

## OVERTON PARK

# notes

*fall 2013*



**SPEAK UP!  
FOR OUR PARK**

# OVERTON PARK

In 2011, a dedicated group of community volunteers created a survey to discuss the future of Overton Park. More than 1,600 people responded to the Speak Up survey, and the overwhelming love and concern for the park helped to create Overton Park Conservancy later that year.

Your responses told us that you wanted a well-maintained park, updated playgrounds, restrooms, a dog park, and an Old Forest protected from development. Those answers shaped the first two years of the Conservancy's work, from Overton Park to Rainbow Lake Playground.

Now that OPC has been managing the park for almost two years, we'd like to ask for your feedback again. With our initial phase of projects nearly completed, we're looking toward the future, and we'd like to know what your priorities are. What do you want to see happen next? What's working, and what's not?

We want to know your general perceptions of the park, as well as specific thoughts on two locations that could benefit from some enhancements: Rainbow Lake and the East Parkway playground and picnic area.

There are two easy ways to participate: visit our website at [www.overtonpark.org/speak](http://www.overtonpark.org/speak), or fill out the enclosure in this newsletter and return it to us in the envelope provided. If you would like extra copies of the survey for your business or community organization, just let us know how many and we'll bring them by! You can contact us at [info@overtonpark.org](mailto:info@overtonpark.org).

The survey will be live until November 30, and results will be posted on our website in December.



Renovations to Rainbow Lake Playground, which reopened this summer, were a direct result of feedback from the 2011 Speak Up! survey. (Photo: Nathan Berry)



## tina's message



How are you connected to Overton Park? Do you run the trails? Visit Overton Park or one of the playgrounds? Are you a member? A volunteer? Maybe you spend sunny days playing sports or music on the Greensward, or you've gotten married in the Formal Gardens. Perhaps you've shared your memories through our Overton Park Stories program.

Whatever your connection to Overton Park, we want to make sure we hear from you. In 2011, more than 1,600 park visitors filled out a survey expressing a collective park wish list ranging from a dog park to clean restrooms. That has been our guiding document as we converted strong donor support into tangible park improvements.

Continuing down the list, our next area of focus will be improving connections to the park. The bicycle plaza and Bike Gate sculpture will connect us to Broad Avenue, Binghampton, and the Shelby Farms Greenline. We'll soon begin planning for a new bike/pedestrian path at Cooper, connecting us to the East End neighborhood, Overton Square, and Cooper-Young. We'll explore what improvements may be needed at Tucker Street, North Parkway, and other park entrances. We'll experiment with shuttles, bike share concepts, and other ways to connect the park to surrounding neighborhoods.

We'll encourage you to become a member, sign up for our e-newsletter, become a Team Overton Park volunteer, like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, fill out a comment form on our website, or send us a note via carrier pigeon. No matter how you do it, we want you to stay connected to Overton Park Conservancy.

You can start today by filling out the enclosed Speak Up survey and telling us what's important to you. It only takes a few moments, but the information we get is critical to planning for Overton Park's future. As you're completing the survey, think about what Overton Park means to you, and consider supporting your park with a gift. It is only through donor support that the Conservancy has been able to make such progress on those things you told us you wanted. Your wish list + your financial support = making the park you want possible. We can't wait to hear from you!

*Tina Sullivan*

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# Bike plaza a key link to the community



Overton Park is surrounded by vibrant neighborhoods, full of families who have treasured the park for generations. But despite its central location, the park is not always easy to access, especially for those visiting without a car.

Part of Overton Park Conservancy's focus over the next few years is to improve that access, making it easier to travel to and within the park by bicycle or on foot. The new plaza set to be installed at the intersection of East Parkway North and Sam Cooper Blvd. is the first major piece to that puzzle. And it's also a part of a much larger effort to connect the neighborhoods of Memphis.

For the past several years, the Shelby Farms Greenline has been expanding throughout the city, linking neighborhoods together in a way that's beneficial for both recreation and community-building. Now, a new connector trail running through the Binghampton neighborhood and its Broad Avenue Arts District will link the Greenline directly to Overton Park. The Hampline will be a two-mile multi-use trail that uses "green lanes"--on-road, protected cycle tracks--to route traffic through a neighborhood that many Memphians have passed over for years.

"Once completed, The Hampline will be the most innovative bicycle infrastructure project to occur within the United States," says Pat Brown, Vice-President of the Historic Broad Business Association. "New York City has a few similar cycle tracks, as do Montreal and Vancouver, B.C., but The Hampline will be the gold standard for other cities to follow."

Numerous public art installations will dot The Hampline's route, and at its western entry point will be Tylur French's Bike Gate sculpture. The archway, which is nearing completion, will provide a totally unique entrance to both Overton Park and this new state-of-the-art trail.

Construction plans are being finalized now for the new bike plaza. If you'd like to be a permanent part of the plaza, personalized engraved pavers are still available in very limited quantities. Our initial plan for 54 pavers sold out quickly, but fortunately, our team at ANF Architects was able to make room for 20 more. Get them while they last! You can reserve yours, or make a general gift to the project, at [www.overtonpark.org/bikegifts](http://www.overtonpark.org/bikegifts).

To learn more about The Hampline, which recently kicked off a fundraising campaign, visit <https://ioby.org/project/hampline>.

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coming up?  
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**From weddings to  
reunions to 5Ks, we've  
got you covered.**

**Visit [www.overtonpark.org/](http://www.overtonpark.org/rentals)  
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# Volunteers keep Overton Park in shape

It takes a village to keep Overton Park clean, active, and awesome, and one of the most vital parts of that village is our cadre of volunteers.

This season, we had numerous groups join us in making the park a better place. Employees of **MOOD: South Central** and students from **Memphis College of Art** sanded logs for the building area at Rainbow Lake Playground. Groups from **Christian Brothers University** and **Youth Villages** removed litter in the park. When the mulch at Overton

Bark was getting low, **Hollywood Feed** donated new mulch and volunteers from **HollyWould Fitness**, **Youth Villages**, and some of our regular Conservancy volunteers spent a Saturday morning distributing it.

And that's all in addition to the daily work done by our dedicated crew of Team Overton Park volunteers, who keep us updated on maintenance issues

that need to be addressed, as well as being our eyes and ears about everything they observe in the park.

Want to be a part of our volunteer crew? You can find information at [www.overtonpark.org/volunteer](http://www.overtonpark.org/volunteer). Currently, our greatest need is for volunteers at Rainbow Lake Playground-- monitoring the space, talking with other visitors,

performing small tasks like sweeping mulch off the sidewalk, and keeping us alerted of any larger issues. If you visit the playground often, you can easily fit volunteering into your regular visits!



Memphis College of Art freshmen volunteered at the park during their orientation week.

## Fall finds in the Old Forest State Natural Area



**Tulip poplar seeds**  
(*Liriodendron tulipifera*)  
Tennessee's state tree has lovely green-and-orange flowers in the spring, and these unique seed pods in the fall. While an oak tree's acorn contains only one seed, a poplar's seed pod can turn into multiple trees.



**Orb weaver spider**  
(*Argiope* sp.)  
These large, boldly colored spiders produce webs that are alternately near-invisible and fascinating in their patterns (as with the "writing spider," whose webs contain shapes that look like the letter X).



**Hearts-a-burstin'**  
(*Euonymus americanus*)  
From a distance, these fruits look like tiny strawberries. Look at them up close and you'll see where they got their name: the four-lobed fruit bursts open in fall to reveal bright orange seeds.



**Citizens to Preserve Overton Park Forest Tours**  
Our friends at CPOP lead free nature hikes in the Old Forest on the second Saturday and last Sunday of each month. Visit [www.overtonparkforever.org](http://www.overtonparkforever.org) for details.  
(Photo: Jane Nichols)



# A very merry day indeed



Everywhere you looked at June's **A Day of Merrymaking in Overton Park**, there was something to see: acrobats soaring through the sky, dogs jumping through hoops, kids scaling climbing walls...plus great food, art, and music all day long.

Overton Park Conservancy's first summer family festival was a huge success, bringing more than 2,500 people into the park for a day of fun in the sun. We can't wait to do it all again next year.

A special **thanks to our sponsors** for making this event possible: FedEx, ANF Architects, Art Center Memphis, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Tennessee, Citizens to Preserve Overton Park, Classic Party Rentals, Echo Systems, Hollywood Feed, Hyde Family Foundations, In City Realty, MLGW, The Jardine Barking Circus, Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, Memphis Zoo, Gail Schledwitz, ServiceMaster Clean, Utopia Animal Hospital, and YMCA of Memphis & the Mid-South. Thank you for all you do! *(Photos: Nathan Berry and Melissa McMasters)*

*'Tis (almost)  
the season...*

**Simplify your life  
and let us send your  
holiday cards this year!**

**Visit [www.overtonpark.org/](http://www.overtonpark.org/)  
holidays for details.**



# Are you a member of Overton Park?

Keeping Overton Park clean and green is a daily exercise, from mowing grass to collecting trash to keeping restrooms clean and making repairs. It takes a lot of work...and financial support.

If you love what you've been seeing in Overton Park over the last two years, you can make an investment in its future by becoming a park member!

Overton Park Conservancy offers several levels of membership, so you're guaranteed to find one that's right for you. Here's a rundown:

**1901 Member (\$25):** You'll get an Overton Park Conservancy decal, limited-run OPC t-shirt, and an invitation to members-only events. Students and seniors get a \$10 discount.

**1906 Member (\$45):** Two OPC decals and two limited-run t-shirts, along with the other 1901 benefits.

**1926 Member (\$100):** Two decals, two shirts, and Willy Bearden's book *Images of America: Overton Park*.

**1954 Member (\$250):** Two decals, two shirts, and a 25% discount on two tickets to an OPC event.

**1971 Member (\$500):** Two decals, two t-shirts, and an exclusive photo shoot in the

park for your family by our own Melissa McMasters.

**2011 Member (\$1,000 and above):** Two decals, two t-shirts, and a one-time 20% discount on facility rentals in the park (up to a \$250 value).

You can find information on the significant dates honored by our membership levels (hint: one of them involves Elvis)--and join today at [www.overtonpark.org/membership](http://www.overtonpark.org/membership). The t-shirt design will change in January 2014, so if you don't have the current version, this is your last chance!



Capture your family fun in the formal gardens (or anywhere in the park!) when you join as a 1971 Member.

## our donors

Overton Park Conservancy gratefully acknowledges the individuals and organizations who made gifts, pledges, and in-kind donations between January 1, 2013 and June 30, 2013. If we have inadvertently omitted the name of one of our supporters, we sincerely apologize. Please correct any errors by contacting us at 901.214.5450.

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# Make some magic for Overton Park Nov. 9

If you attended last year's fundraiser for Overton Park Conservancy, you know that A Magical Night at Overton Park lived up to its name.

If you missed this evening of dramatically lit gardens, delicious food and libations, and cool music, now is the time to reserve your spot for this year's event! The second annual Magical Night will unfold on **Saturday, November 9** from 6:00 - 9:00pm in the park's formal gardens.

Guests can expect another fine evening that casts Overton Park in a new light, with music by Breeze and Jamille JAM Hunter & Mood Swing. Attire is dressy casual—wear your dancing shoes!

Proceeds from A Magical Night help to fund Overton Park Conservancy's work to restore and enhance the park. Last year's guests also contributed more than \$10,000 toward the Rainbow Lake Playground project.

Tickets are on sale now for \$100 each. And since we want you to bring your friends, we're offering a special deal. **When you purchase four or more tickets at once, the price drops to \$75 per ticket.** That's four for the price of three! Purchase your tickets online at [www.overtonpark.org/magicalnight](http://www.overtonpark.org/magicalnight), or call



A Magical Night 2012 - Photograph by Barry Siegel

901-214-5450. We can't wait to see you in November!

A Magical Night at Overton Park is sponsored by FedEx, Classic Party Rentals, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Tennessee, Echo Systems, First Tennessee, inbalance FITNESS, Independent Bank, Memphis Zoo, SunTrust Bank, and Wunderlich Securities.

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