalks. Some is simply items that fall from trash pick-up and

are blown by the wind, but most is thrown by people driving through, or dropped by people walking to work or school. The PHRA has and will continue

to have clean-up days. We are also talking to the city about putting trash containers at several locations.

✓ But if each homeowner would pick-up the areas around their house, we could keep the neighborhood cleaner.

#### Fall Leaves



Leaves are picked up by the city for several weeks in the fall with recycling but ONLY in recyclable paper bags.

During compost season, leaves and brush should be placed in open containers or paper bags (no plastic bags) and be put out for pick-up on Wednesdays (leaves and brush will be picked up on your second garbage day for the rest of the year). Failure to comply can bring fines of up to \$1,500.

✓ Don't blow your leaves into the street! The city does not sweep up leaves from the street. When you blow your leaves into the street, you have doubled the leaves that your neighbors have to pick up. Or if you want to be a friend of the environment, leave the leaves in your yard or compost them.

#### Mufflers and Car Radios

Be aware of the volume of your music and car mufflers, especially late

at night. Sounds carry in this neighborhood built on rock outcroppings. When you arrive home at 2 a.m., music blaring, you wake up the whole neighborhood, including many who have to get up and go to work in 3 hours.

✓ Many residents have complained about the sound of drag racing in the early morning hours on the Saw Mill Parkway. The Saw Mill is the responsibility of the State Highway Patrol, but the Yonkers Police are aware of the problem and are cooperating with the NY State in trying to stop the perpetrators. Motorcyclists seem to be the worst offenders.



### Speeding



Many stop signs are totally ignored and cars race through the narrow winding streets of Park Hillwhich presents a danger to us all. People walking their dogs, children playing on their sidewalks, runners out for their daily exercise are all put in danger by speeding and disregarding signage. The PHRA is working with the Yonkers Police Department to keep a close check on those locations that have significant violations. As we name specific streets and intersections, the police will increase their presence at those locations and issue tickets.

### Respect for Our Elders: Our Trees

The magnificent old trees that grace our neighborhood provide homes for squirrels and birds, shade our homes in the summer, clean our air and provide the oxygen we need to live—these 250 and 300-year-old native Americans deserve our respect. Prune them properly. Allow their leaves to remain on the ground to replenish the soil and give shelter to the insects like bees and fireflies that will emerge in the spring to pollinate our flowers and twinkle in the night.

✓ In addition to the essential role trees play in maintaining a healthy planet, our old trees increase our property values as well! The proximity of healthy, beautiful trees directly affects property values. Good tree cover increases property prices by about 7 percent in residential areas and 18 percent for building lots. Quality landscapes with healthy trees can even increase retail spending from 9 to 12 percent.

As a community we all need to work together to keep our neighborhood a beautiful, safe and friendly place to live.





Little Library visitors at the corner of Glenbrook Avenue and Van Cortlandt Park Avenue. Select FREE books at the Little Free Library anytime!

# Children's Corner

# Improve Reading Comprehension

- Have them read aloud to you
- Find books that they like
- Provide books at the right level
- Choose fiction and non-fiction
- Reread sections that are confusing

- Supplement their class reading
- Write about what they read
- Talk about what they're reading (before, during and after)



# 10 Things You Can Do to Raise a Reader

- 1. Read from day one. Start a reading routine in those very first days with a newborn. Even very young babies respond to the warmth of a lap and the soothing sound of a book being read aloud.
- 2. Share books every day. Read with your child every day, even after he becomes an independent reader.
- **3. Reread favorites.** Most children love to hear their favorite stories over and over again. Rereading books provides an opportunity to hear or see something that may have been missed the first time, and provides another chance to hear a favorite part.
- **4. Send positive messages about the joys of literacy**. Your own interest and excitement about books will be contagious!
- **5. Visit the library early and often**. Public libraries are great resources for books, helpful advice about authors and illustrators, story times, and more. Make visiting the library part of your family's routine.
- **6. Find the reading and writing in everyday things**. Take the time to show your child ways that adults use reading and writing every day. Grocery lists, notes to the teacher, maps, and cooking all involve important reading and writing skills.
- 7. Give your reader something to think and talk about. There are many different types of books available to readers. Vary the types of books you check out from the library, and seek out new subjects that give you and your reader something to think and talk about.
- **8.** Talk, talk. A child's vocabulary grows through rich conversations with others. No matter your child's age, narrate what you're doing, talk in full sentences, and sprinkle your conversations with interesting words.
- **9. Know your stuff.** Parents don't need to be reading specialists, but it is important to understand the basics about learning to read.
- **10. Speak up if something doesn't feel right**. Parents are often the first ones to recognize a problem. If you have concerns about your child's development, speak with your child's teacher and your pediatrician. It's never too early to check in with an expert.

Look for new books and authors that your child may enjoy.

Organize an area dedicated to reading and writing tools, including paper and writing utensils.

Visit the library for story time and book recommendations.

Encourage your child to talk about what he's read.

 ${\sf T}$ alk to your child, and sprinkle interesting words into your conversation.

Offer a variety of books to read.

Read with your child every day.

Expand your home library to include magazines and nonfiction.

Ask questions if you're concerned about your child's development.

Decide to raise a reader!





# Tag Sale

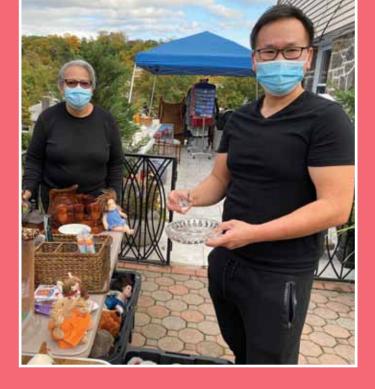
The annual Park Hill TAG SALE was a great success.

The weather was good and 30 households were featured on the official PHRA map, with several pop-up sales joining in all over the neighborhood.

At the end of the weekend, many households donated their unsold clothing items to the homeless through BeholdAshae, Inc.













# Clothing for the Homeless

BEHOLDASHAE (it is done), founded by our neighbor Sherri Williamson three years ago, is a non-profit organization developed to be a vehicle for families to break free of bondage as it relates to despair, hopelessness, financial ruin and heartache. Its aim is to make it easier for men and women to cope with challenges they may encounter from family, single parenthood, unemployment, affordable childcare and social-economic hardships. We met Sherri when she mentioned she was collecting clothing for the homeless. She accepted many of the clothing items left from the Park Hill tag sale. She would appreciate any help you can offer. Her contact information is beholdashae@gmail.com or 914-608-481.

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#### A message to our customers

All of us at David Allen Bath Shop and M. Fraitag Plumbing & Heating hope that all Park Hill residents are staying safe and healthy during these trying times. We want to assure you that we're here for all of your plumbing repair and enhancements needs, and that we've exercised the utmost care when implementing COVID-19 precautions. Please call to make your next appointment in your home or in our show room today.





# HOULIHAN LAWRENCE

SINCE 1888

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Houlihan Lawrence Yonkers 55 East Grassy Sprain Road WEB: www.JaneMcAfee.com EMAIL: JMcAfee@HoulihanLawrence.com



Jane McAfee, Associate Real Estate Broker ABR, ASP, E-Pro, SFR, SRES, GREEN

Call or email me to get my "Good News in Yonkers" e-mail newsletter about all the good things happening in Yonkers.

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#### Park Hill Residents' Association Annual Dues

Dear Neighbors,

We are living in unprecedented times. The COVID-19 pandemic has upended our lives, as well as the economy, and it will be a long road to recovery. Having a strong Residents'

Association allows us to strengthen our community. The Park Hill Residents' Association Membership Plan is tiered, allowing members the flexibility to donate varying amounts in support of the ssociation's activities in the community. It takes a lot of hearts, minds, hands, and resources to make our events and initiatives happen. Please join us, volunteer, get involved, and send in your dues today.

The support you provide by joining PHRA brings these important benefits to the community:

- A large membership gives Park Hill a stronger voice with the City
- Financial support mantains three Park Hill gardens
- Printing and mailing of the Park Hill Reporter and other notices
- Liability insurance for the Board and for public gatherings
- Maintenance of the PHRA website and other social media platforms
- Sponsoring and organizing events that bring the community together, including the Rumsey Road Christmas tree lighting, annual meeting, tag sale, and cleanup events

This year the PHRA Board is working closely with our new councilperson, Tasha Diaz, to increase police presence and to address litter, speeding, parking, and safety. We will continue to publish the Park Hill Reporter and email you announcements on topics of interest. We respond to all individual inquiries and suggestions from our neighbors from our website (Parkhillyonkers.org).

Thank you for your support. We look forward to working with you over the coming year to help keep our community strong, safe, and resilient.

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#### PARK HILL RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

P. O. BOX 59 YONKERS, NY 10705 Presort Standard U. S. Postage PAID Permit # 5432 White Plains,NY



Mayor's Help Line 377-6000 Communication Office 377-6208 Public Works 377-6210 & -6269 Water Department 377-6100 Code Enforcement 366-6888 Parks Department 377-6425 Finance Department 377-6141 Website: yonkersny.gov

#### The Park Hill Reporter

A Publication of the

Park Hill Residents' Association
P.O. Box 59, Yonkers, NY 10705

parkhillyonkers@gmail.com
 www.parkhilyonkers.org

Articles, Photos and Advertising
parkhillyonkers@gmail.com

#### **PHRA Board of Directors**

Kathryn Buckley Claudia Espinoza Shantell James Hettie Jordan-Vilanova Martha Mercedes Marilee Scheuneman Wilson Terrero Mary Lou Vetrano Lucy Vigilant-Smith Jenifer Young

#### The Yonkers Land Conservancy, Inc.

P.O. Box 8 Yonkers, NY 10705 www.YonkersLandConservancy.org

Check the Park Hill website for upcoming events

www.parkhillyonkers.org