



Volunteers for Springfield Park Inc



*2nd Annual Luncheon
&*

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS CEREMONY

Saturday May 13, 2023

Maintaining and Improving Springfield Park

To Volunteer

917.538.2674 or VFSP.org

About VFSP

Volunteers for Springfield Park, Inc., VFSP, was initially organized under the leaderships of Veronica Bellan, Fay D. Hill, and Gennie Vann three dedicated women who saw the need to restore our park.

The organization has grown to include board members Greg Hudson, Curlene Nelson, Stacey Osbourne, Jean Melvin, and Darlene Hudson.

Volunteers for Springfield Park, Inc., was then established in 2015 as a non-for-profit organization with their 501(c)(3) status.

VFSP has led the group to improve and maintain the conditions of Springfield Park by partnering with businesses, schools, churches, and neighbors. They started a flower garden, attended Partnerships for Parks workshops, worked on grant applications for better equipment, and they all worked together for the importance and beautician of the park.

With the assistance of City Parks Foundation's Summer Stage and local elected officials, VFSP co-hosted several concerts in the park. VFSP also tried to recruit young residents to teach them about the importance of park stewardship and maintaining Springfield Park for years to come.

Throughout the year they organized several park clean ups (It's My Park Day) including planting daffodils, annuals as well as painting our park benches, overpass rails, light poles and raking leaves. VFSP's highlight for the year is the annual "Holiday Tree Lighting".

Volunteers for Springfield Park Inc has grown to a board membership of six members, and we are looking for more volunteers to help us in the effort to achieve their goals and the quality of life in Springfield Gardens.



BOARD MEMBERS

Veronica Bellan

Stacey Osbourne

Fay D. Hill

Jean Melvin

Gregory Hudson

Darlene Hudson

Curlene Nelson

Volunteers For Springfield Park Inc.

Program

Welcome and Introduction, Event Chair.....Gregory Hudson

Greetings and Introduction of M.C.Fay D. Hill

Mistress of Ceremony.....Gail Lewis

National Anthem (U.S.A)All

Negro National Anthem.....All

Keynote Speaker.....Jackie Langsam,
Queens Parks Commissioner

Invocation.....Dr. Norma B. Mapp

Recognition of Distinguished Guest & Organizations.....Stacey Osbourne

Guest Speaker.....Khaleel Anderson
New York State Assemblyman, District 31

Special Tribute.....Fay D. Hill

Instrumental Tribute..... Bill Risbrook

LUNCH IS SERVED

Slide Show
Curlene Nelson

A SPECIAL AWARD PRESENTATION

(Unsung Hero)

Instrumental Tribute to Awardees.....Bill Risbrook

Recognition of Board Members and Volunteers.....Selvena N. Brooks-Powers
City Council District 31

Vote of ThanksGregory Hudson

From: The Desk of Fay D. Hill

District Leader - ASSEMBLY District 31B

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OUR AWARD NOMINEES

On behalf of the Volunteers for Springfield Park, Inc., and one of their founding members, I would like to congratulate you all unsung heroes and (s)heroes for your outstanding community work.

Your hard work, volunteerism and accomplishments in the Springfield Gardens and surrounding communities of Southeast Queens are remarkable. It is my most humble and gratitude to award you on your outstanding work and commitments for your communities to improve the quality of life as well as improving your neighborhoods.

May God continue to bless you all as you move forward in your continued efforts in obtaining your goals.



Springfield Park is named after the surrounding neighborhood of Springfield Gardens which was originally known as "Spring Fields" because of its system of natural ponds and creeks. These resources proved attractive to Dutch settlers, who first arrived in the 1640s. The irrigation system they created was used initially to supply water for crops and later incorporated into the city's water system, until the ponds became polluted. By 1700 Spring Fields was a small farm hamlet composed of a number of scattered homes assembled around dirt roads. In the mid-1800s all of southeastern Queens contained only about 2,000 residents, and because of its sparse population it suffered from a lack of basic services, such as sewers and utilities.

What had been a lack of community services for the residents of Spring Fields in the early 1900s was remedied when the Long Island Railroad built a station here, causing an impressive real estate boom. By 1924 Spring Fields' population of 5,000 was living in about 1,200 single family homes. Dozens of additional streets were built during the 1920s and 1930s, as were hundreds of houses, causing the population to increase to approximately 15,000 by the late 1930s. The Post Office renamed the area 'Springfield Gardens' in 1927, and the Long Island Railroad renamed their station accordingly shortly thereafter.

The New York City Department of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity acquired this land, enclosed by Springfield Boulevard to the east, 145th Road to the north and 183rd Street to the west, in the late 19th century. In 1932, the construction of the Springfield Boulevard sewer destroyed the pond, which the city filled in for use as the site of this park. In 1964 a resolution adopted by the City Board of Estimate assigned full rights to Parks over former water supply lands, including Springfield Park.

The park has survived changing attitudes of zoning and land use, including a proposal by the city in 1970 to convert the park into an industrial complex. Jamaica Assembly Member Guy R. Brewer and community associations successfully lobbied for the maintenance of the park as a recreational area.

In June 1999, an \$867,000 reconstruction of a playground within the park on the corner of 147th Avenue and 184th Street, sponsored by Councilmember Juanita E. Watkins, was completed. Springfield Park currently contains two full-size basketball courts, two baseball diamonds, two tennis courts, swings, a spray shower, play equipment with safety surfacing, benches, a flagpole with a yardarm, and a central pond with two bridges.

The Star-Spangled Banner

John Stafford Smith

Oh, say, can you see
By the dawn's early light
What so proudly we hail'd
At the twilight's last gleaming?

Whose broad stripes and bright stars
Through the perilous fight
O'er the ramparts we watch'd
Were so gallantly streaming?

And the rocket's red glare
The bombs bursting in air
Gave proof through the night
That our flag was still there

O say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free
And the home of the brave?

Lift Every Voice and Sing

James Weldon Johnson

Lift every voice and sing,
'Til earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on 'til victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers died.
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
'Til now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who has by Thy might
Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,
Lest our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,
May we forever stand,
True to our God,
True to our native land.



VOLUNTEERS FOR SPRINGFIELD PARK, INC.

P.O. Box 301295
JAMAICA, NY 11430

Board Members

Veronica Bellan
Fay Hill
Gregory Hudson
Curlene Nelson
Stacey Osbourne
Darlene Hudson
Jean Melvin

MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING SPRINGFIELD PARK

718.527.3678

FAY45HILL@GMAIL.COM

WWW.VFSP.ORG

Volunteers for Springfield Park, Inc. organized in 2013 and in January 2015 became a non-for-profit organization.

Mission Statement: *The Volunteers for Springfield are a committed group of unified and dedicated volunteer individuals working together to improved and maintain the condition of Springfield Park by partnering with businesses, schools, churches and neighbors.*

The organization started out with only three dedicated volunteer members and at present our board consist of seven dedicated community members.

The organization has accomplished many projects in the park, just to state a few. Springfield Park was in a deplorable condition for several years and the volunteers has done many restorations of the ground. We have planted gardens and do many projects with Partnership for Parks for several years, e.g., "Its My Park Day" where we have reach out to the community at large to do several park clean-ups during the years and plant daffodils bulbs ready for the early spring seasons and beautify the flower beds.

AWESOME PROJECT: Holiday flair for a nearly forgotten park in Queens

We Support Those Who Care



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VFSP**



Nelson Computer Learning Academy

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AWESOME PROJECT: Holiday flair for a nearly forgotten park in Queens



What does it take to revitalize a forgotten park?

Near and dear to many of our board members these last nine years is the revitalization work taking place at **Springfield Park**. It's a public space that almost fell through the cracks, but is making a big comeback, thanks to the efforts of volunteers like our board members, local students as well local officials and non-profit organization **Partnerships for Parks**.

Springfield Park is a small park like Central Park in Springfield Gardens! Beautiful lake, beautiful flowerbeds. We have seen couples come around and take pictures for wedding albums, graduating students taking pictures in the graduating gowns by our restored flower beds.



DONOVAN RICHARDS
President

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PRESIDENT OF THE BOROUGH OF QUEENS
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May 13, 2023

Fay D. Hill
Executive Director/Secretary
Volunteers of Springfield Park
P.O. Box 301295
Jamaica, NY 11430

Greetings to you and to all the members, friends and supporters of Volunteers for Springfield Park on the occasion of this esteemed organization's 2nd Annual Luncheon and Community Service Awards Ceremony.

Today's event gives us a great opportunity to celebrate the success Volunteers for Springfield Park has had in maintaining and improving Springfield Park, a true 23.5-acre gem of a park located in Springfield Gardens, Queens.

It is also gives us a great opportunity to salute today's distinguished honorees, who are being recognized for their many contributions to the community. On behalf of the 2.4 million residents of Queens, "The World's Borough," I therefore extend our heartfelt congratulations and thanks to Darlene Hudson, Alecia Abraham, Orah Charles, Oma Deonarine, Dr. Roxanne "Simone" Lord, Mel Vail Jr., Sheila Dawson, Rachael Gibbs, and Tiffany Sampson.

I hope all those in attendance at today's 2nd Annual Luncheon and Community Service Awards Ceremony have an enjoyable time. I also wish you and everyone associated with Volunteers for Springfield Park continued success in your dedicated efforts to make Springfield Park the best it can possibly be.

Sincerely,

Donovan Richards Jr.
President
Borough of Queens

Digging in the Dirt at Springfield Park

The Benefits of Gardening

Increased exercise - A busy day in the garden can be a good form of exercise. While tending a garden, you perform functional movement that mimics whole body exercise. You perform squats and lunges while weeding. Carrying bags of mulch and other supplies works large muscle groups. Digging, raking, and using a push mower can be physically intense activities.

Time in nature - Going outdoors is good for your physical and mental health. People tend to breathe deeper when outside. This helps to clear out the lungs, improves digestion, improves immune response, and increases oxygen levels in the blood. Spending time outdoors has been shown to reduce heart rate and muscle tension. Sunlight lowers blood pressure and increases vitamin D levels.

Reduced stress levels - Nearly all forms of exercise can reduce stress including gardening. It's been shown to lighten mood and lower levels of stress and anxiety. It's very gratifying to plant, tend, harvest, and share your own food. Routines provide structure to our day and are linked to improved mental health. Gardening routines, like watering and weeding, can create a soothing rhythm to ease stress.

Social connection - Gardening brings people together and strengthens social connections.

The gardening community is rich with people willing to share their expertise, time and occasionally plants with new gardeners. Master gardeners are local volunteers dedicated to educating and empowering fellow gardeners. Community garden plots bring together people with diverse backgrounds to work on a common goal. Many gardening friendships begin by celebrating a success or bemoaning a gardening misstep.

Social connections are important because they help lower stress, improve resilience, and provide support during difficult times in life. A strong sense of belonging lowers your risk of depression, anxiety, and suicide.

<https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/dig-into-the-benefits-of-gardening>

Lets Garden!
VFSP.ORG



Testimonial



There are so many ways you can better yourself and your community, why not volunteer. Volunteering allows you to see your efforts make a difference. It will bring you pride and joy to walk around your neighborhood, knowing that you contributed to the changes. When driving or walking through different areas, look and say to yourself, why can't we have that in our neighborhood, what do we need to do to have that, and then challenged yourself to make it happen...volunteer.

I have been involved with Volunteers for the past three years. My husband and I adopted an area that we maintain with our own funding. We've planted rose bushes, azaleas, and daffodils to name a few. Mulch and water rocks complete the area.

The week after thanksgiving each year, I start the process of preparing the park tree for our Christmas tree lighting. The tree is pruned, and the area prepared for the lighting that takes place on the second Wednesday in December. Local community leaders are invited as well as neighbors and friends.

Volunteers have given me an opportunity to give back to a community in a small way. As we continue to grow and expand our wings, I hope that the community continues to enjoy the park and all it has to offer and continue to support volunteers in our efforts to maintain a healthy and safe environment.

Congratulations
to
Volunteers of Springfield Park
And this year's Honorees

From



New Style Entertainment, Inc.

Friends of Springfield Park, Queens - Annette Olivia Brown - Author

It was a summer day. A friend, who lived a few blocks away from me, led the way in our afternoon excursion. Our respective bicycles were, at the time, reflective of each rider. I rode a second hand mountain bike that was gifted to me. The bicycle got the job done, however, the scrapes and dull sheen highlighted multiple journeys and kinks in the tough exterior. My friend's bicycle had a dainty basket perched on the handlebars, large wheels and a shiny, 'I just arrived look.'

I wanted to experience a slightly different scenic route on this day. "You can lead the way this time" I quipped. We meandered and turned around roads that I, honestly, had not walked or driven on before. I was aware, however, that my friend knew this neighborhood like the back of her hand. She had been living in Springfield Gardens, Queens for over 30 years!

Like many immigrants to this country, my first home was temporary. First, I lived in Brooklyn with my parents, then I moved to my first apartment ever in uptown Manhattan and then eventually I moved to my first apartment, in a residential home, in Queens. Years later, after a few more moves, I returned to settle in as a homeowner in Springfield Gardens, Queens.

We meandered around homes with well kept lawns, inviting flowers and trees, red brick stones, a few doors adorned with uniquely designed wreaths, and, noticeably, minimal traffic on these residential roads.

Eventually, we connected with a main road that led to a bridge over the Belt Parkway. Then almost instantly we were able to relax on a bicycle path parallel to a large middle school building. A fire house came into view with a large dog's image looming from the entry way. The dog announced the residence of bold and fearless people who were prepared to fight fires. Soon, a cluster of trees appeared and then there it was....an 'oasis in the middle of town.'

"Wow, I'm glad I asked you to lead the way today. I've never been to this park before." I shared excitedly.

The lake, the marvelous lake glistened as the sun stroked it's surface. We rode slowly around the path and stopped at the invitation of one of the two bridges. I looked around and thought, *This landscape has been inspired by the Japanese hill and pond gardens.* The red wood of the bridges contrasted beautifully with the lush green trees and plants around the perimeter of the lake. Birds sang and whizzed around busily as human visitors walked or sat on benches inhaling the aroma of peace. This was my first visit to the park and I knew it could never be my last.

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Annette Olivia Brown, Author

Encounters and Reflections II - It Is Written. TBN Trilogy Books, 2023

Encounters and Reflections - Can You Hear Me Now? AOB Creations, 2019

Website: aobcreations.com

Lighting up the darkness



Rarely has that transformation shone more brightly than at the 4th annual Springfield Park Christmas Tree Lighting. The Christmas trees planted in the park in 2013 and 2014 had both died, and then the lights had been stolen right off the tree in 2015, but the board members weren't fazed. Progress isn't always linear, and it isn't always speedy. So, the board members moved right on ahead, working with park management this year to get the hardiest tree possible, taking a special trip to the store to stock up on lights and decorations (once they found out what the decorations were for, everyone at the store wanted to help us find what we needed), working with as a team to make up fliers, and dropping them off at local grocery stores, shelters, and libraries.

From: Jean Melvin

Board Member of Volunteers for Springfield Park, Inc.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OUR 2023 HONOREES

Springfield Park is in Springfield Gardens, which is in the southeastern area of New York in the Borough of Queens near John F. Kennedy airport.

It is on twenty acres of land. It is on Southern side of Springfield Boulevard, southwest side is on 147th Avenue, the northwest side is on 183rd and 184th Streets and the north is on 145th Road. On the corner of Springfield Boulevard and 145th Road is our Fire Station No. 311, Hook and Ladder 158 located at the corner of the park. Adjacent to the park is a pond the water which runs underground to Jamaica Bay and filters into the park as a residue for birds and fish.

On the southwestern side are the children's playing field, a tennis and basket court and baseball/cricket fields. There is also a park house beside the baseball fields. On the southeastern side, there will be a new basketball court and a splendid BBQ court which are being built to be opened sometime in the summer of 2023.

Volunteers for Springfield Park, Inc. is a non-for-profit organization who helps to maintain the park by raising money or by raising discretionary funds through our city council and other grants that are available to us.

Sometimes in the summer there are concerts and family reunions in Springfield Park. All are welcome to enjoy our treasure in Springfield Gardens, but we expect all to leave the park as clean as the way they found it when they come. There are benches for relaxing around and containers to place the garbage.

ALL ARE WELCOME!



Donations

Ridgewood Savings Bank

Nelson Computer Learning Academy

Winifred Baker

Maureen Todman

Michael Morgan

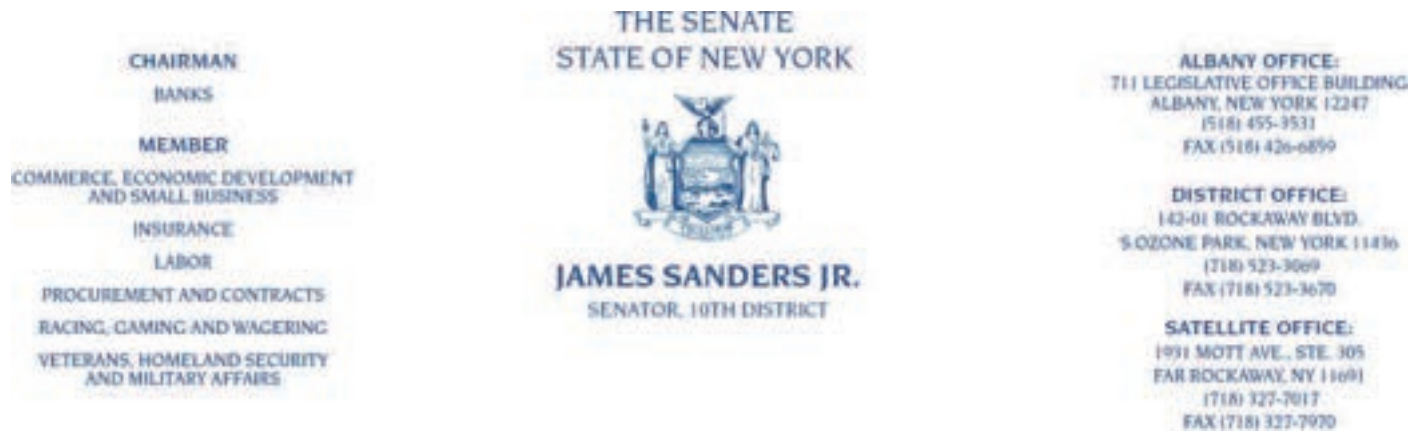
Natalie Vena

Marvis Pritchard

Evidelia Graci Boyd

Jacqueline M. McMikle

Paulette Reid



April 28, 2023

Greetings:

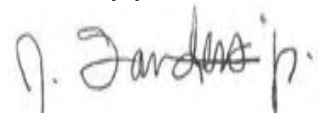
I congratulate the Volunteers for Springfield Park for hosting its Annual Luncheon & Community Service Awards Ceremony at the Douglaston Golf Course on Saturday, May 13, 2023 at 12:00 Noon. The Volunteers for Springfield Park has played an important role over the years in providing service and improvements for the residents of the community.

Especially, I want to congratulate the following honorees who are being recognized for their exceptional public contributions and service to the residents of Springfield Park. They all set a fine example of how each one of us can make a positive difference in the community and the world through volunteering efforts.

Rev. Simone Lord
Aleeia Abrams
Darlene Hudson
Sheila Dawson
Rachel Gibbs
Oma Deonarie, Esq.
Mel Vail Jr.
Debbie (Orah) Charles
Tiffany Samson

Again, thanks to the Volunteers for Springfield Park for hosting this worthy event and to the honorees that have served their community for the greater good of all.

Sincerely yours,



James Sanders Jr.
Senator – 10th Senate District

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May 13, 2023

Honorable Fay Hill
Executive Director
Volunteers for Springfield Park, Inc.
P.O. Box 301295
Jamaica, NY 11430

Dear Ms. Hill,

It is with pleasure that I congratulate the Volunteers for Springfield Park as you gather for your annual luncheon and community service awards ceremony.

The Volunteers for Springfield Park has been around since 2013 with the major purpose of beautifying Springfield Park and making it a resource for the surrounding community. The volunteers have participated in numerous park beautification events where they have assisted with the cleanup of the park and the annual planting of flowers and shrubs. Not to mention, lighting up the park with an annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony for the community, Easter egg hunts, the installation of bulletin boards as well as the new "Welcome to Springfield Gardens," sign were all accomplished by each of you. Additionally, the Volunteers for Springfield Park's reach extends far beyond the park via your senior outreach efforts and youth mentoring programs.

If we have learned one thing from the Covid-19 pandemic, it is that our parks are essential to our well-being, both mentally and physically. I have had the honor of partnering with the Volunteers for Springfield Park and look forward to continuing this partnership as you all are a true asset to *our* community.

Sincerely,

Selvena N. Brooks-Powers
Member of NYC Council, District 31

SBP/RT



Alecia Abraham is a Social Organizer committed to elevating Black communities in Queens, New York. Born and raised in Queens, Alecia is best known for founding The BlaQue Resource Network: a community collective of over 22,000 people dedicated to organizing Black business owners, consumers, and community members in Queens. As the founder of BlaQue New York, she specializes in building community-influence partnerships with brands and organizations to benefit the Black community.

Alecia Abraham began her career as a singer-songwriter. Her artistic abilities and infectious charisma sparked her determination to create an avenue for young talent from Queens, thus founding Prototype Music in 2015. Subsequently, Alecia has organized the Queens Youth Music Festival, an annual event that has grown tremendously with each edition.

In 2019, Abraham founded The BlaQue Resource Network, a community collective dedicated to uniting Black communities in Queens, NY. The BlaQue Resource Network (BRN) organizes original events, media, and programs designed to amplify community affairs and increase civic participation. Promoting businesses, encouraging health & wellness, and facilitating professional development are among the many initiatives that BRN strives to bring awareness to. BRN has partnered with corporations and local businesses to coordinate community events in Queens, including the popular *Night Market* series. BRN's civic engagement initiatives have included broadcast interviews and forums with political candidates such as Mayor Eric Adams. As of February 2022, BRN has attracted an engaged group of nearly 22,000 members, with hundreds of people joining every month.

For her outstanding service and contributions, Abraham has been honored by New York State Senator Leroy Comrie and New York City Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer. In 2020, Queens Borough President Sharon Lee proclaimed August 10th as BlaQue Resource Network day in Queens. Alecia was named one of the 100 Most Influential People in Queens by City & State magazine in 2021. Most recently, Alecia is the proud recipient of a New York City Citation by Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz, presented during their February 2022 Black History Month Celebration.

Alecia is a lifelong resident of Southeast Queens, where she is raising her 9-year-old son with her husband Steve. She is a long-time active member of the Merchants Associations of Rosedale, Laurelton, and Springfield Gardens, the Eastern Queens Alliance, the Jamaica branch of the NAACP, and the Queens Chamber of Commerce.

Alecia Abraham's commitment to creating a local community ecosystem of mentorship, support, and partnership has been proven steadfast through her actions, initiatives, and service.



Darlene Hudson, born on the Island of Barbados, Darlene moved to Brooklyn, New York in 1978 and graduated from Midwood High School in 1980. She earned her BA degree in Sociology from Brooklyn College in 1986 and worked more than 40 years in the banking industry.

For more than 27 years, Darlene lived in Springfield Gardens a few blocks from Springfield Park. She often visited Springfield Park and noticed that it was in dire need of cleaning and maintaining. She joined

Volunteers for Springfield Park (VFSP) and hasn't looked back since.

Along with her husband Gregory L. Hudson, they adopted the area along 147th Avenue between 184th Street and Springfield Blvd. She helps maintain this area using her own money, tools, and supplies. She worked feverishly to help with the "Beautification Initiative" to help clean, maintain, and beautify the neighborhood and community. She could often be seen removing posters and signs miles away from her home. She worked with the 105th Precinct, Springfield Gardens Civic Association, Department of Transportation, Community Board #13, City Councilman's Office, New York City Parks Department, and community leaders to help keep the community clean and safe. Darlene was involved in helping to get the "No Standing Signs" around Springfield Park, having Verizon remove that rusty tin fence (there for over 40 years) and replaced it with the current new fence on the corner of Guy R. Brewer Blvd and 147th Ave, and takes the lead in decorating the Christmas Tree in Springfield Park every year. She helped organize and facilitate the 2019 Luncheon at The Hilton JFK to raise the money to purchase and install the "Welcome to Springfield Gardens Sign" now located on Springfield Blvd (Off the South Conduit) in from the JHS 231 Campus.

She enjoys spending time with her family, relatives, traveling, golfing and most recently a love for running. She has run the Brooklyn Half Marathon twice, the Bronx 10 Mile Race twice, the Chicago and, Atlanta 5K Races, and several other races of four, five, and six miles. Enhancing her love of traveling and running experiences, she traveled with her husband to (including New York City) Tokyo, Berlin, London, Chicago, Boston as he ran those Abbott World Major Marathons and became Southeast Queens first and only Abbott "Six Star Medal" Marathoner.

Darlene is retired now and spends her time enjoying life.



Dr. Roxanne 'Simone' Lord is a board-certified naturopathic doctor, author, pastor, and C.E.O of Mother Earth Juice Bar Café in Jamaica, Queens, NY. Her herbal remedies, healthy foods, juices, books and nutrition workshops help people stay healthy and also develop the faith needed to heal and restore good health, finances and live healthy, abundant lives. Some of her books include, *Beyond Organic*, *A Guide to Healing*; *Financial Freedom by Faith*, *Get Out of Your Cage* and *The Last Castle* in Brooklyn. She is married has two grown children and is the senior pastor at Inspire NY, a church and wellness center in Jamaica, NY.

Her community service, journalistic and media career has allowed her to work with President Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama and interview many powerful leaders, CEOs, Pulitzer Prize winners, artists, literary geniuses, and transformational speakers. She is the recipient of many awards for community service and holds honorary doctorate degrees in Humanities &

Ministry. She graduated from Brooklyn College.

Dr. Lord is the president and founder of the Southeast Queens Chamber of Commerce, an organization on a mission for the development and beautification of SE Queens. The SEQCOC has conducted hundreds of workshops, building health and wealth in the community of SEQ. Dr Lord enjoys filming documentaries and making herbal remedies. Her first documentary is about health and wellness.

A resident of South Jamaica, Dr. Lord is on a mission to help minorities and anyone with compromised health to live better quality and healthier lives as we overcome health disparities.



Oma Deonarine is one of eight children, whose family immigrated from Guyana in 1969. As a child of immigrants, Oma had to navigate the migratory transition so many immigrant families face and the financial hardship of growing up in a large family in a poor neighborhood in Bronx County.

Oma is an attorney with over 30 years of experience in criminal law and family law. Oma currently works as a Court Attorney in Bronx County Family Court and previously worked as a Court Attorney in Queens County Family Court. Prior to her Family Court assignments, Oma was a Court Attorney 15 years in Supreme Court, Criminal Term in Manhattan.

Oma is the product of the NYC Public Schools and City University system. After graduating from William Howard Taft HS in Bronx County, Oma earned a bachelor's degree in biology from the City College of New York. Oma then attended the City University of New York Law School. Upon graduation, she became an Assistant District Attorney in Bronx County. Oma spent 11 years as an Assistant District Attorney prosecuting major felony cases, including murders, rapes, robberies, assaults, gun cases, and drug cases. Oma then worked as the NYC Dept of Correction prosecuting excessive use of force cases against detained individuals on Rikers Island.

As a child of immigrants, Oma became acutely aware at an early age about inequality and discrimination. This propelled her to make a commitment not only to herself but also to her family and the people living in her community in Richmond Hill, "Little Guyana." Oma's parents instilled in her the importance of hard work, the value of an education and the importance of community. This upbringing implanted in her a commitment to family, community and country and compelled her to become an agent for social change. As a result, Oma dove into the opportunity to mentor and tutor young people, worked on literacy projects, worked with food banks and senior centers, helped, and continues to help her community with legal work including applying for citizenship and advising victims of domestic violence and other crimes. Oma has organized community meetings at the local library and facilitated community relations with law enforcement. Oma continues to lend her voice and expertise to her community when called upon.

Oma is a board member of the Southeast Queens Chamber of Commerce and was awarded the Renaissance Leader Community Award for her work in the community. She is active in the Indo-Caribbean Federation, the Indo-Caribbean Bar Association, the South Ozone Park Civic Association (SPOCAW) and Queens Elite Lions Club International.



Orah "Debbie" Charles was born on November 19, 1968 in Marigot, Dominica. She was the youngest of eight children and spent her childhood on the beautiful island of Dominica. At the age of 13, Debbie migrated to the British Virgin Islands in search of new opportunities.

Throughout her life, Debbie has been a devoted mother and grandmother. She raised two children with love and care, and now enjoys spending time with her three grandchildren.

For over 25 years, Debbie has worked as a child caretaker, providing nurturing care for young children. Her patience, kindness, and dedication to her work have earned her the respect and admiration of countless families in the New York City.

In addition to her career in childcare, Debbie is an active member of the Kiwanis International non-profit organization. She joined the organization more than 15 years ago and is now the president of her local Kiwanis club. Through her work with Kiwanis, Debbie has made a positive impact in her community and helped to improve the lives of countless children and families.

In her free time, Debbie enjoys walking, reading, and traveling. She has a passion for learning about new cultures and exploring new places. Her adventurous spirit and positive attitude are an inspiration to those around her.

Debbie Charles is a kind-hearted, dedicated, and compassionate individual who has made a difference in the lives of many. Her commitment to her family, her community, and her work is a testament to her strength and resilience. She is a beloved mother, grandmother, friend, and leader, and her legacy will continue to inspire others for years to come.



Rachael Gibbs a native of Trinidad and Tobago, WI. She is the second of four children born to Thelma and Carlton Abdullah. Rachael was baptized at Sacred Heart R.C. church. When Rachael was three years old her mother passed away. She attended St. Theresa from primary through high school. Rachael's father remarried and had ten more children.

At the age of 17 Rachael went to help her stepmother with six of her younger siblings. The maternal care she provided to her siblings would eventually blossom into the love and care she gives to her family and community.

Rachael is the grandmother of four, and a great grandmother of one. Her grandmotherly love doesn't stop with her family, it stretches throughout the community to all the children she meets.

Rachael stays active in her church, Christ the King R.C. church, where she is an eucharistic minister, a lecture and was a Sunday school teacher for 36 years. She keeps her youth by walking to church daily, and gardening. Rachael enjoys gardening so much that every year she gives anyone who asks a piece of her plants with words of caring for the plant. Rachael's plants continue to bloom every year in the gardens of Springfield Park, Christ the King RC church, the planters at Farmers Blvd and Guy R. Brewer Blvd, as well as many residential homes in her community.



Sheila Elaine Dawson was born and raised in Harlem USA. She attended August Martin High School. It was there she found her passion and love for people. She worked as a Greeter at Friendly's Restaurant. She continued to enjoy working with others as she volunteered at the Queens Botanical Gardens and United Cerebral Palsy. She continued to explore various work opportunities that would allow her to interact with people daily. She finally found a field that would allow her to help others and greet them daily. School Safety was calling her name!

Sheila Dawson has been a School Crossing Guard for 21 years. This is her dream job. She gets to interact with parents, students, teachers, and other school personnel daily. She enjoys knowing that she helps keep them safe and aware of safety precautions while crossing the streets. She continues with her safety initiatives by visiting schools, churches, and other organizations to educate them on safety. She says the best part of her job is when students can tell her they are watching the light as they cross the street to go to school. She takes pride in her job and its shows.

She extends her service of helping others by being a member of the Usher Board at New York Deliverance Gospel Temple for over 40 years. She is not only a faithful servant of the people but of the Lord!

Sheila Dawson is a devoted mother of 4 who enjoys spending time with her daughter gardening and going bowling. She is thankful to be able to serve and help others in her community.

Mrs. Sheila Dawson is an NYPO/School Crossing Guard employee working out of the 113th Precinct Sector. She has been employed with the NYPD/School crossing for 22 years, who has worked various locations within 113th sector.

SCG Dawson is very dedicated, professional worker who take her job very seriously and has always been a powerful force in the workplace and use her positive, loving attitude and timeless energy encouraging others. Numerous children, staff, parents and others in the communities has been inspired by SCG Dawson.

Director of XCEL Tiny Tots Daycare on Linden Boulevard invited SCG Dawson to speak on safety for the children as well as teachers. Mrs. Brisco at PS37 asked SCG Dawspn to speak on safety in her classroom. School Crossing Guard Sheila Dawson has received many awards. We at the 113th Precinct honored SCG Dawson with achievement award in 2020 for attendance and work performance along with countless other awards from other schools, churches and communities.

The Staff of PS37Q



Mr. Mel Vail Jr., President

The 1026 Foundation. On August 5, 2017, we lost our eldest sister, Sharon Delores Vail, to a brain aneurysm. She was 55, her death devastated our family especially our parents. No parent should out-live their children.

One of Sharon's brothers, Mel Vail, Jr., and His dad talked about how they could remember his sister. They donated to many different charities Sharon would believe in. Finally, with the help of her three daughters, the family decided to create a foundation in honor of Sharon Delores Vail. A couple of months after her death, and on October 26, 2017, "The 1026 Foundation, Inc.," was formed and registered with the state of New York as a not-for-profit.

October 26 2017, would have been Sharon Delores Vail 56th birthday. The 1026 Foundation, Inc. mission is to Serve the marginalized and restore shattered communities.

Annual initiates:

- Supporting local family and single shelters:
 - The Salvation Army Springfield Gardens Residents 146-80 Guy R. Brewer Blvd., Jamaica NY 11434,
 - Belt Park Family Residence 153-90 Rockaway Blvd Jamaica, NY 11434
 - Acacia Network Men's Shelter Holiday Inn Brookville, Rosedale, NY
- Annual School Supply Drive for **P.S. 52** *"The Magnet School for Innovation, Exploration & Engineers,"*
- Turkey distribution
- Toy Drive for Children who have incarcerated parents.
- Scholarship for High School Students
- Clean and replenish local Community Refrigerators
- Connecting resources for the unserved i.e., food and clothing



Tiffany Sampson Graduate of Brooklyn College. Tiffany has modeled, been in numerous commercials and on Broadway shows such as Carousel at Lincoln Center. Ms. Sampson debuted in the Intermezzo Young Artist development program where she played Papagena in the production Magic Flute. Tiffany has dedicated her voice and life to working with children mentoring and teaching the youth for over 12 years. Currently she is the Canter and Choir Director for the Adult and Youth choirs, at Christ the King Church Ministries.

Tiffany by profession is a generalist disability teacher for district 75 In Long Island City. Tiffany Sampson not only dedicates her life to the youths but to the community as well. Along with her youth Choir she does a series of humanitarian workshop evangelizing, donating, and helping those in need such as the Ronald McDonald House, The Veteran Center, Grace Episcopal Church Soup Kitchen, Retired Catholic Priest Home in Jamaica Estate, and Springfield Gardens Friendly Parks for over 11 years. Tiffany thanks her parents, son, family, and friends for all their support.

Future for Springfield Park, along with obtaining a Community Space outside of the Park. We are working on building an English Garden, a Butterfly Haven, Gazebo, and Pergola in the park. With the help of NYC Parks, we can add additional adopt benches to recognize many of our fallen heroes in South East Queens. Also, utilize our current water stream to create a separate goldfish pond.

Volunteers for Springfield Park's mission is to make this park a place where all can adore the beautiful green lawn and flowers, and a leisurely relaxing stroll alone or with a group. Springfield Park will be the upcoming place to arrange your wedding, graduation, and family reunion pictures - spending time with your four-legged friend and children. It's a place where you form bonds playing tennis, basketball, and chess and enjoy mother nature at its best.

Visit us and care for Springfield Park.

Stacey Osbourne

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is with sincere gratitude that we the Board of Directors and Volunteers of VFSP Inc. extend our appreciation to you in your support of this journal.

We cannot continue to do the things we have done over the past year without your support. Your financial support continues to be of tremendous help as we expand the services we offer. The revitalization and maintenance of Springfield Park cannot continue without your support.

To all our Patrons, Advertisers, Families and Businesses we extend our sincere appreciation.

Please remember to support the business and organizations advertised in this journal. When you do utilize their services, please let them know you saw their ad in VFSP journal.

Once more, we extend a big thank you to Mrs. Curlene Nelson for voluntarily availing to us your professional skills, expertise, and dedication in the compilation of this journal. Your patience and resourcefulness are invaluable.

(Members of the Journal Committee)

Fay Hill

Gregory Hudson

Curlene Nelson