



Friends of the Burchfield Nature & Art Center

2020 Annual Report

October 2019 – September 2020

Friends of the Burchfield Nature and Art Center - Mission Statement:
Serve community interests in art, recreation, music, history and nature
by providing a welcoming and educational facility.

We Came Together

The BNAC volunteers began their year encouraging people to Come Together. In October 2019, **Sunday Fun Day** featured a Pups in the Park parade, a doggie costume contest, crafts for kids and refreshments. The culmination of the day was the announcement of the winner of the **Wonder Book Raffle**. The **Annual Photo Contest** was displayed at the West Seneca Community Center from October to November with winners and prizes announced at a reception in October. The **Holiday Open House** in December attracted families for a day of games, crafts, conversation and refreshments. Families also enjoyed the annual **February Fun Day** with a variety of activities.

Representatives from the BNAC shared information at a meeting of the Lancaster Women's Civic Club in February 2020. Volunteers helped at the West Seneca Youth Engaged in Service 2019 Halloween party in October and Breakfast with Santa in December. During December, the BNAC was a collection site for "Snacks for Soldiers". Boxes of snacks were sent to the Matthew Glab Post to be distributed to troops.

In February 2020, the BNAC Volunteers proudly accepted the West Seneca Chamber of Commerce **Community Service Organization of the Year Award** recognizing the work that they have done for the community.



Hand In Hand

COVID In 2020 Brings New Challenges

The BNAC Volunteers had a full schedule of activities and events planned for the year 2020. When COVID-19 restrictions and precautions were put in place starting in March, changes had to be made. In April, **Earth Day** park clean-up was cancelled. **The Buffalo Creek Treaty Commemoration Ceremony**, the **Spring Tea Party**, **Discover the Park Day**, six **Wonderful Wednesday** crafts on the patio, four **Summer Concerts**, the **Enchanted Forest** family event, the **Wonder Book Raffle**, and **Sunday Funday** all had to be cancelled for public wellbeing and safety.

As early as March, BNAC volunteers began working from home to help visitors appreciate the park. Facebook postings encouraged people to enjoy the park in different ways like looking for specific features, listening to the sounds, and exploring art in nature. Noting that the park was becoming crowded, volunteers worked with the Town Recreation Department to create a series of 17 **Discover West Seneca Activity Sheets** that encouraged people to explore other parks in town, their neighborhood, and even their backyard. Bad weather days were also accommodated with activities that could be done at home, including arts and crafts activities and quizzes. The BNAC website included a Discover West Seneca page that made all the ideas and information available with a click.



Make It Take It craft kits

As restrictions eased, volunteers returned to the classroom in July and began making **Take It and Make It Craft kits**. The kits were made available in the classroom, on a rope line outside building, and at the Town Community Center. By the end of October, over 2,000 kits had been given away. Thanks to a generous donor, 40 bird houses were made available for people to decorate and hang in their yards. The classroom and the outdoor Information Box were sources for scavenger hunt sheets, maps, and brochures about Charles Burchfield, local history, trees, birds, and butterflies. An Eagle Scout project installed cement blocks with nature symbols to create a **Woodlands Adventure** that included a guide sheet. When the Erie County Fair was cancelled, the BNAC created an **Imagination Fair** that included activity areas throughout the park that families enjoyed for 2 weeks. The Imagination Fair included a Prize Line that allowed children to take home something special. The **Little Library** was a popular feature with people donating and borrowing hundreds of books. Rock painting enthusiasts and Pokemon players were frequent visitors.



Woodlands Adventure

Garden maintenance got off to a slow start, but flower beds were tended and planters filled with flowers. The perennial gardens throughout the park put on a beautiful show for over 7 months.

Volunteers trimmed and removed trees to keep the park safe. Boy Scout Troop 416 used 15 tons of donated gravel to restore paths. Artist Frank O'Connor and his assistant Jennifer, worked on the limb sculpture "Sinisteria" brightening the paint and adding new features. This sculpture has become a park centerpiece. Art features such as sculptures and Burchfield placards drew more attention as people spent more time in the park. Musicians brought instruments and their voices to the park and provided small impromptu performances.



"Sinisteria" sculpture

The BNAC Facebook page and Web page became a source of information for many people. Facebook was used to promote activities in West Seneca including those sponsored by local churches, community service organizations, the Historical Society, businesses, and the Recreation Department. Park visitors were happy to have access to



Decorative Planters

information about local parks, activities, and lists of local restaurants. The Facebook page was also used to make people aware of online activities and information available from a variety of sources such as Burchfield Penney, Lincoln Center, local libraries, and Erie County Senior Services. The popularity of the park was boosted by local media such as the Buffalo News, the Bee, the Front Page, the Sun, WGRZ and Spectrum News.

Volunteers were available 3-4 days a week to provide information and activity ideas. They worked in small safe groups in the limited space of the classroom. This allowed the preparation of the Take It and Make It kits and the organization of other activities such as weddings that were scheduled and accommodated in the park. For safety, volunteers also frequently worked from home preparing materials and maintaining correspondence. *This*

year, volunteers donated over 2,000 hours. The BNAC volunteers assure this unique facility remains a point of pride for the Town of West Seneca.

A Community That Works Together

The Burchfield volunteers are grateful to many groups and individuals who helped maintain and improve the park.

The Town Building and Grounds and Highway Department have maintained the grounds, cleaned the buildings and repaired and prevented tree damage. Local Boy Scout troops 416 completed Eagle Scout projects including the installation of the Woodlands Adventure, the repair of the park introduction sign, and graveling of about ½ of the park paths. They also installed an **Information Box** and built a kid-friendly picnic table. The West Seneca Woman's Club tended the rose garden keeping the weeds under control. Local students provided community service to help with gardens and to keep the trails clear. SASI Day Program came to the park weekly to pick up litter, rake, and clean the Adventure disks.



Eagle Scout Project

The Town of West Seneca Recreation Department coordinated efforts with BNAC volunteers to create the Discover West Seneca project. They also used their social media to share that project and other activities in the park. Youth Engaged in Service provided help with special events during the fall and winter months. Members of the West Seneca Town Board and the West Seneca Chamber of Commerce have provided support and assistance throughout the year.

Over the past 10 years the BNAC volunteers have served as guardians of the facility. In that time, the number of visitors has steadily increased. The year 2020 dramatically pointed out the need for and appreciation of the Burchfield Nature and Art Center in our community. Plans to repair the building will enable the return of art exhibits and expand the space available to the community. The BNAC volunteers are prepared to make West Seneca a place noted for access to and appreciation for art, nature, history and music.

