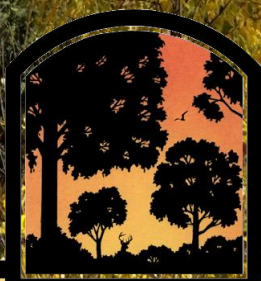


2021



CHESTNUT RIDGE
Conservancy

**Celebrating our most rewarding year
of accomplishments for the Park.**



Merry Christmas & Happy
New Year
From all of us at the
Chestnut Ridge Conservancy

Message from the Conservancy President

On behalf of the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy Board of Directors, welcome and thank you for being a part of our 2021 virtual celebration supporting the preservation and restoration of Chestnut Ridge Park.

We are delighted and immensely thankful to you for having chosen to support the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy in its mission.

Once again, with all the concerns governing COVID restrictions, we are offering \$25 dinner gift certificates for each individual 2021 virtual celebration ticket you purchase. Instead of all of us meeting at one location on a specific date to celebrate, we are giving you the option of choosing select area restaurants via the dinner gift certificates as a give back and thank you for your donation(s), for which you may use on your own date and time of choosing. This is our safe way of showing our appreciation for your support of the Conservancy.

In our 2021 commemorative booklet you will see pictures and read about our 2021 achievements for Chestnut Ridge Park as well as the Conservancy beginnings, our founding trustees, current board members the story and history of Chestnut Ridge Park. We hope you enjoy this keepsake.

Our future ability to support restoration and preservation efforts in Chestnut Ridge Park depends on your support. We can only do the good things we do for the park with your financial backing.

From all of us at the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy, again, our sincere thank you for your support and may you have a safe and healthy remainder of the year and coming year.

*Sincerely, Gordon M. Panek
President – Chestnut Ridge Conservancy*





*Celebrating eleven years of partnership
with the Erie County Department of
Parks, Recreation and Forestry for the
benefit of Chestnut Ridge Park.*



For that, we sincerely thank

- ❖ *County Executive Mark C. Poloncarz*
- ❖ *Commissioner of Parks Troy P. Schinzel*
- ❖ *County Legislator John J. Mills*
- ❖ *Park Superintendent J. J. Thomas*
- ❖ *The entire staff at Chestnut Ridge Park*

About the Conservancy, it's beginnings, and its future...

In an effort to assist the County of Erie in preserving and restoring Chestnut Ridge Park in the midst of budget cuts and rising expenses, a dedicated group of concerned citizens came together in 2008 to form the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy.

Officially incorporated in 2010 as a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization the Conservancy was established to support the restoration and preservation of the rich natural, recreational and historic resources that comprise Chestnut Ridge Park.

The Conservancy is a all volunteer organization comprised of a non-paid Board of Directors. The members of the Board work in partnership with Erie County Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry through a legal Memo of Understanding with Erie County. The Conservancy's funding stream is based on memberships, general donations and a once a year Gala fund raiser. Through the past years the Conservancy has accomplished some very notable achievements for Chestnut Ridge Park. See our achievements page.

As is the case with most not-for-profit organizations, funding new initiatives big or small remains a challenge. Today's Park perseveration and restoration projects whether they are big ones or smaller ones, cost a lot of money. Even simple stone work restoration can run into the tens of thousands of dollars.

The Conservancy remains committed to continue as a viably funded organization, to utilize its resources to help with occasional calling from the Erie County Parks Department on various restoration or preservation projects. Community support is essential for the Conservancy to remain as a viable funded organization.

The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy 2010 Original Board of Directors “Founding Trustees”

Chairman – Raymond Fabiniak (d)

President – John Bailey

Vice President – Ed Starosielec (d)

Treasurer – Jack Bertsch

Secretary – Justine LeFauve (d)

David M Buyers (d)

Marilyn Heim

Michael Merritt

Ronald J. Michnik

Michael Neumeister

Sincere thank you to those founding trustees who had played the key role in forming, incorporating and setting the wheels in motion for the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy and its mission. For those listed above (d) who have passed, may their memory live on with the organization they played their respective role in founding.

The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy 2021 Current Board of Directors

*President - Gordon M. Panek
Vice President – Ramona Lloyd
Treasurer – Barbara Hauser
Secretary – William Thornton*

Directors

Ron Michnik – Founding Trustee

*Troy Schinzel –
Commissioner of Parks*

*Liz Cash
James Lynch
Greg Meckes*

Toni Cudney

*Andy Gernold
Edward J. Murphy III
Jason Jaskula
Jim Hornung, Sr.
Tim Sands*

*Administrative Consultant – Herbert Schmidt
Playground Grant Consultant – Mary Simpson*



The Raymond A. Fabiniak Guardian Award 2021 Recipient - Gordon Panek

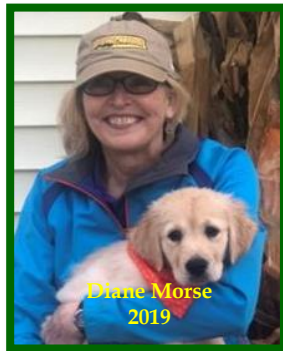
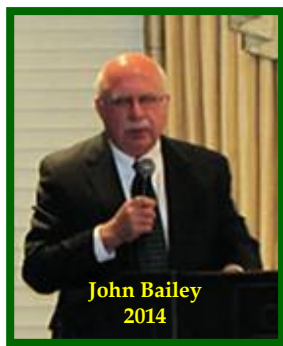
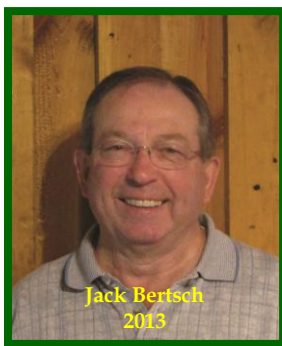
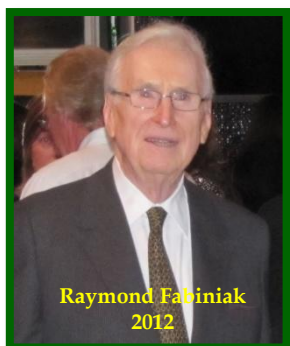


Each year, the Conservancy gives recognition to an individual who has given a considerable amount of their time and talents to the mission of the Conservancy for the good of Chestnut Ridge Park... This year the Conservancy's Board is awarding its distinguished Raymond A. Fabiniak Guardian Award to the Conservancy's current President, Gordon Panek for his past seven years of board service and four as President.

I am not generally the type of person who seeks the limelight, but sometimes our passions put us there. I've been a Chestnut Ridge Park regular since I was first taken there by my parents when I was five years old. The roaring fireplace, the winter trails, sled hill, toboggan runs and warming up in the casino with hot chocolate are memories indelibly etched in me like still framed pictures from a long time ago. When I grew older, the tennis courts and the robust tennis scene became my calling to the park and for the past thirty years I've spent a lot of my Spring, Summers and Falls at the park playing tennis, running tournaments and making new friends. Over the many years, I've run, hiked, played tennis, sledged, photographed sunsets, watch concerts and literally grew up along the way, so when I was invited out of the crowd by former President John Bailey to join the Conservancy's board, I thought how fitting to be a part of a community group that advocated for the well being of a park I've spent most of my life playing in. The experience at the Conservancy has given me the opportunity to be a part of some wonderful if not outstanding achievements for the Park and with pride I can say I played an important role. To my Board member colleagues, thank you for your kind recognition. Gordon M. Panek

Raymond A. Fabiniak Guardian and Benefactor Award Recipients

Each year Chestnut Ridge Conservancy Board of Directors selects an individual to award for their outstanding service, dedication and volunteerism to the Conservancy.



Accomplishments

- ✿ *A Playground for All - 2021 \$750,000* ✿
- ★ *Tennis courts lights replacement & relighting- 2021 \$29,000* ★
- ★ *Casino interior stone work - 2020 \$10,000* ★
- ★ *Casino floor refinishing - 2020 \$19,000* ★
- ★ *Eternal Frame trail head rest area - 2020 \$5,000* ★

2019 and Prior

- ★ *Casino murals restoration \$40,000* ★
- ★ *New park entrance signs \$29,000* ★
- ★ *Stonework restoration \$15,000* ★
- ★ *New wildflower garden \$10,000* ★
- ★ *Boy Scout Legacy 11 Project (Pier, Shelter & Bridge) \$7,500* ★
- ★ *New park benches & swing \$5,000* ★
- ★ *Tennis courts wind screens \$2,500* ★
- ★ *Fifteen Oak Tree Planting @ Eternal Flame Trail Head \$1,500* ★
- ★ *Tennis court benches \$500* ★
- ★ *Portable bicycle/sled racks \$3,000* ★
- ★ *Binocular viewer at casino \$1,200* ★
- ★ *Hamilton Ward memorial plaque \$1,200* ★
- ★ *Commissioner's cabin re-staining \$1,000* ★
- ★ *Blue Star memorial garden \$1,000* ★
- ★ *Dog waste collection stations \$1,000* ★

Event Sponsorships or Participations

- *The Chestnut Ridge Summer Classic Tennis Tournament* ●
 - *The United Way Day of Caring* ●
 - *Movie Night(s) on the Hill* ●
 - *The Orchard Park Art Festival* ●
 - *The Annual Kite Festival* ●
- *Chestnut Ridge Santa Land & Winter Fest* ●



The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy has accomplished an amazing list of achievements in the Park culminating in over \$1,000,000 spent on historic preservation, tree planting, beautification and improvements to the Park.

We are truly grateful. Chestnut Ridge Park has been part of many of our cherished family memories.

*Thank You Chestnut Ridge Conservancy!
Jim and Toni Cudney*

Chestnut Ridge Park

Excerpts from Erie County Park Commission booklet published 1939

“South easterly from Buffalo there is a gradual rise towards the foothills of the Allegheny Mountains in Pennsylvania. The first sharp rise in this direction from the gently sloping basin which surrounds Buffalo at the foot of Lake Erie has an elevation of about 1200 feet. It is about seven miles inland from Lake Erie. One of these ridges swings westerly to merge in the uplands on the eastern side of the Eighteen Mile Creek valley which extends southward. Along the crest of this ridge Erie County pioneers found many enormous chestnut trees and ever since that time, this section, as been known as Chestnut Ridge”

. With an overlooking panoramic vista of Lake Erie, the City of Buffalo, Village of Orchard Park and other towns now sits Chestnut Ridge Park, the crown jewel of Erie County’s Park System.

Chestnut Ridge Park consists of 1,213 acres of park land, originally named for the chestnut trees on its hills, it is currently the largest park operated by the Erie County Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry.

The Park property was acquired by Erie County in 1926, and it was one of the first parks established by the County. The park’s facilities and landscapes were improved substantially by the Works Progress Administration throughout the 1930s. The Park lands include some of the most beautiful natural scenery and vistas to be found anywhere in Western New York



Erie County Parks Commission

- *Established in 1924 to identify land in Erie County suitable for the establishing and developing a county parks system.*
- *Was an all-volunteer commission.*
- *Chestnut Ridge Park - originally 320 acres of land was purchased from the Grace, Graves, Zell, and Benning families. \$24,050 total paid for the land (\$75/acre)*
- *Upon his death, Hamilton Ward (pictured above) bequeathed another several hundred acres of land to Chestnut Ridge Park.*

Hamilton Ward, Jr. Monument Re-dedication - Spring 2022 Chestnut Ridge Park

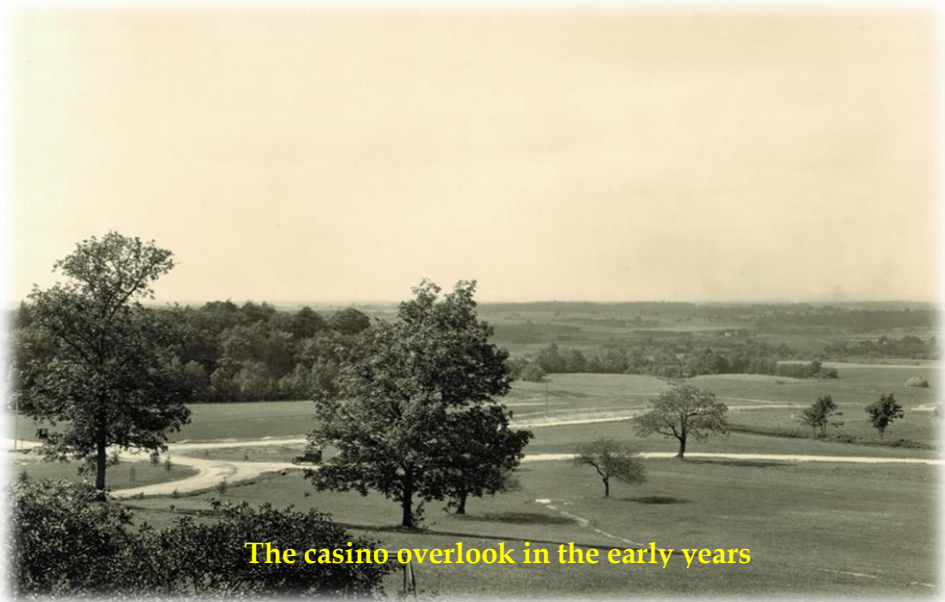
Dedicated to
HAMILTON WARD, JR.
(1871-1932)

A prominent Buffalonian and an ardent conservationist who was instrumental in the establishment and design of Chestnut Ridge Park in the 1920's.

Hamilton Ward Jr. also founded Allegany State Park, as well as the Erie County Parks Commission, vital in forming the first four county parks: Como Lake, Ellicott Creek, Emery, and Chestnut Ridge.

As a testament to his devotion to Chestnut Ridge Park, upon his death he bequeathed several hundred acres of his property to the county to become part of the park.





The casino overlook in the early years



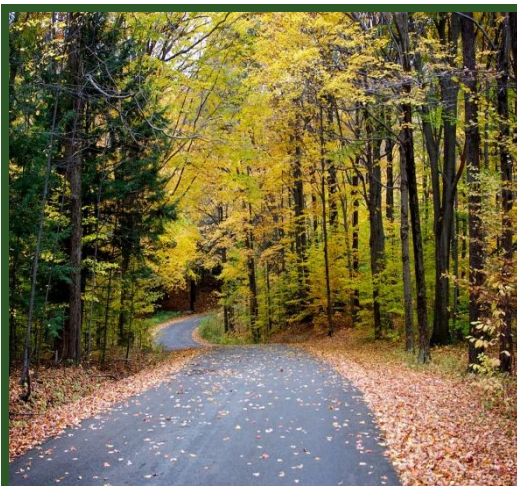
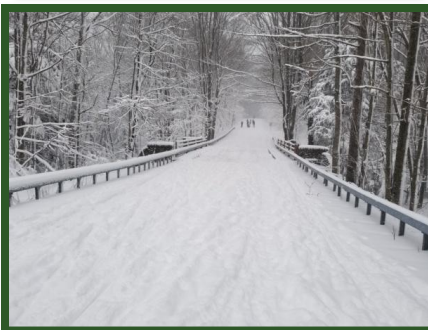
The casino overlook today

Things to see and do in Chestnut Ridge Park

With miles of walking, hiking, biking & running trails, unsurpassed scenic views, toboggan and sledding runs, twelve tournament tennis courts, disc golf, snowmobiling, cross country skiing, natural lake, fishing pier, picturesque casino with roaring fire places and café, numerous picnic shelters and larger event shelter and a brand new “state of the art” “Playground for All”.... Chestnut Ridge is the park for nearly any outdoor activity preference you may desire.

“Keep close to Nature’s heart... and break clear away, once in a while, and climb a mountain or spend a week in the woods. Wash your spirit clean.” – John Muir







2021



**Sponsors
Program Advertisers**

*West Herr of New York
Parkitects, Inc.*

Wendell Companies

Rodriguez Construction Company

Ilio Dipaolo Restaurant

Hamburg Brewing Company

Elbers Landscape, Inc.

XOAR Communications

Hofbrauhaus Buffalo

Brown & Stromecki Agency

Litwin Castle Insurance

Thomas Johnson, Inc.

Mark Cerrone, Inc.

DV Brown & Associates

Byrd House of Orchard Park

Try-It Distributors

Branch Managers, Inc.



Thank You to all our 2021 Commemorative Program Advertisers!

Please support our Gala Program Advertisers, their donations make our event a success.

A Buffalo, New York Tradition Since 1965



Specializing in Italian-American Cuisine, Steaks & Seafood

Dine-In • Take-Out • Gluten-Free Menu

Outdoor Courtyard Dining • Drop-Off & Off-Site Catering

Private Banquet Facilities

Ringside Lounge

Three Time Award Winning Wine List



3785 South Park Ave. Blasdell, NY 14219

716-825-3675

www.iliodipaolos.com

WEST HERR

NEW YORK

Proud to support

CHESTNUT RIDGE
Conservancy



*From Sales to Service, Parts, Collision and Accessories ...
it would be our pleasure to assist with
all your automotive needs.*

Proudly serving West Herr New Yorkers for over 71 years.

- ▶ 10,000+ New & Pre-Owned Vehicles Available 24/7
- ▶ 30 Convenient Sales Locations
- ▶ 29 Convenient Service Locations
- ▶ 5 Convenient Collision Center Locations
- ▶ Financing relationships with nearly every Bank, Credit Union & Lending Institution

New York State's Largest Vehicle Retailer

westherr.com





*In business for
over 80 years!*

**The Vukelic
Family & Try-It
Distributing Co. Inc.
Are Proud To
Support The
Chestnut Ridge
Conservancy**

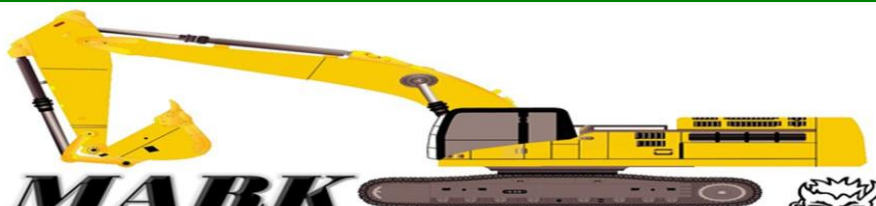


VISIT OUR WEBSITE
TRYITDIST.COM



Thomas Johnson Inc.

4196 South Taylor Road
Orchard Park, New York 14127
Phone: (716) 662-4575
Fax: (716) 662-5326



MARK
CERRONE  **INC.**

Safety and Quality First



LITWIN
CASTLE
INSURANCE

Jo Ann Litwin Clinton

jlitwin@litwincastle.com

4955 Chestnut Ridge Road
Orchard Park, NY 14127
716.662.2121 **ph**
716.662.1733 **fax**
716.228.2284 **cell**
www.litwincastle.com



HOFBRÄUHAUS BUFFALO

FOOD

BEER

EXPERIENCE

BLDG

GROUP SALES

Call Us: 716-939-BEER



190 Scott Street
Buffalo, NY 14204

BIER!

Noon-9pm (Sunday)
4pm-10pm (Mon-Thurs)
Noon-12am (Fri-Sat)

PRINTING • GRAPHIC DESIGN • COLOR COPIES • WIDE FORMAT PRINTING

B2B MARKETING • ENVELOPES • BUSINESS CARDS • LETTERHEADS

BROCHURES • NEWSLETTERS • ADVERTISING MAILERS

A BUFFALO BUSINESS SINCE 1987

XOAR

2799 Southwestern Blvd. • Suite 200 • Orchard Park, New York 14127 | 716.675.7766 | inbox@xoarcom.com

BRANCH MANAGERS, INC.



**For all
your tree
needs...
Give us a
call.**

(716) 662-6868

Before you can begin to build your future,
you need a strategy to

protect it.

Specializing in:

Financial Planning

- Fee-based
- Managed accounts
- Mutual funds
- Retirement
- Stocks, bonds, IRAs

Insurance Services

- Auto
- Business
- Disability
- Home
- Life



716-662-4461

4313 South Buffalo Street
Orchard Park, New York 14127
www.brown-stromecki.com

Contact us today to see how we can help
MAKE YOUR DREAMS BECOME A REALITY.

Securities offered through Registered Representatives of Cambridge Investment Research, Inc., a Broker/Dealer, Member FINRA/SIPC. Advisory services offered through Cambridge Investment Research Advisors, Inc., a Registered Investment Advisor. Brown & Stromecki Agency, Inc. and Cambridge are not affiliated. V.CIR.0819



BEST BURGER IN TOWN

"BYRD IS THE WORD...

PASS IT ON"

THE *Byrd* HOUSE

Homemade Soups
• *Lunch* • *Dinner Specials*

4190 N. Buffalo St., Orchard Park
662-3909



HAMBURG
Brewing Company

**FRESH LOCAL
BEER
LIVE MUSIC**



6553 BOSTON STATE RD.
HAMBURG, NY 14075



HAMBURGBREWING.COM

Conservancy Milestones New Tennis Court Lighting

With the Conservancy funding the restoration of the tennis court lighting, for the first time in twenty five years, Chestnut Ridge Park's tennis courts have been given some new "start of the art" lighting. This was a three year project in the making requiring the re-running of electrical conduit across the parking lot, retrenching the wiring to the posts, installing electrical control panels and adding eighteen new 500 watt LED fixtures. None of this project was easy to accomplish. The Conservancy is very grateful to Erie County Parks not only for its approval of the restoration project but also for the critical help needed in the conduit re-trenching and main circuit breaker hookups. With Chestnut Ridge Park now hosting several Community tennis tournaments and the USTA Championships as well as other junior programming and extended evening court time for the local tennis playing community, this project has been a very welcome restoration achievement for Chestnut Ridge Park.





USTA

EASTERN

CHESTNUT RIDGE
Conservancy

USTA EASTERN SUPPORTS THE CHESTNUT RIDGE CONSERVANCY

**CHESTNUT RIDGE PARK IS THE HOME
OF USTA WESTERN REGION
CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Get out and play...

- Youth Programs
- Adult Advancing Leagues
- Play in the Park Social Leagues



Chestnut Ridge Park Tennis Courts Re-lighting



Working together to restore and preserve
Chestnut Ridge Park



After a twenty-five-year shut down, the Chestnut Ridge Tennis courts once again have operational lighting as an added amenity for Summer Tennis Play!

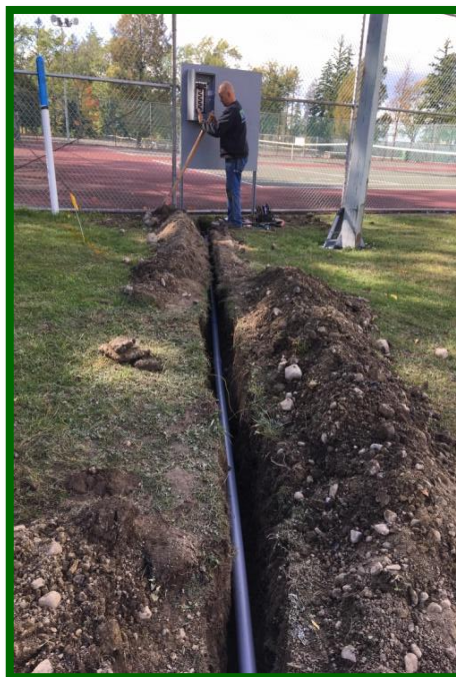
The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy together with the Erie County Parks Department secured the funding and resources to re-wire and replace the upper four courts light fixtures with new "state of the art" 500 watt led sports lights illuminating the Ridge Courts like never before. It's amazing to see the courts so well lighted. All for you to enjoy!



Official lighting and Opening Day - May 15, 2021



"Lights On" Round Robin winners!





A Playground for All

Our 2021 Signature Achievement!

It all began in 2015 with an idea and a discussion about funding the replacement of some of the aging play equipment in Chestnut Ridge Park with new and inclusive play equipment. Fast forward to 2019, Erie County Park's approval of a CRC plan for a significant brand new "all inclusive playground" and the hiring of a playground fund raiser by the name of Mary Simpson, we ultimately became successful in landing some very big funding \$\$ late in 2020 from the Junior League of Buffalo & Mrs. Ruth Shoemaker of Orchard Park. Many others organizations, businesses and individual donators throughout 2020 and 2021 saw the value and worthiness of the project and also gave significant donations getting us to the fully funded level in 2021 to begin the process of ordering the playground equipment and hiring the architectural firm to do the excavation & installation construction planning. See our next page for who all our main partners were and for all those who had so graciously given to support this special project.



Our partners and key players for the “Playground for All”

It should not go without saying who our main partners, vendors and key personnel were throughout the long process.

Erie County Department of Parks, Recreation & Forestry

Commissioner Troy P. Schinzel

Upon giving us their approval of the project, The Parks Department became our most significant partner for lining up the needed County resources, site preparation labor, construction meetings, and additional financial support to help drive the project to its successful completion.

Parkitects, Inc.

Ben Frasier - Playground Project Manager

Our playground designer/consultant, equipment vendor and overall playground project manager. Their skillful staff guided us through the project from start to finish.

Wendell Architects & Engineers, Inc.

David Kenyon - Senior Landscape Architect

Our highly recommended architectural firm who was responsible for drawing up the many iterations of site excavation and site preparation (construction) plans.

Rodriguez Construction Group, Inc.

Kevin G. Maxwell - VP Construction

Erie County's Park construction project vendor of choice who so adeptly excavated, re-graded and prepared the site for the installation of the all important rubberized base.

Rodriguez Construction also handled all the sidewalk installations, archway sign stonework, fencing and landscaping.

Community Build Volunteers

Hundreds of people and groups who donated their time, hard work and efforts on two full days in late August to assemble and place in position all the playground equipment, saved the Conservancy a significant amount of cost versus a vendor provided installation.

Thank you volunteers of M & T Bank, Junior League of Buffalo, DV Brown & Associates,

Rodriguez Construction, Erie County Parks Staff, Kiwanis Club, Chestnut Ridge Conservancy, Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz, Commissioner Troy Schinzel and so many more good people!

And finally a very special thank you to **Mary Simpson**, our esteemed playground consultant, grant writer & fund raiser for her counsel, her many hours of letter writing, proposals, presentations, funding source communications, board updates and community build coordination. The playground would not have happened without her efforts!

In recognition of the generous donations of many who financially set the wheels in motion for the playground.



**The Shoemaker
Family Trust
Ruth Shoemaker**

**The Bertsch
Charitable Trust**


**THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF
BUFFALO**
Women building better communities®

Shawn & Amy Connelly
Ms. Judith Travers
In memory of Debra Scheider


**Ralph C. Wilson, Jr.
Legacy Funds**
At the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo

**The Margaret L. Wendt
Foundation**



**American
Legion
Post 567**



Wegmans

J Mills Distribution Co. - "The Deli People"

[BN]
THE BUFFALO NEWS

Lawley

INSURANCE | EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

 **POLYMER
CONVERSIONS**



TOPS
Friendly Markets

PROUD TO SUPPORT
**CHESTNUT RIDGE
CONSERVANCY**



LANDSCAPE SERVICE, INC

2900 Main Street • Buffalo, New York 14214

716-834-2167

www.elberslandscape.com



**We are proud to support the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy
and its ongoing contributions to our community**



The Difference Is Making One



The Initial Excavation of the Playground Area



RCG is proud to support
the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy
and their achievement on opening
"A Playground For All"



A Playground For
All-Sitework



www.rodriguez-cg.com | 716.464.3257 | info@rodriguez-cg.com



“PLAY is the highest form of research.”

- Albert Einstein

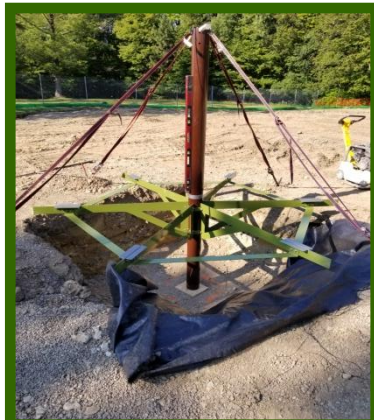
Wendel is thankful to have been part of the collaborative effort that resulted in the “Playground For All.” **COME OUT AND PLAY!**



architecture
engineering
energy efficiency
construction management

877.293.6335 | wendelcompanies.com

Laying the Foundations





Parkitects

PEOPLE ■ PARKS ■ PLAY

Guiding community imagination from design to reality.

Proud project manager of the "Playground for All" at Chestnut Ridge.

The Amazing People of Community Build Days!







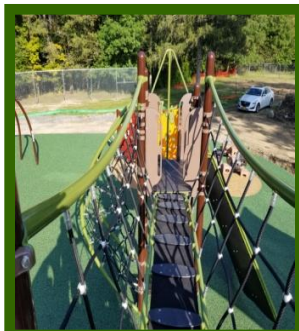




*Our heartfelt
gratitude to all who
had helped make
this herculean
project a reality.
We salute you.
Thank you!*



The Awesome Finished Product!



A Playground For All

GRAND OPENING CELEBRATION

Friday, October 22 • 11AM
CHESTNUT RIDGE PARK



CHESTNUT RIDGE
Conservancy

erie.gov/parks • chestnutridgeconservancy.org



Chestnut Ridge Conservancy event sponsorships and Community Outreach



BPO Concerts



Tennis Tournaments



Movie Nights on the Hill



Rock Painting at the Orchard Park Art Festival





Annual Kite Festival & Pumpkin painting



Santa Land and Winter Festival

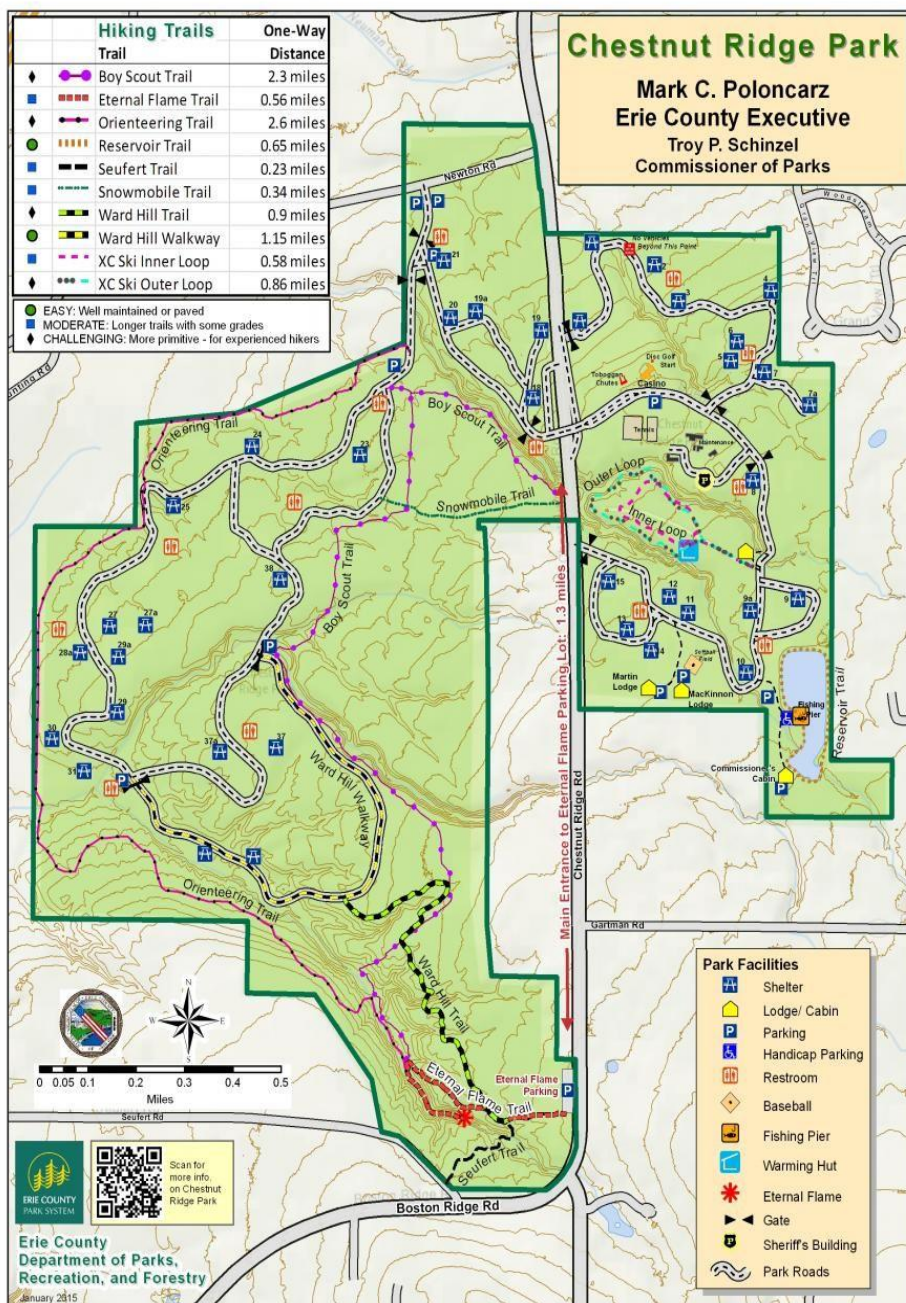


Artify the Park

United Way Days of Caring

For over six years, in the month of August, the Conservancy has been working with M & T bank and a number of their outstanding volunteers to do painting, maintenance and cleanup work at Chestnut Ridge Park on the "United Way Day of Caring". Ron Michnik, the CRC's only remaining founding trustee has been the lead coordinator between M & T bank and the Parks Department on this yearly effort. So much has been done for the benefit of Chestnut ridge Park and we thank Ron Michnik, the many M & T Bank volunteers and the Erie County Parks department for working so well together and devoting their time!





**Dedicated to the Preservation and
Restoration of Chestnut Ridge Park**



CHESTNUT RIDGE
Conservancy

ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org

P.O. Box 1376

Orchard Park, NY 14127