

We're the Friends of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza

FALL 2004

GATEWAY TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND HOME TO THE KATHARINE HEPBURN GARDEN

A nonprofit community organization dedicated to park preservation and beautification

Gateway to the UN

Words under the entrance dome read "Gateway to the United Nations,"



but even if it weren't engraved in stone, historical precedent has long established Dag Hammarskjold Plaza as the UN's entry way. The land was ceded to the City in 1948 when the UN was being sited, and the park was dedicated to Dag Hammarskjold in 1961, after the UN secretary general died in a plane crash while on a peace mission to the Congo.

What had once been envisioned as a majestic boulevard, over time, became a neglected cobblestone plaza used mostly as a staging ground for UN demonstrations. In the 1980s, when Community Board 6 held public hearings to review a new design for the park, a vocal contingent insisted the proposed park not sacrifice demonstration space.

In August, 1999, the park reopened to the public following a long awaited \$4 million reconstruction.

The design by NYC Parks architect George Vellonakis provides a multi-use space that accommodates not only protestors, but performance groups (center collonade), exhibitions, a cafe, and casual visitors. The Plaza, with its vista of the UN and promenade lined with fountains, is reminiscent of European town squares, providing a common meeting ground.

One of the biggest challenges for Friends of DHP has been to accommodate the diversity of groups that use the Plaza and minimize the impact of mass gatherings. We think you'll agree, we all have a vested interest in preserving the park at a level befitting its stature as Gateway to the United Nations.



Your Membership Matters

Think Dag Hammarskjold Plaza takes care of itself?—or that the City does it? Think again. Even in boom times, the budget of the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has been slashed and slivered, leaving concerned citizens to come to the rescue. We raise the funds to clean the park's six fountains, plant its garden, pressure-wash the plaza and more. This year, we added hanging baskets (hay racks) to the plaza.

Consider that the DPR's budget decreased by 36 percent from \$258.5 million in 1990 to \$164.4 million in 2004, while its total staff was reduced by 60 percent. We only see uniformed park workers when there's an emergency.

So if you love parks, please show your support. At the same time, it's important to advocate increased public spending for all NYC parks.

This year, New Yorkers for Parks (NY4P), a citywide coalition of over 1,000 civic and economic development

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Living Memorial for 9/11

Since 2001, more than 2 million daffodil bulbs have been planted by volunteers in 1200 parks, playgrounds, schools, gardens and green spaces, including Dag Hammarskjold Plaza. Started as a living memorial for 9/11, the Daffodil Project has gained nationwide recognition for its wide-reaching community base and contribution to the revitalization of New York City. The classic daffodil is bright yellow, the color of remembrance. Daffodil bulbs are planted in fall for spring flowers.

COMING EVENTS

Oktoberfest: October 2 at Patio Cafe in Dag Park
Fundraiser: October 17 (see below)
Fall Parks Cleanup/Planting: date to be announced
Treelighting "Holiday Magic": date to be announced

Support Our Park

Friends of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza cordially invites you to

The World Bar

845 First Avenue at 48th Street &

The Trump World Tower

for Champagne,

Hors d'Oeuvres & Cocktails

Sunday, October 17, 2004

3 P.M. ~ 5 P.M.

\$50.00 Tax Deductible Contribution

RSVP Olga 212-969-8820

Please send checks/contributions to

Friends of DHP mailing address.

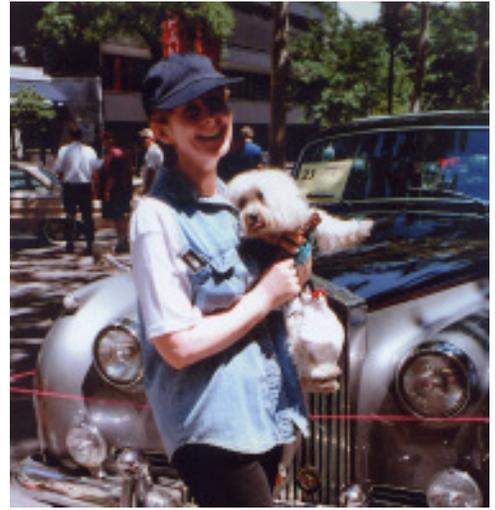
Your contributions help us to:

- Purchase plants for the garden;
- Pay for litter pickup and removal;
- Clean the six fountains;
- Pressure-wash the Plaza;
- Organize park events.

DAG HAMMARSKJOLD PLAZA IS LOCATED ON EAST 47TH STREET BETWEEN FIRST AND SECOND AVENUES, NEW YORK CITY
Friends of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza ~ 847 Second Avenue ~ NYC 10017 ~ 212-969-8820 ~ www.hammarskjoldplaza.org

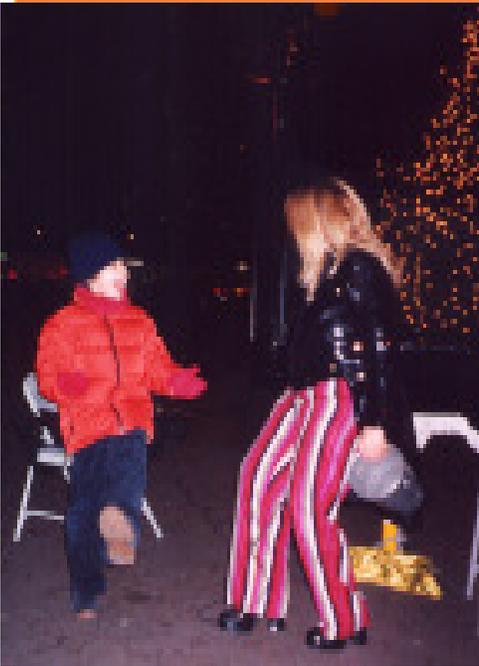


Friends of DHP President Michael Butler (far L) presents plaque to a proud winner.



The Empire Autorama (6/26/04), an exhibition of vintage autos now in its third year at Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, is a cooperative effort between Friends of DHP and the Lamda Car Club, organized by John Roulston-Bates during Pride Week. In the group photo, NYC Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe (second from left) with Friends' board members (L-R) Bob, Sherrill, Mike, and (front) Meryl. That's State Senator Liz Krueger wearing the hat. And a sunny day it was!

Holiday Magic and Mistletoe



The Sculpture Platform provides an ongoing display of public art. Here, "Octopus" by Gloria Kisch.



"Splendid Step" by Zigi Ben-Haim.

Night Out Against Crime, brought to Dag Park by the 17th Precinct Community Council and featuring our Men and Women in Blue!



Here's Jerry, a Friends director, found frequently in the garden. (right) Autumn joy...Follow the stepping stones and find quotations of Katharine Hepburn.

Fresh produce, dairy and baked goods at Greenmarket on Wednesdays...



We shall miss you, Kate. A good neighbor, Katharine Hepburn fought vigorously to defend the trees and charming character of Turtle Bay. In 1997, we dedicated our garden to her.

In Spring, we invite members to join us for the Katharine Hepburn Garden Party.

This year, at May gathering, we unveiled a bench from Hepburn's own garden, donated by her estate.



RIGHT PHOTO: (bench L front) Mary, chair of our garden committee, with directors (far R) Joan, Millie and (standing) Sherrill plus Friends members, Pat and pal. (back L-R) Friends advisor Gary Papish of CB6, park architect George Vellonakis and Bill Curtis, president of Turtle Bay Association (co-host), with Jerry and (hat) Mike, our president.

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groups, asked Mayor Michael Bloomberg to restore critical cuts to DPR made after 9/11 and allocate an additional \$20 million over the 2004 level of agency funding.

The 2005 NYC budget, passed in July, allocated \$201 million to the Department of Parks & Recreation. To his credit, Mayor Bloomberg has recognized parks as an important factor in the city's quality of life.

"Our sense of it is that the parks department has been treated like other agencies," Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe said, "where in the past, the parks department was cut disproportionately."

But lacking the powerful lobbying groups of other city agencies, the DPR is always hustling to make ends meet. Case in point: the continued privatization of park facilities and the increase of leased concessions within parks, plus those irksome park-use fees.

The DPR also depends heavily on the unskilled labor pool of welfare-to-work programs paid for by the Department of Human Resources, using federal and state money. Any drop in this

"We want to put the park workers back in the parks..."

funding is precarious because these workers do most of the raking, cleaning and painting. While the 2005 funding package will help restore crucial training for the welfare-to-work program and boost seasonal labor, the absence of professionally trained park staff remains the big problem.

"We want to put the park workers back in the parks," said Christian DePalermo, executive director of New Yorkers for Parks.

That has yet to happen. While the City has continued to acquire more park land, the money for operating the parks was never fully restored from the cutbacks of the previous recession in the early 1990s. The DPR's share of the city budget declined from 0.65 percent in 1991 to 0.52 percent in 2001. That's just half of one percent to operate a park

system of more than 28,000 acres, the largest in the U.S.! Trees require pruning, and lawns, gardens and fountains are high maintenance. Masonry, plumbing, electrical work all require skilled workers.

Central Park, which is funded primarily through private donations, has over 70 gardeners. Indeed, the City's flagship parks, Central Park and Bryant Park, no longer depend on the DPR for upkeep. The Central Park Conservancy provides more than 85 percent of Central Park's annual \$20 million operating budget. Bryant Park, with an annual budget of over \$3 million, is primarily supported by corporate property assessments within its Business Improvement District (BID).

To achieve a similar level of programming and upkeep, Dag Hammarskjold Plaza would require an annual budget of \$1 million. Help us get there. —Anne Saxon-Hersh "Lady Slipper"

Special thanks for the generous support of our nonprofit, government & corporate members: American Express, Greenacre Foundation, Ford Foundation, New York Community Trust, Turtle Bay Association, Patio Cafe, and Assemblyman Jonathan L. Bing.

"No Excuse" Concert

Friends of DHP member Shamina de Gonzaga conceived the 6-hour "No Excuse" concert and information fair in Dag Park (9-9-04) as a way to give individuals, especially youth, access to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) tackling global problems.

"With so much emphasis on terrorism and fear, I wanted to offer something positive...provide access to humanitarian groups and UN programs involved in the development effort, so anyone interested could make a direct connection...even if they never set foot in the UN," Shamina noted.

The event served as a complement to this year's United Nations DPI/NGO Conference, "Millennium Development Goals: Civil Society Take Action." Shamina is the first elected youth boardmember to serve on of the UN's NGO/DPI (Dept. of Public Information) Executive Committee.

In addition to the information component, the high-energy event featured live music, dance and theater introduced by MC Shorty Brown of MTV Australia.

FRIENDS OF DAG HAMMARSKJOLD PLAZA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit community organization whose sole mission is park beautification, preservation and vitality. Our volunteer activities include keeping Dag Hammarskjold Plaza clean and green and organizing events that foster community. As stewards of the park, we work in partnership with NYC Parks and Recreation, city officials and other organizations who share our commitment to public space. Membership is open to all who wish to share in our mission.

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Yes, I want to help. Count me in!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (home) _____

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email _____

Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation:

— Green Thumb \$25

— Conservationist \$50

— Benefactor \$100

— Guardian \$500

— Angel (\$1000 and above)

— OTHER \$_____

— I'm also willing to volunteer.

Please make checks payable to
Friends of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza
847 Second Avenue, #129
New York, NY 10017
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