

By Shawn Folz
Press Release
April 19, 2021
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jennifer Hoppa, Fort Tryon Park Trust
Phone: (347) 865-5399
Email: jennifer.hoppa@forttryonparktrust.org
Website: <https://www.forttryonparktrust.org/>

“Fort Tryon Park Trust 85th Anniversary Film” PREMIERE on Thursday, April 22, 2021

Manhattan, NY — April 19, 2021: On Earth Day, the Fort Tryon Park Trust is releasing a short film to celebrate Fort Tryon Park’s 85th Anniversary Year and this National Landmark park’s impact on New Yorkers. The film tells the story of the park’s creation, its heyday, its decline following the fiscal crisis of the 1970s, and its resurgence through the work of the Fort Tryon Park Trust conservancy in partnership with NYC Parks. The park’s magnificent landscapes are showcased in the film, and contemporary and historical images transport the viewer through the parks 8+ decades. Park luminaries like current NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP and Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer share their deep appreciation for the park. Adrian Benepe, President of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, and Dr. Ruth Westheimer are featured, and convey how they formed the Fort Tryon Park Trust over 23 years ago to reclaim the park for present and future generations.

On October 12, 1935, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. gifted the completed park to the City of New York, and it has served as an oasis of immense beauty, respite, and recreation ever since. Fort Tryon Park is considered the last masterwork of the Olmsted Brothers firm, and its majestic Palisades and Hudson River views, topographic landscapes, abundant gardens, rusticated stone walls, and staircases together with varied recreational amenities, make it one of the most unique parks in all of New York City. It serves as a sanctuary for refreshment, play, inspiration, and creativity for uptown’s residents and international visitors. It’s also a special place for life’s milestones like quinceañeras, marriage proposals, wedding ceremonies, and memorials. Throughout the pandemic, the park has been a refuge for hope and healing.

“There is so much to celebrate about this outstanding park in its 85th Anniversary Year. It has welcomed diverse New Yorkers from all walks of life for more than eight decades, and enriched their lives as a beautiful oasis, a place of inspiration and a community sanctuary,” relayed Jeff Bauml, the Chairman of the Fort Tryon Park Trust, when asked about making the film. Fort Tryon Park Trust founding board member, Dr. Ruth Westheimer, says, “Guess what? Fort Tryon Park is almost as old as me, now that it is 85 years old. Our beloved park has been very important; not just to all generations, but to all kinds of refugees, like me. My hope is that everyone who watches the film will consider giving it an anniversary gift.” These and other important voices tell the story of Fort Tryon Park, a safe haven for all New Yorkers, and the role of the Tryon Park Trust in keeping it a celebrated open space for generations to come. “This film relays how this aging masterpiece of a public park needs growing support so that it continues to flourish for the public’s benefit. People can participate in protecting it by supporting the work of the Fort Tryon Park Trust.” – Jennifer Hoppa, Executive Director, Fort Tryon Park Trust

The Fort Tryon Park 85th Anniversary Film is a promotional film created by Writer/Director Michael Bridenstine, of Towhead Productions.

The film is available online:

<https://www.forttryonparktrust.org/85th-anniversary-film/>
Facebook & Instagram @forttryonparktrust

Additional Information about The Fort Tryon Park Trust

The Fort Tryon Park Trust is a nonprofit organization that supports the 67-acre Fort Tryon Park, by raising private funds for its ongoing care, targeted park upgrades, community engagement, and dynamic public programs to keep it a vital and celebrated open space. The Trust's mission is to preserve, protect, and enhance this historic and Scenic Landmark for all New Yorkers and visitors. The Fort Tryon Park Trust partners with NYC Parks in helping continue the revitalization of this unique public city park and in ensuring it receives the high level of care its unique features and extensive horticulture require.

Dr. Ruth Westheimer was catalytic in enlisting then Manhattan Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe to form a foundation, a conservancy for Fort Tryon Park, well over 23 years ago. The Trust's private funding has helped fuel extensive reclamation work in the park ever since.

Horticultural Restoration:

For the past 3 decades, the Fort Tryon Park Trust has worked alongside NYC Parks and key partners like the Greenacre Foundation, to help underwrite the ongoing restoration of the 3-acre Heather Garden, the largest garden with unrestricted public access in all of New York City. The Alpine Garden was also reclaimed after 4 decades of overgrowth, and was complemented by the installation of greeting gardens along the Broadway Promenade. The Trust also helps underwrite supplemental gardening staff to sustain these horticultural assets, as well as gardening tools, equipment, plant material, consultants, and horticultural supplies. The park's 4-dozen 100+ year old American elm trees get inoculated biennially, with Fort Tryon Park Trust funding, to help protect them from Dutch elm disease, as their canopy and shade are irreplaceable.

Park Infrastructure & Amenity Upgrades:

Working hand in glove with NYC Parks, the Trust's private funds help upgrade aging park features and amenities. The Margaret Corbin Plaza bluestone entrance to the park was restored by the Trust. Water service was installed along the Broadway side of the park to help support greeting gardens and the Alpine Garden, and historic drinking fountains were reinstalled. The Trust provided \$350,000 towards the \$3.1M reconstruction of the Jacob K. Javits Playground, a project that was completed in early 2020. During the past two years, private donations to the Fort Tryon Park Trust have resulted in the restoration of dozens of sections of the park's 9 miles of historic retaining walls - our "Fortify the Fort" fundraising campaign. The Trust is currently working with private funders and NYC Parks on the Billings Arcade Reclamation Project, to remove damaging invasive vines and execute slope and landscape restoration work along the park's oldest structure - a remnant of an estate that pre-dated the park.

Public Programming:

The Trust helps underwrite and provide over 300 dynamic, free, public programs, and events to help park visitors experience the park as a natural classroom, a performance space, an outdoor green gym, and a sanctuary for peace, protest, and celebration.

Park Stewardship:

The Trust engages and equips volunteers to connect to the earth and to actively participate in the ongoing care of their park, through multiple stewardship events each month.