



“Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in.” - author unknown

Burchfield Nature and Art Center’s volunteers continue to bring people together to meet our mission of serving the community’s appreciation of art, nature, recreation, music, and history in a welcoming and educational facility. **From October 2020 through December 2021 over 3,300 volunteer hours have been donated to this mission and over 47,000 hours since 2010.**



BNAC Volunteers Persist Despite COVID Challenges

As COVID-19 restrictions and precautions continued, the BNAC volunteers found ways to offer programs and activities that visitors could safely enjoy.

Take It and Make It craft kits included the materials to make a work of art. Volunteers prepared all the materials for crafts that encouraged creativity and sharing. Since July 2020, over 7,700 of these packets were given out at the park, the West Seneca Library, Night Out, the Farmer’s Market and the Community Tree Lighting. The BNAC Facebook and website provided a variety of activity sheets and informational brochures. Those resources were also available to visitors in the park so they could take nature hikes, find historic information, identify birds and trees, and explore attractions that are available in the park.

In July and August 2021, **Wonderful Wednesday** returned to the patio area. There were crafts, games, chalk art and bubbles for families to enjoy. The Carnival Kids Steel Drum Orchestra performed. Rain drops didn’t dampen the fun of this event sponsored by the West Seneca Rotary. Fourteen Holy Helpers Parish also brought music to the park by sponsoring a performance by John Paul Von Arx.

In September, **Sunday Fun Day** featured a Pups in the Park dog parade, crafts for kids and refreshments. There were also displays featuring wildlife and pet adoption.

Each December a special mailbox has been set up for children to send letters to Santa. The volunteers helped Santa respond to over 130 letters.

The BNAC volunteers believe in reaching out and supporting our community. A collection of gifts and funds was made to the West Seneca Cares effort. Over 700 handwritten Friendship Notes were created and sent to veterans, nursing homes and Meals on Wheels to let people know someone cares. The volunteers helped 18 couples schedule their weddings in the park and provided guidance for others interested in using the park or classroom for group gatherings.

Promoting the BNAC and West Seneca is an important part of accomplishing our mission. Volunteers are available 3-4 days a week at the BNAC building to provide information. Our Facebook page now has over 4,000 followers and over 5,300 check ins. The Facebook page encourages people to visit, provides information about activities and updates people about changes at the park. This page is also used to promote events and activities sponsored by other groups in West Seneca. The BNAC website provides updates on activities, resource material and offers a picture filled description of the Center. Informational tables were set up at West Seneca Night Out and the Farmers Market to keep the public informed about the BNAC. We have also received a great deal of attention from the media helping to promote the park. The Sun, the Bee and the Buffalo News have provided coverage. Social media also plays an important part of promotion. The facility has excellent ratings on Google, Trip Advisor and Yelp. Websites like Buffalo Rising, WNY Family Magazine, Step Out Buffalo, I Love NY, Visit Buffalo Niagara, Kids Out and About and YouTube have included information and positive reviews about the BNAC. The formation of the Charles Burchfield Gardenville Historic District by the Chamber of Commerce will help make people more aware of the rich history of this area.

The Wonders of Nature

The gardens and parklands attract thousands of visitors every year. Efforts continue to maintain native species and keep the park attractive and environmentally friendly. Trees and shrubs have been planted to replace hundreds of trees lost to the emerald ash borer. Years of nurturing produced an overwhelming number of milkweed plants this year. The butterflies flourished. Every day brings a new experience as different trees and perennial flowers take their turn blooming from March through October. Fall brings on a bounty of color. Native wildlife is plentiful and a greater variety of birds have been visible. This natural habitat is thriving.



A Community That Works Together

At the Burchfield Nature and Art Center there is always something that can be created, enhanced, improved or repaired. We are fortunate to have community support to help meet these challenges.

Boy Scout Troops have completed a variety of projects since October 2020. Troop 483 spent an evening cleaning up litter in the spring. Troop 616 built and delivered 4 new picnic tables. They also worked with the United Way of Buffalo and Erie County to install a Born Learning Trail. A recent project by this troop planted trees, installed benches on the gazebo and cleared dead wood to create a natural barrier along the creek bank. Troop 416 made improvements in the Seneca Nation Treaty Commemoration area. The addition of a sign about the Seneca Nation clans made this area more educational.



Artist Frank O'Connor and his assistant Jennifer have repainted and extended the limb sculpture Sinisteria. Signage was added to the work of art which has become a local landmark. The colorful sculpture is a presence and attraction through all seasons.

SASI Day Program continued their work in the park this year by picking up litter, raking, weeding and caring for special features in the park. Local students also helped with clearing trails, gardening and craft packets.

The BNAC Adopt-A-Garden program was supported by West Seneca Woman's Club, Hunt Real Estate ERA (West Seneca Branch), Grow Buffalo Business and Sherry and Bill Bauer. The groups took on larger garden segments that they cleaned up, improved and tended throughout the summer and fall.

Although we could not safely bring large groups together for the annual Earth Day park clean-up, we supported and promoted local efforts to take part in earth friendly activities. Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper completed a shoreline clean up along the creek in June 2021.

The Town Building and Grounds and Highway Departments have been very busy in the park this year mowing grass, cleaning buildings and keeping the grounds safe. Mother Nature provided some incredible challenges by blowing down trees and flooding areas of the park.

The past 2 years dramatically pointed out the value of the Burchfield Nature and Art Center in our community. The Town's current plans to restore the gallery and conference area of the building will enable the return of art exhibits, activities, 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.



For a Power Point version of this report please go to BurchfieldNAC.org or Facebook page [BurchfieldNAC](https://www.facebook.com/BurchfieldNAC)