



Berkeley Partners For Parks

Fall/Winter 1998

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Park Celebrations

As brilliant sunshine angled through the fall leaves, a series of festive celebrations in parks throughout Berkeley marked the grand openings of projects completed this season. Thanks were offered to all whose enthusiastic efforts contributed to making the projects such big successes.

At San Pablo Park, friends and neighbors chipped in to help with construction of a new tot lot, greatly expanding the scope of the project. The San Pablo train and the hidden talk tubes are highlights. Sixty-third Street Mini-Park, in conjunction with design suggestions by park neighbors, has been completely rebuilt, bringing a new spirit to the block. Engineered wood fiber provides access to all facilities.

At the west end of Ohlone Park, a brand new tot lot has been installed whose creative design maximizes the usability of the available space. Resilient paving gives access to the climbing structure as well as the swing set. The area is extremely popular with local families who like to reserve the adjoining picnic tables for birthday parties. Relocation of the fence expands the usable area and enables families to play carefree on the grassy lawn.

The original plan for Oak Park, at the intersection of Domingo Avenue and El Camino Real, has at last been realized with a new pathway, irrigation lines, and landscaping. With an eye toward colorful blooms in the spring, neighbors have planted flower bulbs lining the trail. Volunteers have adopted sections of the park and will assist the Parks Department with weeding for the next few years until the landscaping matures.



Photograph by Stephen Swanson

*Two girls mix cement for a new play structure
at San Pablo Park*

The tot lot at Thousand Oaks is the first project sponsored by Berkeley Partners for Parks as part of the Play Area Matching Fund. Neighbors helped install seating atop the tot lot's circular edge, adding grace and usability. A ceremonial "throwing in of the sand toys" by all those in attendance was the perfect complement to the amazing, sunny fall day!

Virginia/McGee Totland received not only new play structures and picnic tables, but upgrades to their studio space and a rebuilt, accessible rest room. Weekend work parties this summer allowed the project budget to be stretched and the installation of additional amenities. The dedication celebration was highlighted by seasonal decorations, games, a puppet show, and a harvest potluck.

Congratulations and thanks to everyone who assisted with bringing these projects to fruition!

About Berkeley Partners for Parks

Berkeley Partners for Parks (BPPF) is a citywide non-profit devoted to supporting and developing parks, community gardens, and open spaces in Berkeley through encouraging citizen involvement and support. Since its incorporation as a nonprofit in 1994, BPPF has played an instrumental role in bringing additional funding and thousands of hours of volunteer labor ("sweat equity") to bear on improving Berkeley's parks, community gardens, and public landscaping. The participation of adopt-a-park groups working in partnership with the City and local businesses has led to improvements in dozens of parks and community gardens throughout the City of Berkeley.

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*BPPF is a nonprofit 501(c)3 corporation
(I.D. # 94-3228356) founded in 1994 to
support parks and open spaces in Berkeley.*

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Mini-Grants Awarded

Mini-grants to cover the cost of materials for community-sponsored improvements to Berkeley's park and open spaces originated in 1994 when Berkeley Partners for Parks made sure that 10% of the windfall PERS capital improvements fund was reserved to encourage neighborhood participation. Funded this year by a special Council allocation, Round Four mini-grants were awarded in October by the Parks & Recreation Commission. Landscaping projects are planned to beautify several parks from Aquatic Park to to the upper meadow of Codornices Park. Neighbors will undertake new plantings at Cedar Rose Park, Berkeley Way Mini-Park, Strawberry Creek Park Annex, and Antique Plaza, as well as "Far-away Island", where Grant Street meets Ohlone Park. New play structures will grace Columbus School, Dorothy Bolte Park, San Pablo Park, and Glendale-La Loma. Improved signage will appear at Ohlone Park, Strawberry Creek Park, and the Berkeley Rose Garden. Other park facilities funded are tables for Becky Temko Tot Park, chess tables at San Pablo Park, and a community mural at Totland. Sign up to assist with the efforts and watch as our parks blossom!

For information about future mini-grants, contact Brad Ricards, Landscape Architect, Parks & Waterfront Department (665-3455).

The President's Corner

Our unending gratitude goes to longtime BPPF Board member and immediate past president Nancy Carleton, who resigned her Board position in April. Her multiple talents, organizational skills, and tireless dedication to Berkeley's parks, community gardens, and open space have been crucial to successful projects throughout the City. As an appointee to the Parks & Recreation Commission, she will continue her efforts to expand funding for parks and build consensus around park improvements. Joining the Board is La Shaun Howard, whose unflagging efforts to rebuild 63rd Street Mini-Park resulted in a revitalized, accessible play area.



Thanks also go to Scott Boyer, whose proficiency put our books in a clearer format. Due to personal commitments, Scott has resigned as our treasurer, but his work was instrumental to our

financial health. Our books are in equally capable hands with Board member John Caner, a trustee of Friends of Willard Park, as our new treasurer. And taking on the responsibility of BPPF secretary is Stephen Swanson, whose work on behalf of Berkeley's parks is widely applauded. As Berkeley Partners for Parks begins another year, I encourage each of you to lend your assistance to strengthening our community's open space. Whether it be through financial contributions or participation in a project in your park, we welcome your support. Please consider a 1999 membership in BPPF to receive our regular newsletters and park calendars. We hope to announce soon discounts at local nurseries available to current members.

Mark Liolios, BPPF President

Adopt-a-Park Group News

Berkeley Partners for Parks extends a big thank you to Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Bay Area (RMHCBA), which has supported Berkeley's play areas with two separate grants. RMHCBA gave \$2500 for new play equipment at the recently opened tot lot at **Thousand Oaks Park**, and \$2500 for a tot house to be installed in spring of 1999 at **San Pablo Park**. BPPF applauds RMHCBA for its generosity and community-minded programs. We hope other businesses will follow RMHCBA's lead in the support of Berkeley's parks.

Neighbors have revived interest in the plot of land southeast of John Muir School where Domingo Avenue meets El Camino Real. A weedy hillside has been reclaimed as a true park for the neighborhood. Armed with a plan long buried in the City's files, **Friends of Oak Park** worked closely with staff of the Department of Parks & Waterfront to make the park a neighborhood showplace. The new trail and landscaping will soon be joined by additional street trees and a wooden sign at the entryway. To complement the new plantings, the nearby Claremont office of Prudential California Realty has offered to donate several large boulders along the pathway. For further information, contact Renee Redner at 548-7703.

Friends of César Chávez Park reports that the City Council voted October 6 to designate for a one-year trial period an area of nearly 17 acres in the undeveloped portion of the park as a place where people can legally walk with their dogs off-leash. The area — entirely east of the park's two most prominent hills — will be demarcated by fencing and straw bales and will be clearly signed with rules for usage. In addition, Council selected a 7-acre site in the park's northeast corner as a protected natural area. A 3-month study is underway to collect baseline data on current environmental conditions. The proposal will prohibit off-leash dogs on the perimeter trail and in the developed portions of the park. Grand opening of the off-leash area will likely be late this winter. If you would like to find out more, contact 704-0827.

The new tot lot at Thousand Oaks Park is officially open for play! The lot has already become a favorite meeting place for play groups and many new friendships have been formed among tots in the neighborhood who now have a "local hangout!" The **Thousand Oaks Park Society (TOPS)** wants to thank Berkeley Partners for Parks, the City of Berkeley, Berkeley Unified School District, and the many local businesses and park friends including Andronico's, Berkeley Hills Realty, Red Oak Realty, Ira and Carol Serkes/Remax Realtors, Ronald McDonald House Charities, Thousand Oaks Neighborhood Association, Zelda Bronstein, Sarah Butler, Nancy Carleton, Liana Thomason, G. J. Stillson-McDonnell, and the Swett Family for their generous support and contributions. Many, many volunteers were part of this effort, and to each and every one we extend a sincere thank you! New and returning park users have already voiced opinions on other park issues. To facilitate action on these ideas, the Thousand Oaks Park Society held a meeting on November 30 to discuss "phase two" of park improvements. Leave a message at (510) 526-5888 to get on our mailing list.



Mayor Shirley Dean joins Friends of a Berkeley Skatepark at the "How Berkeley Can You Be?" festival

The highlight of the season for **Friends of a Berkeley Skatepark** was the "How Berkeley Can You Be?" festival. We skated in the parade and at the festival site, as well as debuting our new much-admired t-shirts. In addition, the Berkeley Unified School District has given us a place to store our skateboard ramps. Call 548-1707.

The pedestrian/bicycle bridge over I-80 is undergoing detailed design work to create a magnificent steel arch linking Aquatic Park with the Bay Trail, Marina, and Eastshore State Park. Landscaped to blend into the parkland, the curvilinear, fully-accessible ramps will lead to landings at each end of the span and provide dramatic views. Grand opening will be the Fourth of July, 2000. At the same time, Caltrans will construct the Living Wall noise barrier — stacked earthen terraces planted with native vegetation — that will cut the sound of the freeway by 60% along the west side's rebuilt pedestrian trail. Mini-grants have been awarded to **Friends of Aquatic Park** for volunteers to install benches overlooking the Main Lagoon and to plant new

landscaping near the park's south entrance. Wish to participate? Call 549-0818.

Friends of Shorebird Park reports that the City Council has allocated \$15,000 to increase the size of the straw bale classroom building. Construction will hopefully take place in the spring. Call 644-8623 for further updates or to contribute to the building fund. The recently installed wooden play structure recycled from 63rd Street Mini-Park has been a big hit.

Friends of Totland reports that their new slide should be installed soon and two new bouncy toys are on order. Plans are moving forward for the Community Mural at Totland. The next meeting will be held on January 10. For further details, contact 524-4996.

The next meeting of **Berkeley Path Wanderers Association** will be held January 20th at 7:00 P.M. at the Live Oak Recreation Center at 1301 Shattuck Ave. Call 524-4517 or 524-0713.

To broaden the use of community gardens by neighbors, the **HopPer Commons Association** held a picnic on Sunday, September 20. The completed art projects were thrilling, most notably the Sunflower Gate by Amy Blackstone, the slate mural by Fran Segal, and the mosaic-covered Snake Benches by Dmitry Grudsky. Plans are underway to create an outdoor art showcase in these community gardens, where the work of local artists can be introduced to the wider community. Call 528-3035.

The **Poetry Garden at Arts Magnet School** has been adopted by an Ad Hoc Committee of Parents, Students, Friends, and Neighbors. Located at the corner of Milvia and Lincoln Streets, the garden sits opposite the site of Allen Ginsberg's cottage, where the Beat Poet wrote "Footnote" to "Howl" in the late 1950s. The garden will be devoted to poetry, outdoor sculpture, and horticultural study. Contact Steve Rosenbaum, project coordinator, at OHLone 4-3971 or e-mail him at srosenba@socrates.berkeley.edu.

Visitors to the Berkeley Rose Garden this year have seen many improvements and changes, thanks to the hard work of our recently appointed rosarian, Art Boado, and the many volunteer efforts of the **Friends of the Berkeley Rose Garden**. Three hundred new rose identification markers are completed and in place; the deer fence is finally installed; and the new garden entry and overlook has new benches, roses, and hillside plantings. The goal for the coming year is to continue the replacement of garden benches, to repair historic stone work, and with a parks mini-grant to revamp the Berkeley Rose Garden sign. The Parks & Recreation Commission has unanimously approved the Rose Garden Master Plan, which lists future capital improvements. Call 525-3005.

Friends of Dorothy Bolte Park have held two work parties, preparing for a new climbing wall, which will be installed along with a "Cozy Climber" in the next several months. A redwood barrier for the expanded play area will be complete in early December. A mini-grant will allow us to purchase new play equipment. Call 527-2556 with your ideas.

Help support Berkeley's parks, community gardens, and open space! Please give to Berkeley Partners for Parks, a 501(c)3 nonprofit. Make your check payable to BPPF. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law.

Name(s): _____ e-mail: _____

Address: _____ Fax: _____

City/State/Zip: _____ Phone: _____

- \$1-15 (low-income) \$50 (contributing partner) \$500 (benefactor partner)
- \$25 (individual partner) \$100 (supporting partner) \$1000 + (patron partner)
- \$35 (participating family) \$250 (business partner) Other: \$ _____

Contributors of \$50 or more are entitled to receive a complimentary T-shirt (natural color with BPPF's logo in forest green); if you are giving \$50 or more, please indicate your preferred T-shirt size: Large Extra Large

Please mail this form and your check to BPPF, P.O. Box 13673, Berkeley, CA 94712.