



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

June 2, 2025

Dear Members and Friends,

In 2000, if you talked to the small group of East Siders who had just formed the Conservancy, I wonder if they would have predicted that their vision and hard work would have so much positive impact 25 years later. They have reason to be proud: their efforts on behalf of both parks revitalized both Blackstone Boulevard and Blackstone Park Conservation District.

In this 25th anniversary year, some aspects of the Conservancy have not changed since the beginning. We still work with our valued partners in the Parks Department and the City, and rely on essential support from members and volunteers. But with your help we have grown and accomplished much. New benches and trees in both parks, concerts and nature-based programming, a stronger-than-ever working relationship with the Parks Department, a gratifying increase in visitors who join us in caring for the parks, to name a few.

The challenges have been consistent too, with plot twists over time: erosion and damage due to a changing climate, wear-and-tear by visitors, threats from invasive species and plant diseases. We are addressing these challenges with an increased focus on long-term planning and, in the spirit of “it takes a village,” expanded partnerships with other environmental organizations.

Thanks to you, 2024 was a productive year. Inspired by our vision, Healthy urban green space for all, we were guided by a few priorities:

- ◆ Offer fun, free events that draw visitors into both parks. As a member, you receive advance notice of our events and a chance to sign up early.
- ◆ Build a sustainable future. In addition to ongoing efforts combating erosion and invasive plants, volunteers worked on longer-term projects such as re-shaping the southern “Boulevard Gateway” and re-forestation in Blackstone Park. Federal, state, and municipal support for these and other projects has been vital, as has member support.
- ◆ Cultivate healthier trees. We plan, plant, water, and supplement the work of our valued partners in the City of Providence Parks Department. On the Boulevard, we flagged dozens of small trees for special care, pruned small trees and shrubs, and monitored conditions. Watering young trees is a growing need: last fall’s severe drought boosted the 2024 tab to a whopping \$6,750. On this and other specialized tasks, we work with contractors, including Groundwork Rhode Island and Garden Time, two local nonprofits that train people in landscaping skills for re-entry into the workforce.

Please join us for our annual meeting, on Wednesday, June 18 at 5:30 PM at the Blackstone Boulevard Trolley Shelter, near Elmgrove Avenue—and stay for the season’s first concert!

Sincerely,

Carrie Drake, President

Projects and Progress in 2024

Blackstone Boulevard Park

- ◆ The popular Trolley Shelter summer concerts on the Boulevard featured five shows by favorite artists with an array of musical styles. Hundreds enjoyed the music, with some adding in a picnic dinner or dancing in the closed street. The series is partly funded with a State Senate Legislative Grant sponsored by Senator Sam Zurier.

- ◆ The Boulevard Gateway Project moved forward. This major redesign of the south end of Blackstone Boulevard will include improved stormwater management, safety, and park aesthetics. Planning work continued with funds from the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program, Councilwoman Helen Anthony, and the City of Providence. In the fall we were awarded next-phase "SWIG" funding from the Southeastern New England Program. The project is led by a coalition of environmental organizations, with vital support from City agencies, municipal leaders, and extensive community engagement.



- ◆ Tree care grew. In early summer, more than 50 small trees were flagged for special attention, including re-establishing tree pits with high-quality mulch that suppresses weeds and holds moisture. Regular monitoring continued through the growing season. Contractors began pruning older small trees, removing dead, diseased, damaged branches. Our five beeches were evaluated for beech leaf disease, and supplemental care was started.

- ◆ Pickup Sticks, two multi-week volunteer projects, in collaboration with the Parks Department, helped beautify the Boulevard, create mulch, and improve mowing safety.

- ◆ Contractors watered young trees. An extended fall drought led to a relatively steep expense of \$6,750. In the fall, contractors planted and cared for three new trees.



- ◆ A seasonal Boulevard Monitor was hired to monitor the Boulevard for watering and care issues.
- ◆ Volunteers cared for Boulevard gardens and picked up litter.

Blackstone Park Conservation District

- ◆ Nature Programming by the Education Committee featured year-round events, including a moonrise celebration, two RiverRides, guided nature walks, and birding. With 15 Minute Field trips, families explored educational activities and crafts in the popular long-running monthly series “Art and Science in the Park.”
- ◆ Entertainment included four Indian music concerts and a jazz concert, all held in Blackstone Field.
- ◆ Volunteers planted almost 50 new trees and shrubs in the ravine, with temporary protective fencing, with funding and guidance from the National Resource Conservation Service. NRCS also helped us with focused invasive species removal in the South Section.
- ◆ More than 175 volunteers worked more than 325 hours improving ecosystem health. They removed invasive plants, fixed trails, planted, cleared trash near the water, and more.
- ◆ Volunteer work events included 20 drop-in Park-Keepings, approved independent tasks, and team-building/service groups from Dimeo Construction, Stanford University’s “Beyond the Farm” program, Croft School, Lincoln School, Moses Brown, and Wheeler School, and Scout Troop #28. Temple Beth-El, Temple Emanu-El, and Congregation Beth-Sholom participated in our largest event, a massive shoreline cleanup for a “reverse Taschlich” contribution to The International Coastal Cleanup, co-hosted with Save The Bay. Our valued partners in the Parks Dept provided support for all events.
- ◆ Blackstone Field’s gathering spaces were spruced up for events and public enjoyment. The Children’s Circle was enhanced with an improved fence and replenished wood chips.
- ◆ We co-hosted an Earth Day invasive plant removal, clearing burning bush and bittersweet from a swath along Angell Street.
- ◆ Park maps and entrance signs were updated.



BLACKSTONE PARKS CONSERVANCY

P.O. Box 603141, Providence, RI 02906

Annual Financial Report, FY 2024

Assets January 1, 2024	127,672
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Income

Membership Contributions	45,013
Grants	3,268
Interest	2,034
Other	311

<i>Total Income</i>	50,625
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Expenses

Administrative	(17,674)
Contract work	(12,966)
IT, printing, mail, signage	(4,193)
Events and gifts	(420)
Licenses	(94)
Blackstone Park Conservation District	(20,286)
Blackstone Boulevard	(23,395)
Boulevard Concert Series	(7,353)
Education	(8,847)
Miscellaneous	(9,584)

<i>Total Expenses</i>	(87,140)
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<i>Net Result</i>	-36,515
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Assets December 31, 2024	91,157
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Thank you

Our heartfelt gratitude goes to the many individuals and organizations who gave advice, grants, and time to the Blackstone Parks Conservancy in 2023. We are also deeply indebted to our many generous members, listed in subsequent pages.

April Alix
Audubon Society of RI
Robertico Arias
Sue Anderbois, City Council
Helen Anthony, City Council
Audubon Society of RI
Dan Berard
Boulevard Tree Sponsors
Lt. William Brown, Providence Police Dept
Brian Byrnes
Classical High School Jazz and Rock Band
Congregation Beth Shalom
Sharon Carpentier
Don Cordner *
The Croft School
Sam Daganhardt, City Forester
Dimeo Construction Company
Harold Doran
Peggy Edwards
Wenley Ferguson
Greg Gerritt
Rabbi Emily Goldberg
John Goncalves, City Council
Joe Grady, Joe's Backyard Band
Melissa Guillet
Jasper and Joseph Hoefflerle
Anthony Hollingshead
Horsley Witten Group
Brian Johnson, BKJ Productions
Mahmood Karimi-Hakak
Wendy Klein
Kate Lacouture, Garden Time
Petros Linardos
The Lincoln School
Karen Longeteig*
Leo Major
Brad Marston
Sgt. Michael Martinous, Providence Police Dept
Helene Miller, Partnership for Prov. Parks
Miss Wensday
Moses Brown School
Narragansett Boat Club
Narragansett Bay Estuary Program
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Nickel Jukebox
Rabbi Preston Neimeiser
Wendy Nilsson, Supt. of Providence Parks
Park-Keepers
Joe Parillo, The New Ensemble
Partnership for Providence Parks
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Providence Community Library Special Collections
Providence Dept. of Parks & Recreation
Providence Dept. of Public Works
Providence Dept. of Planning
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Allan Raskin

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Bob Segal
Skyscrapers Inc
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Stone Cold Gypsies
Swan Point Cemetery
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Temple Beth-El
Temple Emanu-El
Kate Wells
The Wheeler School
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The Hon. Sam Zurier, RI Senate
*BPC Committee members



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Members

We are very grateful to our members who contributed between January 1st and December 31st, 2024.

Lifetime Members, \$1,000 and above

The O3 Fund
Kevin and Amy Orth
The Porter-Braden Fund
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 The Hon. Samuel and Mrs. Lauren Zurier



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