

PARKSIDE

HERMANN PARK CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER

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in the park

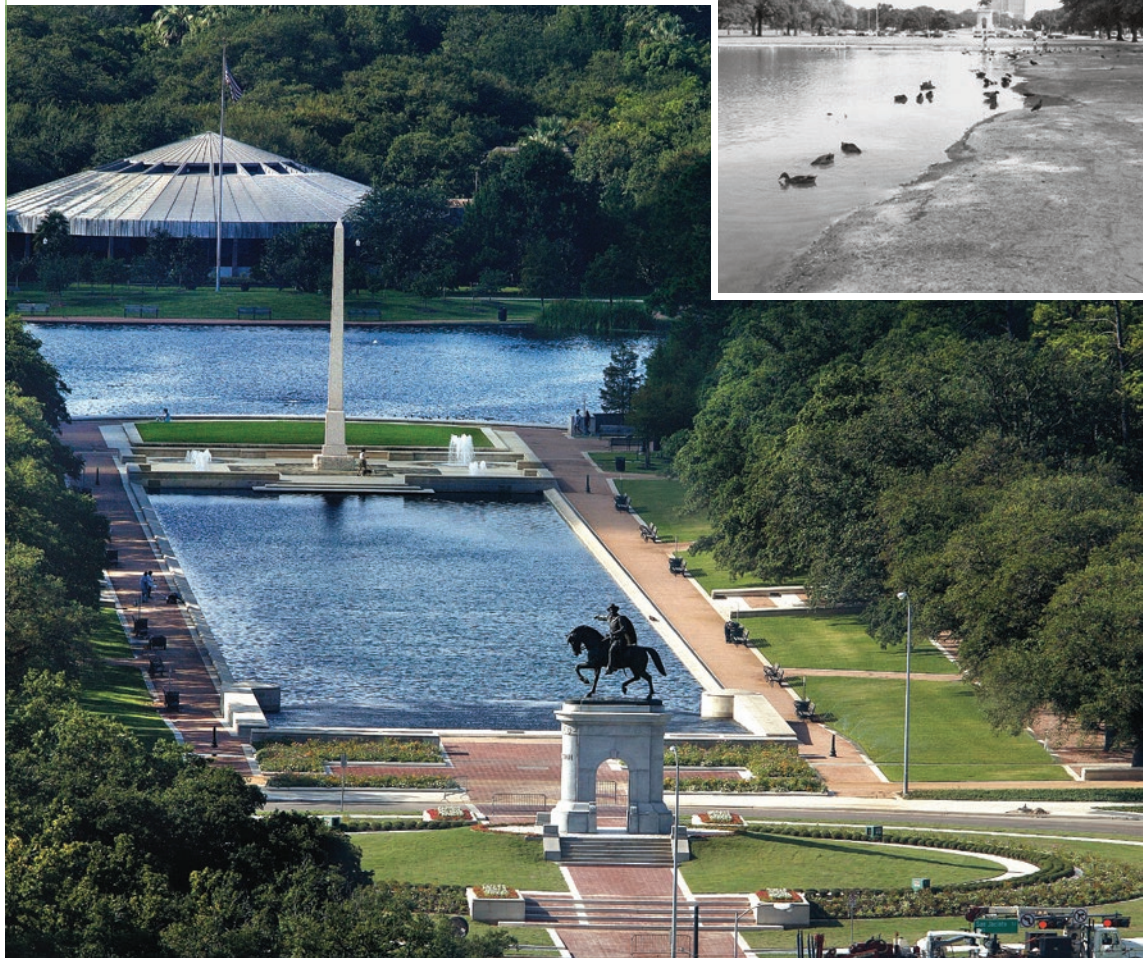
20 Years in the Making

Hermann Park looks great! For Houston natives and transplants alike it's what they've come to expect. The mud pit in the middle of the Park, shown below from the 1990s, is becoming a more distant memory.

Through the years, the Conservancy has been dedicated to making the Park healthier and more beautiful. To celebrate all that has been accomplished the last 20 years, we are sharing some before and after images. Take a stroll down memory lane with us!

And, it keeps getting better—the McWilliams Dog Park and the Commons are both under construction and opening in less than a year! Don't miss the sneak peek of the Commons construction on pages 6-7.

THE MARY GIBBS AND JESSE H. JONES REFLECTION POOL



MISSION

Hermann Park Conservancy is a citizens' organization dedicated to the stewardship and improvement of Hermann Park—today and for generations to come.



hermannpark.org

letter from the president



Doreen and her mom, Trouta Stoller, at Evening in the Park

The following is a transcript of Doreen's remarks from Evening in the Park, April 28, 2023, where she was honored for her 20 years of service.

It is hard to believe that it is possible for me to have been doing anything for 20 years. I was there when Chris Knapp paid Philip Cannon his finder's fee—a bottle of whiskey. Amortized over twenty years, I guess that was a fair fee.

Philip had sent my resume to the Friends of Hermann Park who were looking for an executive director who was "different." I had been in the tech industry doing strategic planning and one day found myself sitting in a room with a bunch of people going on and on about how the deal was going to benefit them and not the client. And I thought, "I am wasting my life".

As I was considering the opportunity, it was hearing the dozens of languages people spoke when I took a walk around McGovern Lake that convinced me that Houston deserved a vibrant public space to embrace our diverse community.

And now that diverse community is embracing the Park right back. We recently prepared a presentation for City Council and found that the Conservancy has received over 41,000 gifts of \$100 or less. And these gifts come from 151 zip codes of Houston's 178. So not only do people from all over the city use the Park, they support it, too.

When I was working on my remarks for tonight, Dan asked me to think about the most amazing or funny or odd things that have happened in the Park over the last twenty years. Well, I could fill up two hours with just what happened this week! But here's a pro tip—secure your cell phone when you go out in a pedal boat because, no we will NOT drain the lake if you drop it in and call our office. But if your first date was here by the Moroles sculpture, we will attach your "Will You Marry Me" banner to the little train and blow the whistle and cheer when you drop down on one knee. Learning how to run a railroad is just one of the many gifts of this job.

I am grateful for the Hermann Park Conservancy team who daily works with passion and commitment. I tell them regularly that because they came to work today, a family got to make a memory on the little train or a cancer patient found respite in the McGovern Centennial Gardens. Not every one can say that about their job. They have made these twenty years special and it is a daily gift to come to work with them. And I am so proud of the early employees who are now grown and have children of their own. My only disappointment is that despite my relentless badgering not a single one of them has allowed me to participate in a flash mob wedding proposal!

But relentless badgering is my super power. There used to be a giant slag pile along MacGregor called "Mt. MacGregor" and it took years of begging our public partners to help us remove it. On the glorious day it finally left the Park, Raouf Farid my friend at Harris County Flood Control joked that my gravestone would say "She moved a mountain." But during my tenure we have built the mount in the Centennial Gardens and are working on an extraordinary mountain for the play garden in the Commons. So I guess under my watch we are down one mountain, but up two.

I am grateful to everyone in this tent who has helped bring about the remarkable transformation in the Park including my board and advisory board

members some of whom are my closest friends. I love when you pass the baton for board service to your grown children. And I adore the photos you text me of your grandchildren on the train.

Like the multi-generations of people enjoying the Park, I have three generations of friends and family here tonight—including my mother, friends from high school, college, business school, church and my tech friends—even my book group. Your presence here tonight has made my heart full. Your presence these last twenty years has made my life full.

The reflection pool was the first construction project I worked on and its renovation is 18 years old. A whole generation has grown up expecting Hermann Park to be this glorious. They don't know about the mud pit that we used to slog through after rolling down Miller Hill and listening to the squishy sounds our sneakers made in the mud. But please take a minute to look at the beauty surrounding us and think of the role you have played and the magic you have created.

Michele recently overhead a young girl walking into the Gardens say, "I am so jealous of this place." You know what, so am I.

Doreen

LAKE PLAZA/KINDER STATION, continued from page 1



1998

2010

2004

Joe Aker

City Cam Aerial Photography

Scott Adams

What's Blooming?

Summer has arrived! Despite Houston's high temperatures, the McGovern Centennial Gardens are thriving thanks to the hard work and dedication of our horticulture staff. The team continuously monitors plant health throughout the Gardens to ensure our plants are receiving the proper care and a steady amount of nutrients. Resulting in bright and awe-inspiring blooms! On your next visit to the Gardens look out for the gorgeous Agastache 'Blue Fortune,' Coreopsis ssp. 'Tickseed,' Day Lilies sp. and Salvia.

It is through your generosity that we are able to continue this kind of meticulous care of the McGovern Centennial Gardens. To learn more about the McGovern Centennial Gardens or to help us keep the Garden flourishing, visit us at hermannpark.org/gardens.

Make sure to plan your visit to the McGovern Centennial Gardens this summer. Summer hours are from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Enjoy!



Blue Fortune
(Agastache)



Salvia



Daylilies



Tickseed
(Coreopsis Spp.)

DONORS

Play Your Park Campaign & The Commons

- \$2,500,000+**
Hildebrand Foundation
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Liyue Sigle

McGovern Centennial Gardens

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Marley Lott

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Sthree

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Motiva

Urban Green

- \$100–\$499**
Darla F. Miller
Kelly and Billy Reynolds
Christopher Young

HERMANN PARK CONSERVANCY



A New Connection with Hermann Park

Hermann Park Conservancy at its heart is a community organization dedicated to caring for the Park. Our members are a big part of that community!

The Conservancy's membership program is a way to become more connected to the work we do in the Park. As a member, your support makes a difference in this Park! And, you get to enjoy some special perks—free train rides on the second Saturday of each month, invitations to exclusive member events, and much more.

The Conservancy is excited for the openings of the McWilliams Dog Park and the Commons within the next year. We have some fun things planned for our members.

Join or renew your membership today so that you don't miss any updates or invitations!

hermannpark.org/membership

We have Liftoff! A sneak peek of the Commons

We have exciting updates on the Commons construction! In the last few months, major play structures arrived on-site and were expertly assembled by Forney Construction and a team from MONSTRUM, builders of the play structures. The play structures, including a Houston toad and rocket ship slide, will be nestled in a landscape that sparks fun and imaginative playtime.

Here are some snapshots of behind-the-scenes action!

Landscape architecture firm, **Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates**, developed the concepts and designs for the Play Gardens and structures.

The **rocket ship slide** stands as the tallest structure in the Commons, reaching over 50-feet tall!

After being constructed by **MONSTRUM**, a Denmark-based company, the play structures were carefully loaded on shipping containers for their journey to Houston's Hermann Park.

Space Adventure pays homage to Houston's remarkable history with manned spaceflight, and to the fondly remembered Rocket Ship slide in Hermann Park. The space capsule landing, a fun net climbing structure, being assembled.

Houston toad photos by Susanna Kartye

The **Houston toad** is designed for climbers ages 3-5 years.

The **Houston toad** features handholds and footholds, inside and outside, similar to a rock climbing wall.

While the big kids zoom around Space Adventure, the **Thicket** is for younger kids playing at a slower pace.

Toddlers, 6-18 months, can explore the **bright dragonflies and daisies**. Then, have a blast going down a mini-slide.



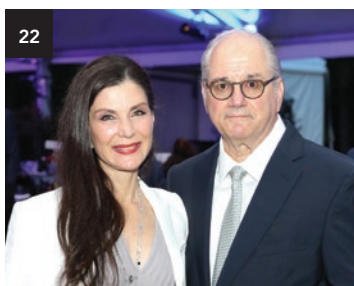
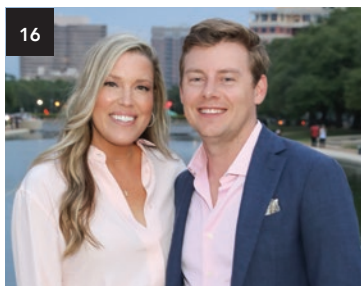
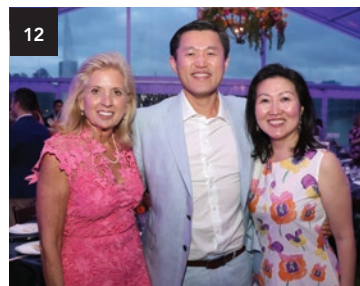
Uplifted Aerial Photography

Evening in the Park 2023

On Friday, April 28, 2023, Hermann Park Conservancy supporters and friends gathered in the heart of Hermann Park for our *Evening in the Park* gala to honor Conservancy president, **Doreen Stoller**, for her 20 years of service. Co-chairs **Y. Ping Sun and David Leebron** and **Phoebe and Bobby Tudor** worked diligently to ensure the gala would be a night of celebration for Doreen and appreciation for the extraordinary urban green space that is Hermann Park. The evening's events included a special musical performance and as Doreen took to the stage, a burst of confetti streamers surprised her and the enthusiastic crowd cheering her on and waving signs that proclaimed "Yay Doreen!" and "20 Years!". While the evening ended with a bit of downpour, it did not dampen the enjoyment.

Our deep appreciation to everyone that supported this special evening benefiting the Conservancy. The spring gala set a record by raising \$1 million for the care and improvement of Hermann Park.

Photos by Priscilla Dickson



1 Co-chairs David Leebron and Ping Sun 2 Co-chairs Phoebe and Bobby Tudor 3 Honoree Doreen Stoller and Dan Piette
 4 Anne and Albert Chao 5 Chris and Kristy Bradshaw 6 Ann Kennedy and Geoffrey Walker
 7 Doug Selman, Janet Clark, Doreen Stoller and Cathryn Selman 8 Peter and Fan Morris, Winnie Scheuer and Kevin Bonebrake
 9 Joe and Cathy Cleary, Anne Carl and Alicia Smith 10 Errol and Sharon McLaughlin and Roslyn Bazzelle Mitchell and Derrick Mitchell
 11 Laura and Brad McWilliams 12 Rebecca Mark-Jusbasche, Min and Maria Kim 13 Brigitte Kalai and Marian McClendon
 14 Peter and Kathleen Rodriguez 15 Heidi and Marcus Smith 16 Holly and Austin Alvis 17 Troy and Allison Thacker
 18 Kim and Dan Tutcher 19 Gary Smith and Jim Murdaugh 20 Paula and Reginald DesRoches 21 Divya and Chris Brown
 22 Cynthia and Anthony Petrello 23 Hallie Vanderhider and Bobby Dees 24 Demetra and Frank Jones
 25 Linda and Sara Kelly 26 Stephanie and Frank Tsuru 27 Sissy Kempner, Cece Fowler, Susie Criner and Denny Kempner
 28 Kristina Somerville and Ishwaria Subbiah 29 Alie Pruner and Judy Bouillion

A Little Rain Stopped No One!

A little rain didn't dampen the spirits of thousands of Houstonians attending **Kite Festival**, presented by **Kirkland & Ellis**, on Sunday, March 26. In addition to kite flying, attendees enjoyed a plethora of activities. These ranged from a kids' bubble party to engagement opportunities with some of Houston's beloved institutions and community organizations such as the **Houston Museum of Natural Science** and **Houston Landing**. We are grateful for the support of the 35 organizations represented this year!

Kite Festival



DONORS

Kite Festival

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DJ Mav Music

Houston First

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Evening in the Park Gala

All gifts in honor Doreen Stoller, honoree, and chairs Y. Ping Sun and David Leebron and Phoebe and Bobby Tudor

\$50,000-\$99,999

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Y. Ping Sun and David Leebron/
Phoebe and Bobby Tudor

\$25,000-\$49,999

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Hallie Vanderhider

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Anonymous

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Cece and Mack Fowler

Cherie and Jim Flores

Forney Construction

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H-E-B

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Ann and J. Kent Friedman

Kate and Steve Gibson

Kathy and Glen Gondo

HERMANN PARK CONSERVANCY

Kite Festival, continued



Hermann Park's Kite Festival began as a celebration of the Park's centennial in 2014 and now is one of the Park's most-loved annual events. A celebration of community, *Kite Festival* offers visitors an opportunity to enjoy a day in the Park while witnessing Houston's diversity.

Juan Ramon Amezcua Castellanos had the festival recommended to him by a friend. Juan frequents the Park in between his residency and studies in the Texas Medical Center. He was excited to learn about a free community event taking place just around the corner from where he works.

"It was my first time attending this festival and despite there being a little rain, I was able to enjoy myself with kite flying, speaking with the many organizations along the reflection pool

and watching the live performances," Amezcua Castellanos said. "I can only hope that next year the weather is a little better, but now I know for next time to bring some rain boots!"

For 8-year-old Arthur DeHoyos, the rain was the best part of the festival! Running down Miller Hill with his kite and splashing through the puddles, he couldn't have wished for a better day.

"I love getting wet while running down the hill," DeHoyos said. "I hope it rains next year too!"

Special thanks to this year's host committee, sponsors, volunteers, and community partners for making the day spectacular. We can't wait to see you next year!

Japan Team Back in Town!

Just over 30 years ago, world-renowned landscape architect Mr. Takeshi "Ken" Nakajima designed Hermann Park's Japanese Garden with traditional elements including sculpted planting, interconnected water features and use of natural materials. Over the years, the Houston climate and the Texas-style gardening techniques began impacting the Japanese Garden. This inspired the local Japanese community to organize the first trip of a design and landscape team from Japan in 2007, led by distinguished Japanese landscape designer Mr. Terunobu Nakai. They started the tradition of annual visits to provide direction and training to the Conservancy and Houston Parks and Recreation Department teams in order to preserve and properly care for the Japanese Garden.

Covid-19 forced a cancellation of the 2019 visit. Travel restrictions continued and a return trip wasn't possible until the beginning of this year—over four years since the team's last trip to Hermann Park. In January 2023, the Conservancy was delighted to welcome back the team for a two-week visit, now led by Mr. Hiroshi Iwasaki.

Caitlin Talkington, our landscape horticulture supervisor, was ecstatic for the opportunity to learn alongside our HPARD colleagues. "Learning from gardeners who spend a lifetime perfecting their craft has truly been a privilege," Talkington said. "We were able to watch as the team demonstrated the traditional craft and art of caretaking for the Japanese Garden."

Mr. Hiroshi Iwasaki (right) was a member of that first time team in 2007 and has joined the team every year along with his son, Taiki Iwasaki. Mr. Iwasaki shared, "To do such a special job, not only in Japan, but to be given a chance overseas in Houston is very honoring and we feel a responsibility to spread the culture of Japanese gardens. The Japanese Garden of Hermann Park is beloved by the locals, Japanese people, and staff of the Park, which is why we would like to contribute as much as possible and make the garden a welcoming place for everybody."



Before leaving Mr. Hiroshi Iwasaki shared, "In the gardening field, we believe creating and managing a Japanese Garden is a special job." The Conservancy staff couldn't agree more.

If you want to be part of the ongoing efforts to care for the Japanese Garden or looking to find more information, make sure to visit us at hermannpark.org/japanesegarden.

Evening in the Park Gala, continued

\$5,000-\$9,999

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Kenneth Bohan
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Ling and George Yang
Nancy Zefo and D. Keith Fernandez

\$500-\$999

Lary Barton
Jeff Beauchamp
Jereann H. Chaney
Dinah Chetrit and Rich Levy
Ellie Francisco
Amy and Blair Garrou – In memory of Allen N. Kee
Ed Harris

Volunteer Milestone



"It's as important as ever to have great public spaces in Houston and I'm happy to do my small part to keep Hermann Park one of the best places for folks to connect, reflect, play or do whatever else fits on any given day."



Hermann Park Conservancy is grateful for each and every volunteer that chooses to spend time supporting our team. Volunteers play a critical role in the upkeep and care of Hermann Park and their impact can be seen across the Park in lush garden beds, newly pruned trees and so much more. Since July 1, 2022, our volunteers have committed a total of 12,912 hours to the Park! In dollars, that's just over \$410,000.

Our volunteers have a diverse background. Some are hospital personnel, retirees, plant enthusiasts or students from local schools. No matter where our volunteers come from, the results of their effort to care for the Park are always the same—a healthy and beautiful place for our six million annual visitors.

Peter Tsan, a longtime Park visitor and advisory board member, has volunteered with the Conservancy since 2015. Recently, Tsan reached a new milestone by accumulating over 800 volunteer hours in the Park. Assisting Conservancy

horticulturalists with ongoing projects at least once a week, Tsan has found his time in the Park to be incredibly gratifying.

Tsan originally began volunteering at the Park as a way to "level up" his gardening skills. Now, eight years later, Tsan has invited friends and family to share the feeling of joy while volunteering in the Park.

"Sometimes it's nice to have a good conversation with friends while pulling weeds in the Rose Garden or to watch the ducklings and squirrels roam around while skimming the stream at the Japanese Garden," Tsan said. "At the end of the day, the biggest reward is seeing other people choosing to spend their time at the Park."

If you're interested in volunteering at Hermann Park email us at volunteer@hermannpark.org to learn about how you can join us in the office or out in the gardens!

Interested in team building opportunities with your organization or company? **Volunteer at Hermann Park!**

It takes teamwork to keep the Park beautiful and healthy for the over 6 million annual visitors who spend their days on our trails, gardens and play areas. To learn more about group volunteer opportunities at the Park, contact us at volunteer@hermannpark.org or at **713-524-5876**.



Evening in the Park Gala, continued

\$500-\$999
 Drs. Janet Kohlhasse and Steven Craig
 Takeshi Komatani
 Kathy Lord
 Layla and William Lumpkin
 Mona and Chris Menzel
 Terrylin G. Neale – In memory of Erin Gregory Neale and Lamar Gregory Neale
 Jim Nelson and Richard Lapin
 Katrina and Nick Peacock
 Shavonnah Roberts Schreiber
 C. Daniel Tighe
 Sharron and Dalton Tomlin
 Tootsies
 Cyvia Wolff
 Lorraine Wulfe

\$100-\$499
 Robin and Richard Brooks
 Louise and Riad Chehlaoui – In honor of Laura McWilliams
 Margaret Culbertson
 Peggy and Bert DuPont
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Save the Dates!



Anthony Rathbun

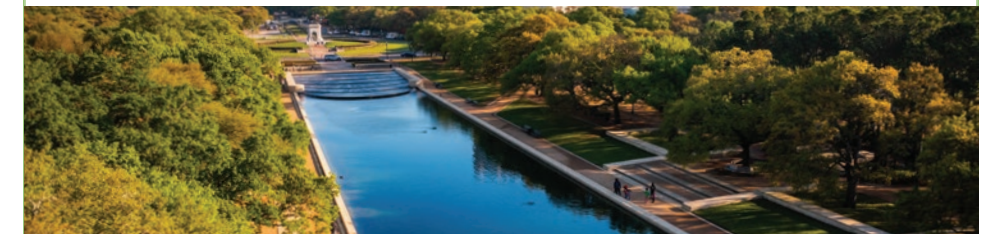
Saturday, October 21 Run in the Park
 Are you ready for the 20th annual Run in the Park? The October 21 event will feature a 5K, 10K, and 1K Kids' run under Hermann Park's shaded trails. At the finish line, participants will be greeted by a post-race party featuring music by DJ Mav, breakfast foods, drinks and more at Molly Ann Smith Plaza. Make sure to check hermannpark.org or follow us on social media @HermannPark to find the latest updates regarding Run in the Park! And, mark your calendar for Tuesday, August 15 when early-bird registration opens.

Saturday, November 4 Park to Port Bike Ride
 Experience a new view of Houston as you cruise 20-miles along the Brays Bayou Greenway Trail during the Park to Port bike ride. Beginning at Hermann Park's Bayou Parkland, you will journey toward the Port of Houston for a turn-around celebration. Then hop on your bike for the return ride back to Bayou Parkland for a post-ride celebration. Want the latest news regarding Park to Port? Visit us at hermannpark.org or follow us on social media @HermannPark.



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The George Hermann Society recognizes donors who have provided for the future of Hermann Park through bequests or life income gifts to Hermann Park Conservancy.



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