



# VIEWS FROM THE HEIGHTS

Volume 36, No. 4  
Winter 2025

Jackson Heights  
Beautification Group

[www.JHBG.org](http://www.JHBG.org)

Jackson Heights – “A Garden in the City”

## *Our Pets:* Gifts of Love & Companionship



Help the JH community by volunteering at our cleanups and other events!  
Go to [JHBG.org](http://JHBG.org) or e-mail [info@jhbg.org](mailto:info@jhbg.org) to sign up!

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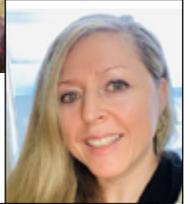
**On the cover: Art by Kirsten Magnani.**  
 I've always had pets and I can't imagine a home without one (which would feel so empty). Their unconditional love grows tenfold from the love you give them. These are pets I've encountered in JH that have enriched my life with their colorful and unique personalities.

**en español  
 paginas 8-9**



## President's Message

BY LESLIE ELLMAN



Dear Neighbors,

With winter comes more time indoors. This has its pros and cons. One major pro in my household is more time indoors with our beloved cats.

Throughout the Spring, Summer, and Fall our home is more like a pit stop. We spend fleeting moments with our furry family members as we race from one activity or adventure to the next. Being home more often gives us the opportunity to relax and truly appreciate the wonder and joy of sharing your life and home with a pet.

Whether you are a pet person or not, I hope you enjoy this issue, dedicated to pets and the people who love them.

We wish everyone a very happy Holiday Season and a warm and cozy winter, with extra cuddle time with your pets!

—Leslie Ellman, President



## Editor's Message

### The Gift of Joy and Companionship

BY MELISSA ZAVALA

Inspired by the exhibit on evolving relationships between New Yorkers and their pets which closed this past spring at The New York Historical (formerly The New-York Historical Society) called *Pets and the City*, this issue celebrates pets for the joy they bring us. Their companionship is truly a gift to pet owners, something worth rejoicing about

this holiday season.

The articles in this issue introduce us to a few pets around the neighborhood, as well as celebrate the upgraded tennis courts at Travers Park, a mural soon to unveil, while also remembering some of the neighbors we've lost in 2025, and more.

We want to offer an apology for an error made in the fall issue. The captions identifying

Ms. Maria Terrone were listed in reverse order from the photographs, misidentifying her. We regret the error.



As another year closes, we are grateful for all of your support. Please send us your suggestions and ideas for interesting people to feature and new stories to tell this coming year. Email us your suggestions and feedback by writing to [info@jhb.org](mailto:info@jhb.org) or by regular mail at JHBG, PO Box 720253, Jackson Heights, NY 11372.

# Upcoming Events in Jackson Heights!

Events and dates are subject to change.

## Holiday Lighting

**Saturday, December 6,** at the Post Office at **4pm for Arts and Crafts,** and **5pm for caroling!** Our annual Post Office Holiday Lighting is a Jackson Heights tradition. Thanksgiving gives JHBG's TreeLC volunteers and others a chance to decorate the post office gardens in time for the first Saturday of December when neighbors gather in front of the building to make crafts, drink hot chocolate, and eat cookies. Carols ring in the holiday season just after sunset. The event concludes with the lighting, at which time we go home with cheer.



Crafts, cocoa, and caroling are a great way of getting into the holiday spirit! Join us!

## Table Wine

79-14 37th Avenue.  
**Free Wine Tastings, every Friday before Christmas.**

## Art Retail Therapy

For art classes and community events, visit A.R.T. at 84-26 37th Ave. [artretailtherapy.com](http://artretailtherapy.com).

## The Jackson Heights Art Club

Meets at St. Mark's Church, 3350 82nd Street, offering classes for children on Saturdays and adults on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.

## The Queensboro

80-02 Northern Boulevard. Check out [thequeensboro.com/events](http://thequeensboro.com/events) for more info.

## Open Mic Nights 8:30pm, Thursdays TBD

Don't miss our monthly Open Mic Night featuring great local performers. Come check it out—bring your friends, participate, perform, sing, dance, do something!

## Play Dungeons & Dragons

**Wed., Dec. 3 and 17th**  
Step into adventure as our custom "Storms of the Skylands" campaign continues! [bit.ly/49XrHEd](http://bit.ly/49XrHEd)

## FoHi Improv

**Wed. Dec. 10, 7pm**  
Come on out to see FoHi Improv's House Team, Unisphere, perform a fresh, 100% improvised show. Based on audience suggestions, the group will weave scenes filled with characters and lines made up on the spot. Tickets and more info: [fohiimprov.com/queensboro](http://fohiimprov.com/queensboro)

## 2nd Annual Jackson Heights Holiday Party for All

**Tues., Dec. 23, 5-9 pm**  
Kids movies starting at 5pm. Live music at 7pm. Food and drink specials!

## Annual New Year's Eve Dinner Party

**Wed., Dec. 31., 9pm to 2am.**  
Canapes, raw bar, carving station, hot buffet and dessert buffet. Includes first cocktail and champagne toast. DJ Joe Zapata returns

to get the party started and keep you dancing! There will be New Year's Eve party favors and noise makers!

**NY Restaurant Week**  
**Tues. January 20 to**  
**Thurs. February 12**



The joy of play can mean greater social connections, whether playing D&D or experiencing collaboration in an improv show. Stop by The Queensboro to socialize and have fun!



The Jackson Heights Beautification Group Presents

# JACKSON HEIGHTS ORCHESTRA

**WED. DEC 10, 2025**  
**LEXINGTON SCHOOL**  
25-26 75th ST  
EAST ELMHURST, NY

**7:30 P.M.**  
Concert is free  
\$20 suggested donation  
Visit [JHORCHESTRA.ORG/DONATE](http://JHORCHESTRA.ORG/DONATE) to make a gift to the JHO.

**ALEX WEN**  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

An evening of beloved Masterworks and holiday classics!

Haydn: Symphony No. 26 in D-minor  
Tchaikovsky: "Winter Dreams" from Symphony No. 1  
Handel: "Hallelujah" Chorus  
"Christmas at the Movies" medley  
... and more!

[@JHORCHESTRA](http://@JHORCHESTRA)  
[JHORCHESTRA.ORG](http://JHORCHESTRA.ORG)



**Pet and People Watching:** Pets around the neighborhood always offer special sights to see! Below: Cyrus the pigeon comes out of his travel bag for a photo-op.



# Pets IN Jackson Heights

BY MELISSA ZAVALA

**W**hile dogs and cats are common urban pets, all kinds of animals are often kept as companions. From turtles, to birds, guinea pigs, snakes, lizards, chinchillas, and more, the bonds humans form with other animals provide several positive effects. From emotional support to improved mental health and social connections, pets are comforting and joy-inducing.

Sometimes pets can be communal companions, as is the cat at our local precinct where officers delight in his company and care for him together. His name is Officer Jackson, the 115th Precinct's Finest Feline, who is named after Jackson Heights. He has free run of the place and is spoiled by all.

"We found him on January 17 of this year and he is still here with us. Although now, he has become an indoor and outdoor

cat. The Officers love having Jackson around. His playful antics and warm personality are great for our officers and the people coming to visit the precinct. He is well taken care of, has all his shots and has a nice warm place to sleep and rest as long as he wants!," says Community Affairs Detective Gonzalez about Jackson.

Beyond communal pets, some urban residents connect with wildlife and conceive of them as much-loved wild pets, a phrase



**Officer Jackson, the cat at the 115th Precinct.**

used in the birding community intended to promote conservation. But don't feed birds by dumping food on the street! That feeds rats, too, growing their population.

Sometimes pets are something in between wild and domestic. Patricia Colon is the proud pet mother of a pigeon named Cyrus. Patricia has many stories to tell about Cyrus who is really attached to her husband and stays close to him. She came to care for Cyrus because she has a friend who rescues orphaned pigeons. In trying to find homes for birds in need, she found herself mothering one of her own. She is on a mission to take care of pigeons, oftentimes scorned birds.

During the season of giving, it's tempting to offer sweet baby animals as presents, especially to children. It is important, however, to consider that while pets can be real gifts to us, they should



not be given as such. Animals require a lot of care and can be expensive to sustain over lifetimes, making them a serious commitment and a responsibility that everyone involved should agree to take on. With so many pets in shelters, adoption can also seem like a good idea. However, the growing population of animals in shelters, especially post-pandemic, reminds us that keeping pets is hard. As the city faces a crisis of affordability, pet sharing can perhaps be a better option, an alternative we have been promoting for the past two years (see Gail Siegel's articles in previous issues). ♦

# Cats From Functional to Furry Friends

BY THEODOSIA KALLIONTZIS

Cats aren't native to North America, much like honeybees or, more recently, spotted lanternflies. In fact, there is a paleontological phenomenon known as the "cat gap" which refers to the lack of felines in this continent. When, exactly, cats first set paws here is anyone's guess.

The main reason we have our fuzzy feline friends now is because they served as mouse patrol on North America-bound ships. Cats were not listed on ship records, unlike pigs or sheep—no, those were considered "working animals," essentially part of the crew. (The image that comes to mind is that of a tiny sailor-cat, valiantly chasing a mouse.) This

would not change until about the turn of the century, during World War I.

In New York, it's a bit more complicated. Cats seem to have had to juggle two identities at once, as beloved companions and as hard workers. Like when you go into your neighborhood bodega, squeal over the adorable cat, take a thousand photos, and then watch it jump up and stalk into the backrooms, recovering from another hard day of shooing off rats and sitting stoically. Bodega cats are, perhaps, the best example of the two roles cats have played simultaneously. Now beloved animals, their work is more on the backburner rather than at the forefront. ♦



Toula, the author's black-and-white rescue cat, living her best life! Well cared for and loved, she brings her human family much joy.

# Pet Resources in the Heights

BY MELANIA LOEWY

Pets add joy to our lives, so it's important that they are well cared for. Luckily, Jackson Heights has some places offering different ways to care for pets that are worth highlighting, including Petco, the JH CREW Dog Run, and fun cat toys at Lockwood.

## Petco

Petco is a staple store for all pet lovers, offering everything from food to grooming, training, and seasonal accessories. There's also a treat bar for dogs. In addition to dogs and cats, they offer various other pets and accessories, including fish, rabbits, and birds. Petco makes sure your pet is healthy and stylish all year round! This store is located at **75-07 31st Avenue**.



From left to right, the Dog Runs at Travers Park, JH CREW, and Landing Lights Park, with Koko, the author's pup, enjoying the latter two sites.



dog park? Located on **69th Street and 35th Avenue**, JH CREW\* is spacious, offers shade, water bowls, and even poop bags. There are also different sections to separate differently sized dogs and whenever it's necessary. \*Note this is a member-only dog park. View the application here: [jhbg.org/programs/jh-crew/](http://jhbg.org/programs/jh-crew/)

## The JH CREW Dog Run

Dogs are social animals. They need a place to play and meet new friends. Looking for a place to bring them? What about the

There is also another dog park on 78th street called **Landing Lights Dog Run**. The photo (in the middle above) shows my dog Koko at the

JH Crew Dog Run. He was not happy because his friends were not there.

Travers Park also offers a small dog park area, giving our poodles different options.

## Lockwood

Lockwood is known for its NYC-themed goods. They have really cute pet toys, particularly for cats, which feature fun wordplay. They are located at **77-13 37th Avenue**. ♦



Lockwood, via Instagram

# The Annual Children's Halloween Parade: A Spooky Success!

## A Festive Night of Costumes and Fun

BY JOHN McCAFFREY



Grand Marshals Carol DeSantis and Louise Ross (above), along with disability advocate Beverly Carrol (far right), were three of this year's five honorees. The NYPD's ceremonial units also led this year's parade.



As evening falls and the wind howls, the excitement rises. Children of all ages gather in colorful costumes, princesses, superheroes, friendly monsters, and more—each child eager to join JHBG's 34th Halloween parade!

This year's honorary Grand Marshals were:

**Pastor Father Christopher Heanue**, a Queens native, and the newly installed spiritual leader of St. Joan of Arc Roman Catholic Church.

**Beverly Carroll**, a long-term disability advocate who spearheaded the 10-year effort to create an accessibility ramp at our local post office.

**Carol DeSantis, Louise Ross,** and **John McGurrin**—long-time

JHBG volunteers currently heading the Parade's hospitality brigade.

And outgoing 21st Council District Member, **Francisco Moya**.

This year's parade also included several new additions:

The number of trick or treat bags rose to 3,000. Our wonderful donors stepped up to meet our financial goals. **Newtown High School Key Club** provided the muscle and enthusiasm to fill them.

**Jennifer Rizzo**, professional dancer, along with her partner, Angela Ang, posted a Facebook call to organize a performance of Michael Jackson's "Thriller." Jennifer and over two dozen volunteers practiced for several weeks and their performance is proof of their

dedication. See it here: [bit.ly/4oRdCNs](http://bit.ly/4oRdCNs)

Thanks to the efforts of **Community Officer Gonzalez** of the 115th Precinct, the NYPD honor guard and band led the parade.

Finally, it takes a village to carry out the parade, but several volunteers require special recognition:

Parade Co-Director, **Edwin O'Keefe Westley**.

**Kirsten Magnani** donated her talents to create another wonderful poster.

Thanks also to JHBG directors **Joe Brunken, Daniel Karatazas, Len Maniace and grandson, Louise Mulvihill, Mahmudur "Mo" Rahman, Jim Riccio,** and **Sherif Sadek**. And of course, our fearless, dedicated President **Leslie Ellman**. ♦

### We are also grateful to all of the donors who supported this year's parade!

<p>82nd Street District Management Assistance</p> <p>ABETX Int'l Brokers</p> <p>Armondo's Italian Restaurant</p> <p>Brown's Army + Navy</p> <p>Conway Funeral Home</p> <p>Costco</p> <p>Downtown Natural Market</p>	<p>Dunkin' Donuts</p> <p>Espresso 77</p> <p>Foodtown</p> <p>Garden Heights Property Management</p> <p>Happy Kitchen</p> <p>Jackson House</p> <p>Jahn's Restaurant</p> <p>Jewish Center of JH</p>	<p>Joseph Lock &amp; Alarm</p> <p>Suzanne Knobel</p> <p>Koeppel Autos</p> <p>La Boina Meats</p> <p>Lety's Bakery</p> <p>Liberty Coca-Cola</p> <p>Lockwood Shop</p> <p>New Peking Kitchen</p> <p>Noah's Ark Pet Clinic</p>	<p>Olivos Opticians</p> <p>Queens Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>Romeo's Italian Restaurant</p> <p>Sister's Pizza</p> <p>Stand Alone Cheese</p> <p>Table Wine</p> <p>US Tennis Association</p> <p>Vitalscript Pharmacy</p>
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# A New Burst of Color On the Way for Jackson Heights

BY SUZANNE ADLER



Above: Co-founders of JH Mural Project, Riha Hart and Suzanne Adler. They are the creative forces behind the drive to beautify Roosevelt Avenue.

Below: Noah Bassman is the artist painting the mural on 84th Street, with interests in place, community, and urban life.

When walking past the graffiti-covered wall at 84th and Roosevelt, I didn't see blight but possibility. Soon after meeting Riha Hart, a younger neighbor with deep local roots who was dreaming of ways to bring more public art to our community, we founded the Jackson Heights Mural Project. This is an organization that aims to collaborate with local artists to transform spaces along the Roosevelt Avenue Corridor and throughout Jackson Heights.

Our vision is to revitalize public spaces, cultivate creativity, build social connections, and inspire the children of the community.

With the generous support and guidance from Jackson Heights Beautification Group, Flushing Town Hall, Ponce Bank, A.R.T., and small donations from the community, that vision is already taking shape.

The first mural, "The Jackson Heights Mural Project Welcomes You to Jackson

Heights" by Noah Bassman, will turn a once-forgotten wall into a joyful landmark that celebrates the diverse cultures that make this neighborhood thrive. His design concepts are informed by a poll that Riha and I circulated, asking for community input.

This project is proof that art can heal spaces and people. We've seen what murals have done for cities like Philadelphia and Detroit. There's no reason why we can't do it here.

The project is expected to be completed by November and will be celebrated with a ribbon cutting event on **Saturday, December 13th from 11:30 am to 1 pm.**

To learn more, volunteer or donate, follow us on Instagram and Facebook at [@jhmuralproject](https://www.instagram.com/jhmuralproject)

- ★ [instagram.com/jhmuralproject](https://www.instagram.com/jhmuralproject)
- ★ [facebook.com/p/Jackson-Heights-Mural-Project-61563349293857](https://www.facebook.com/p/Jackson-Heights-Mural-Project-61563349293857) ♦

## Mensaje de la presidenta

POR LESLIE ELLMAN

El invierno nos regala más tiempo para estar en espacios interiores. Para mí, eso significa pasar más tiempo en mi casa con mis adorados gatos. Estar en casa nos da también la oportunidad de relajarnos y apreciar de verdad la alegría de compartir la vida y el espacio con una mascota. Ya sea que te gusten los animales o no, espero que disfrutes este número del boletín, dedicado a las mascotas y a quienes las cuidan. Les deseamos a todos felices fiestas y un cálido invierno con tiempo libre para acurrucarse con sus mascotas.



Los artículos de esta edición nos presentan a algunas mascotas del vecindario, la renovación de la cancha de tenis de Travers Park y la inauguración de un mural. Recordamos también a algunos de los vecinos que perdimos en 2025. En este fin de año, queremos agradecerles su apoyo e invitarlos a seguir colaborando con sus sugerencias e historias para el año que viene. Escríbannos a [info@jhbg.org](mailto:info@jhbg.org) o a la dirección postal JHBG, PO Box 720253, Jackson Heights, NY 11372.

## Una nueva explosión de color viene a Jackson Heights

POR SUZANNE ADLER

Cuando pasaba frente a la pared cubierta de grafiti en la calle 84 y Roosevelt, no veía el deterioro, sino las posibilidades. Poco después de conocer a Riha Hart, fundamos el Proyecto Mural de Jackson Heights, una organización que aspira a colaborar con los artistas locales para transformar espacios a lo largo de Roosevelt Avenue Corridor y a través de Jackson

Heights. La idea es revitalizar espacios públicos, promover la creatividad, fomentar lazos sociales e inspirar a los niños de la comunidad. El primer mural, "The Jackson Heights Mural Project Welcomes You to Jackson Heights", de Noah Bassman, celebra las diversas culturas que hacen prosperar a este vecindario. Esperamos que esté terminado en noviembre. Si quieres saber más, apuntarte como voluntario o hacer una donación, visita [jhmuralproject.com](http://jhmuralproject.com) y síguenos en Instagram en [@jhmuralproject](https://www.instagram.com/jhmuralproject).

## Renovación de las canchas de tenis de Travers Park

Este verano, el Departamento de Recreación y Parques de la Ciudad de Nueva York renovó las canchas de tenis de Travers Park. La comisionada de parques Iris Rodríguez-Rosa respondió con generosidad a las peticiones de quienes se reúnen no solo para jugar, sino para hacer amigos, crear comunidad y promover la inclusión. La renovación también recibió apoyo de Community Board 3 Queens, la Asociación de Tenis de Estados

Unidos, el JHBG y el jardín de niños. ¡Ven a darles vistazo!

## Una mujer enojona

POR RUDY GRECO

Marguerite Park fue uno de los miembros fundadores del Jackson Heights Beautification Group, creado en 1988. Vivió en la calle 80, en The Chateau. A Marguerite le enojaba ver el grafiti en todos lados. Descubrió y se puso en contacto con gente de Sylvan, California, pueblo pionero en la limpieza comunitaria de grafiti, que compartió su experiencia y sus exitosas tácticas. El JHBG representa el primer esfuerzo comunitario para limpiar el grafiti en Jackson Heights. Después de 36 años, nuestro vecindario está prácticamente libre de grafiti. Gracias, Marguerite, por enojarte y, sobre todo, por hacer algo al respecto. Descansen en paz.

## Gatos: de animales útiles a amigos peludos

POR THEODOSIA KALLIONTZIS

Los gatos no son nativos de América del Norte. Existe un fenómeno paleontológico conocido como el "cat gap" (brecha del gato), que se refiere a la ausencia de gatos en nuestro territorio. Si ahora tenemos felinos peludos como amigos es porque sirvieron para el control de ratones en los barcos que venían a Norteamérica. En Nueva York, los gatos parecen haber llegado con doble identidad: eran, al mismo tiempo, adorables acompañantes y buenos trabajadores. Ahora su trabajo ha pasado a segundo plano.

## Los notables de Jackson Heights: Mae Foley, una policía pionera

POR DANIEL KARATZAS

Mary Vermell nació en el Lower East Side de Mahattan en 1886. En 1923, a los 37 años,

## Nota de la editora: El regalo de la alegría y la compañía

POR MELISSA ZAVALA

Este número del boletín es un homenaje a las mascotas por la alegría que nos dan. Su compañía es un verdadero regalo para sus dueños, algo para regocijarse al acercarnos al final del año.



Mary "Mae" Foley se integró al Departamento de Policía de la ciudad de Nueva York. En algún momento de sus 22 años de carrera, Mae y su familia se mudaron a Jackson Heights, al 30-16 de la calle 82 (considerado ahora East Elmhurst). Su carrera se habría perdido en la historia si no fuera por el libro de Mari K. Eder, generala de división del Ejército de los Estados Unidos ahora jubilada, publicado en 2023. Mae se alistó en el NYPD cuando solo había 55 policías mujeres. Fue una de las primeras integrantes del "Masher Squad", encargado de vigilar que las mujeres no fueran agredidas ni acosadas por los hombres. Mae se jubiló en 1945 y murió en 1967.

### Recordemos a Marguerite Park

Marguerite Park, exdirectora del JHBG, falleció en agosto a los 90 años. Marguerite se mudó a Jackson Heights en la década de 1970 y luego a Florida en 2000, después de su jubilación. Ella estuvo entre los primeros directores del JHBG e impulsó nuestros esfuerzos para limpiar el grafiti. Defensora apasionada de Jackson Heights, fue también dueña de un deli en la calle 82 y agente de seguros de muchas de las cooperativas originales del vecindario.

### Recursos para las mascotas en Jackson Heights

POR MELANIA LOEWY  
Las mascotas nos dan alegría, por eso es importante que las cuidemos bien. Por suerte, Jackson Heights tiene algunos lugares que ofrecen diferentes recursos para su cuidado, como Petco (una tienda que ofrece productos y cuidado para mascotas, ubicada en



Jackson es la adorada mascota de la comisaría de policía 115 en Jackson Heights.

75-07 31st St), JH Crew Dog Run (un parque para perros en la calle 69 y la avenida 35), Lockwood (una tienda de juguetes para gatos en 77-13 37th Avenue) y el parque para perros de Travers Park.

### Cuando cuidar árboles se convierte en una lucha por la información pública

POR LEN MANIACE  
A veces uno se pregunta si la gente del Gobierno ve a los ciudadanos que hacen preguntas como molestos metiches. Desde junio de 2024 he intentado saber cuánto gasta el gobierno de la ciudad en el cuidado de los arbustos y flores de las más de 100 jardineras de la avenida 34. Cansado de no obtener respuesta, en noviembre de 2024 le pedí ayuda a un amigo abogado para formalizar esta búsqueda apegados a la Ley de Acceso a la Información. En agosto de este año por fin obtuvimos por respuesta un montón de datos que de poco nos sirvieron. A mediados de octubre seguíamos negociando por la información con el Departamento de Transporte. No vamos a rendirnos, pues este asunto va más allá de la avenida 34. Es importante que los ciudadanos

exijamos responsabilidad a los funcionarios públicos.

### Jardín pequeño, ciudad grande: acompáñanos a hacer jardinería en la calle 69

POR THE VEGGIE NUGGETS  
El Jardín Veggie Nuggets se ubica en la calle 69 entre las avenidas 35 y 37, cerca del sitio de compost JH-SCRAPS. Tenemos una banca, un mural y, lo más importante, cientos de flores y plantas que hacen de él un paraíso y un hábitat para los polinizadores. Cada semana, los voluntarios nos reunimos para regar, recoger basura, quitar maleza y poner compost. Si deseas ayudar, ven los sábados de 11:00 a. m. a 1:00 p. m. Búscanos en Instagram como [@wetheveggienuggets](https://www.instagram.com/wetheveggienuggets) o visita nuestra página [theveggienuggets.org](https://theveggienuggets.org).

### Una vida de servicio: homenaje a Doris Derwik Wurgler

Doris Derwik Wurgler, una de nuestras directoras con más antigüedad, falleció este verano. Honramos sus décadas de servicio, su fuerza y la dedicación a su familia y a la comunidad, y planeamos develar un tributo especial para ella en la primavera. Ya

fuera enfrentado el sexismo o una pandemia mundial, Doris vivió en tiempos de cambios dramáticos. Por más de una década, Doris dirigió la publicación de este boletín y expandió su alcance. Echaremos de menos su colaboración en el cuidado del vecindario y la preservación de la historia y las tradiciones culturales.

### Una voluntaria escéptica

POR ANNE ZACCARDELLI  
No me gusta arrancar maleza. Siempre había pensado que lo único que hacía el JHBG era arrancar maleza y plantar flores, pero un día mi vecina Marta me invitó a participar. Pasamos parte de la mañana recogiendo basura de las calles y las jardineras y podando las ramas rotas o muy bajas de los árboles. En nuestras caminatas aprendí que los árboles de Jackson Heights necesitan mucho más de lo que me imaginaba. Llevo casi un año como voluntaria y espero la llegada de la primavera para, por fin, obtener mi certificación en poda del gobierno de la ciudad.

### Con Edison da energía a la economía de Nueva York

Suministrar a la ciudad de Nueva York y Westchester con una de las energías más confiables del país no es lo único que hace Con Edison. La compañía está comprometida a proporcionar seguridad y buen servicio a más de nueve millones de personas y 350 000 negocios, al tiempo que ayuda a las familias y los pequeños negocios a usar la energía de manera más eficiente. El trabajo de Con Edison beneficia a Queens mediante alianzas laborales y la contratación de al menos 1800 residentes de la comunidad. ♦

# Love-All! Travers Park's Tennis Courts Got Revamped This Summer

Mr. and Mrs. Staunton with some of the tennis players.



The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation recently upgraded the tennis courts at Travers Park given their popularity. Parks Commissioner Iris Rodriguez-Rosa generously responded to the growing number of tennis players who daily, and throughout every season, come out to form friendships, build community, and promote inclusion.

The original park's renovation designated the Rory Staunton Field as a multi-purpose space, with two tennis courts, running tracks, and three children's hopscotch games. But six years of use has shown tennis to be the main activity.



Mr. and Mrs. Staunton with Monica Vergara of the Neighborhood Tennis Group.

When tennis players began advocating for an improvement to the only public tennis courts in our area, support came from Community Board 3 Queens, the



Top: The courts before the upgrade. Below: Upgraded courts.



United States Tennis Association, the Jackson Heights Beautification Group, and the Garden School, as well as from the parents of the boy after whom Rory Staunton Field was

named, leading to the upgraded courts. Come and check them out! Readers can also learn more about Rory Staunton by going to [EndSepsis.org](http://EndSepsis.org). ♦

## A Life of Service: A Tribute to Doris Derwik Wurgler

One of our longest serving directors, Doris Derwik Wurgler, passed away this summer. We honor her decades of service, her strength, and her dedication to family and community. We plan to unveil a special tribute to her in the spring. Stay tuned for details. As the year comes to a close, our organization's latest presidents remember her. They reflect on who Doris was and we hope that readers will think of her and celebrate her service to the neighborhood.

When I think of Doris, I am reminded of the famous quote by Maya Angelou: "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

Doris did and said so many amazing things throughout her extraordinary life, and yet, what stands out most in my memory is her presence. Doris made me feel like I was in good company with a smart and fierce woman who was ahead of her time. She had a way of making you feel like you had to bring your A-game because she would not accept less.

I was so privileged to know her and to have many years working side by side with her through JHBG. Doris will be awfully missed and we will always remember her presence. —Leslie Ellman

Doris once shared one of her experiences with me about her involvement with the one and only powerful civic organization in JH. She was very committed to the neighborhood and to the organization. She thought she was qualified and wanted to run for president but her dream would not materialize because she was a woman. It was a sign of the times. Men were the only ones considered for leadership. She nevertheless continued her work and lived long enough to witness a great shift in attitude. Her devotion to whatever she committed herself to kept her going. —Edwin O'Keefe Westley

Whether enduring sexism or a global pandemic, Doris lived through dramatically changing times. Transformations to the means of communication eased production for the newsletter, which she led for over a decade. The organization underwent changes as well but Doris helped maintain traditions, whether with Skandia Lodge or preserving neighborhood history. She will be missed. ♦



# SMALL GARDEN, BIG CITY: Come Garden with Us on 69th Street!

BY THE VEGGIE NUGGETS



The colorful Veggie Nuggets Garden (above) brings much-needed vibrancy to an industrial corridor. Left: the young gardeners celebrate some of their accomplishments with a seed giveaway. Below: besides their enduring blooms, when squeezed gently from the side, snapdragon flowers appear like snapping dragon mouths, giving them their common name.



**A**t the Veggie Nuggets Garden, dogs take up no small part of our day-to-day operations. Dog poop is one thing we often clean up (dog owners, please do your part!), and volunteer, Gail, has a dog who's often in harrowing situations requiring rescue.

Our garden is on 69th Street, between 35th and 37th Avenues, next to the community compost site, JH-SCRAPS. We have a bench, a mural, and most importantly, hundreds of flowers and herbs that make our small section of the city a paradise. We prioritize creating a habitat for pollinators in our city (and won a grant for doing just that) by planting pollinator-

friendly plants like milkweed. One of our favorite plants in the garden are the snapdragons, which bloom for a shockingly long period of time, all the way into late October.

Every week, we volunteer to maintain the garden—it's a lot of work! We water, pick up trash, weed, and apply compost. We often work during JH-SCRAPS' volunteer hours between 11am and 1pm. If you have a green thumb, want to help out or smell the flowers, come work with us during those times on Saturdays.

You can find us on instagram: [@wetheveggienuggets](https://www.instagram.com/wetheveggienuggets) or on our website: [theveggienuggets.org](http://theveggienuggets.org).

# JACKSON HEIGHTS NOTABLES

Highlighting former Jackson Heights residents of notable interest for the ways in which they represent our neighborhood.

## Mae Foley **Pioneering Policewoman** BY DAN KARATZAS

**W**hen she was born in New York City's Lower East Side in 1886, Mary Vermell's parents would never have predicted that their daughter would have a career outside the home, let alone one fighting crime in her hometown. She married young and had children. It wasn't until the age of 37 that Mary "Mae" Foley joined the New York City Police Department in 1923. At some point during her 22-year career, Mae and her family moved to Jackson Heights, residing at 30-16 82nd Street (now considered East Elmhurst).

Mae's career would have been lost to history had it not been for the book *The Girls Who Fought Crime: The Untold True Story of the Country's First Female Investigator and Her Crime Fighting Squad*, authored by retired US Army Major General Mari K. Eder in 2023. In 1915, Mae Foley helped organize the Women's Police Reserve, essentially a female auxiliary police force. Eight years later she joined the NYPD when there were just 55 women police officers. Prior to her joining the

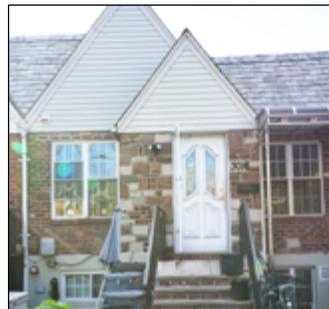
force, the passage of the 18th Amendment, commonly referred to as Prohibition, would increase the need for law enforcement, especially in large cities. Mae, it turned out, ended up serving on the NYPD's "front lines."

She was an early member of what became known as the "Masher Squad," which saw to it that women were not harassed or assaulted by men—especially drunks, perverts and other undesirables. According to Eder: "Mae realized that so much of policing is about mediating conflict and resolving issues in relationships. It's about talking and listening." Who knows what she must have seen during those years.

She served in Manhattan's 19th precinct between 1925 and 1930 and was later promoted to the rank of detective in the Queens homicide division. By 1935, she was working under Manhattan District Attorney Thomas Dewey, protecting female witnesses. She assisted in such well-known cases as those involving mafia kingpin, Lucky Luciano, the unsolved

"Three X Murder" in 1930, and the pro-Nazi activities of the German American Bund.

Mae retired in 1945, and her career with the NYPD was lauded in a short article in *The New York Times*. In 1961, Queens County proclaimed her birthday Mae Foley Day. Last year, the corner of 50th Avenue and 5th Street in Long Island City was named "Detective Mary "Mae" Foley Way" in honor of her service to the city and the nearby 108th Precinct. Mae Foley died in 1967. ♦



Considered a meticulous investigator, crime fighter Mae Foley lived in this cozy home in East Elmhurst (left). The street corner named after her (right) is down the street from the historic 108th Precinct, a direct descendant of the police force predating the city's incorporation in 1898.

## Announcements!

### Holiday Lighting

**Saturday, December 6 at the Post Office:**  
4pm for Arts and Crafts, and 5pm for caroling!



### Table Wine 79-14 37th Avenue

Just having celebrated its 16th year in Jackson Heights this November, **Table Wine** offers shoppers a wide selection of spirits, liqueurs, ciders and more! Stop by on **any Friday before Christmas between 5-8pm for FREE tastings** of new wines, just in time to make your selections for holiday dinners!

Then on **December 31st**, the store will transform into *Bubble Central* all day, complete with disco ball! Pick up your preferred celebratory drink for evening festivities, from Champagne to Cava, Prosecco, or more unexpectedly fun varieties like Pét-Nats (the original method of making sparkling wine) and even a semi-sparkling skin-fermented white wine (AKA orange wine) from Greece! Be sure to ask the knowledgeable staff for their recommendations.



### Plant Exchange

With this past fall's successful plant exchange at the Sunday Green Market—50 plants were given away by neighbors and for neighbors—we will host another event next spring! Start your cuttings and clones after the new year so that they're ready for the warmer weather. See you in the Spring!

# The Reluctant Volunteer

BY ANNE ZACCARDELLI



Volunteers work on tree care all year round! Socializing and care work can also mean friendships and fun. Join this active group by emailing [JHBGtrees@gmail.com](mailto:JHBGtrees@gmail.com).

I do not like pulling weeds. For some reason, I thought pulling weeds and planting flowers were the only activities JHBG did. I would often see volunteers in yellow shirts working on the garden at the post office, but I avoided joining. Then one day, one of the Super Stewards and my neighbor, Marta, invited me to join the group on a cold, wintery day (when I figured we wouldn't be pulling any weeds). And lo and behold, our time was spent picking up trash from the street, plucking plastic bags from trees, and pruning broken or inconveniently low tree limbs! I found that tree trimming was very satisfying.

On our walks, I learned that street trees in Jackson Heights need much more care and attention than I realized. I grew up

in Michigan—in a subdivision aptly named Nottingham Forest. Tree care was minimal in the forests surrounding my home. Trees grew, fell, and died, returning to nature. Not so for the street trees of New York City! Separated from their fellow trees, street trees have to battle compacted soil, insects, dog poop, and drought to survive. Saving trees? I can get behind that!

By the time summer arrived, I was prepared! What I learned was that cultivating plants in tree beds accomplishes a few goals. Flowers and plants not only look pretty, but they aerate and enrich the soil for the trees—not to mention preventing human feet from marching through tree beds! I also learned that grass takes precious water from the trees. I still may not like pulling weeds, but I definitely

attack tufts of grass with gusto! During the summer months young trees need several gallons of water a week to survive. Thankfully for them, I love plunging my arms and hands into our buckets of cold water in the summer heat.

It's been almost a year since I started to volunteer with JHBG, and I've found that I've taken a greater interest in my surroundings. I've noted what types of trees are along my street and which ones

may need some help. I have a rain gauge app to track how much rain we get. I also pick up any wayward plastic bags on the street so I don't have to tear them out of tree branches later! I look forward to next spring when I can finally get my tree pruning certification from the city. ♦

For more volunteer opportunities with JHBG, go to [jhb.org/volunteer](http://jhb.org/volunteer) or email [info@jhb.org](mailto:info@jhb.org).

## Con Edison is Energizing New York's Economy



**P**owering New York City and Westchester with some of the nation's most reliable energy isn't the only thing Con Edison does. The company is committed to providing safe and dependable service to more than nine million people and 350,000 businesses while helping families and local businesses use energy more efficiently. Here are some meaningful ways Con Edison's work is benefiting Queens.

**Con Edison invested \$262 Million in Queens businesses in 2024.**

### Local Hiring and Workforce Partnerships

- ★ 1,800 of our employees reside in Queens.
- ★ 17% of our new hires in 2024 reside in Queens.
- ★ 67% of Queens hires came from disadvantaged communities.
- ★ Of the over 1,300 total hires in 2024, 14% were assigned to Queens work locations.

**Con Edison meets the energy needs of Queens customers by offering affordability programs and energy efficiency based on industry-leading measures of reliability and clean energy solutions.**

- ★ \$65M in bill discounts provided to more than 84,000 income-eligible customers in the borough.
- ★ \$68M in incentives, resulting in significant energy savings for Queens customers.
- ★ 3,500 electric vehicle chargers facilitated through the company's PowerReady program.
- ★ 32 community partners based here who received over \$1.5M in 2024.

**Con Edison continues to play a vital role in growing and energizing the economy to improve the quality of life for all New Yorkers.**

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# When Caring for Trees Turns Into a Battle for Public Information

BY LEN MANIACE

Sometimes you have to wonder whether some government officials view concerned citizens who ask questions as annoying buttinskies.

Since June of 2024, I've been attempting to learn how much New York City spends on the intensive care given to the shrubs and flowers in more than 100 planters along 34th Avenue's Open Street. The Horticultural Society of New York is under contract to perform all care using paid staff.

My thinking was, it would be great if only a similar program could care for the 350-plus trees on medians and along curbs of the Open Street, plants that now depend on care from JHBG Tree LC volunteers who cover large stretches of the 11372 Zip Code.

So far, my search for that information has come up empty.

Why does this matter? Better care is crucial to keeping our trees alive and thriving, and in return, trees take care of us. Trees clean our air and reduce water pollution; they also help battle climate change by storing carbon dioxide and by protecting neighborhoods from the extreme heat caused by climate change. As JHBG Tree LC volunteers say, trees are Mother Nature's air conditioners. In comparison, what environmental benefits do we get from the Open Street planters? Not much, though they are nice to look at.



JHBG Tree LC volunteers tap a hydrant on 34th Avenue to water parched trees on Open Street medians and along curbs this past summer. NYC issued JHBG a permit to use the hydrants for tree watering.

Fed up with no response from the city Department of Transportation, despite regular reminders, I teamed up with a lawyer friend to formalize this hunt in November of 2024. We filed a request with the state using the Freedom of Information Law for the data we were seeking, a process I relied on to pry information from uncooperative government agencies over a 34-year career as a daily journalist. For this request we also sought a complete picture of the agency's spending on the Open Street, not just what was paid to the Horticultural Society. (The pursuit of this information was not a JHBG activity, but something my friend and I undertook on our own.)

We know the wheels of government can turn slowly, but this surprised us: it would take six months, the agency wrote. May came and went, nada. Finally in August, the DOT responded with a wide assortment of data, little of which was useful. With guidance

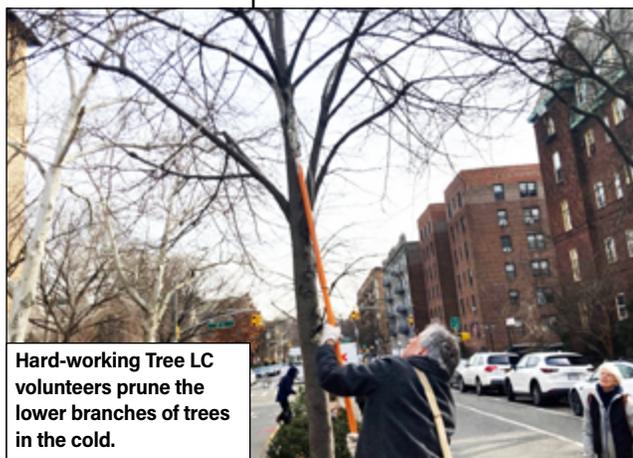
from the state Committee on Open Government, we appealed and as of mid-October are negotiating with DOT officials for the information.

We're not about to give up this effort; its importance goes beyond the Open Street and trees. With a handful of exceptions, government records belong to the public and access to them is viewed as essential in democratic societies. With the decline of news organizations which once sought this kind of information, it's going to be more important than ever for individuals to hold our government officials responsible. ♦

*The following organizations can provide more information on how Freedom of Information Laws work:*

**New York State Committee on Open Government**  
[opengovernment.ny.gov](http://opengovernment.ny.gov)

**The National Freedom of Information Coalition**  
[nfoic.org/about](http://nfoic.org/about)



Hard-working Tree LC volunteers prune the lower branches of trees in the cold.

# Remembering Marguerite Park

**F**ormer JHBG Director Marguerite Park, passed away in August at the age of 90. Marguerite, who moved to Jackson Heights in the 1970s, retired to Florida in the early 2000s. She was one of the JHBG's original directors, and was responsible for initiating our anti-graffiti efforts. She was a passionate advocate for the neighborhood, having been a local business owner (a deli on 82nd Street) and an insurance agent for several of the original cooperatives in the neighborhood.

Marguerite's cousin and Jackson Heights resident, Vincent Amato, shared some reminiscences:

She was eight years older, and always petite and pretty, but what was really outstanding about her was her vitality and



energy. As a teenager, she loved all of the Italian singers of the 1940s, but had a special fondness for Sinatra. Born in the shadow of East New York Brooklyn's 75th Precinct, we soon learned all the lore and the lure of the old neighborhood. Our paths would cross again, when my family moved to Jackson Heights in the early 1980s, and I became acquainted with my cousin's professional accomplishments and her commitment to preserving the beauty of Jackson Heights. Marguerite was fiercely loyal to family and friends and to old-fashioned values of neighborliness and civic virtue.

She is survived by her daughter, Linda Park, who shares her mother's *joie de vivre*. ♦

## To An Angry Woman, We Give Our Thanks

BY RUDY GRECO

**M**arguerite Park was one of the founding members of the Jackson Heights Beautification Group in 1988. She lived on 80th Street in The Chateau, across the street from Mike Crowley, our first President, who resided in the Elm Court with his neighbors, Fred and Ingrid Fox who were also involved in JHBG in its early days. Other early members included Maire Breen, Virginia Stevens, and Pat and Bill Cleary.

This group of neighbors were angry about the dog waste that littered the sidewalks and represented the municipal government's neglect which grew with the demise of the Queensboro Corporation, the company that built and managed the Jackson Heights community.

Marguerite was particularly angered by the graffiti which was everywhere you looked. She discovered and contacted the town of Sylvan, California, pioneers in community graffiti removal and prevention. They shared their experiences and successful tactics with us. The rest is history.

JHBG was the very first community graffiti removal effort in New York City. We blazed a path that was followed by the NYPD, the Queens Borough President, Queens College, Con Edison, and countless other groups. Today, 36 years later, Jackson Heights is virtually graffiti free and our lampposts are regularly cleared of the visual pollution of unsightly posters and notices.

Thank you, Marguerite, for being angry, and most of all, for doing something about it. Rest In Peace. ♦



Proactive neighborhood volunteers in the 1990s cleaned the streets and scrubbed graffiti to beautify the neighborhood. That work is still central to the organization.



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**VIEWS FROM THE HEIGHTS – Winter 2025**

## ONGOING EVENTS

### **Saturdays, 11am-1 pm**

#### **JH-SCRAPS (composting)**

69th St. & 35th Ave.

For info on what is compostable,  
contact [info@JHBG.org](mailto:info@JHBG.org)

### **Most Saturdays, 10 am**

**Tree LC** Meets at the NE corner of  
80th St. & 37th Ave.

Schedule may vary and include some  
Sundays. Check the

[JHBG Facebook page](#)

for complete information.

### **Saturdays 10 am**

#### **Clean and Green**

For complete details,  
go to [info@JHBG.org](mailto:info@JHBG.org).

### **Saturdays 10:30 am**

Meet at the gardens at St. Mark's  
Episcopal Church on 34th Ave.,  
between 81st and 82nd Streets.

### **Daily**

#### **JH-CREW dog run**

69th St. between 34th & 35th Aves.

To join, go to [info@JHBG.org](mailto:info@JHBG.org)  
for application. Suggested donation,  
\$25/year.

## FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS:

*Please join us or renew your membership (there are 2 ways):*

Go to [www.JHBG.org/membership](http://www.JHBG.org/membership)

and pay by credit card. It's quick and easy!

Mail a check with this form for the membership level you select to:

**JHBG–Membership • P.O. Box 720253**

**Jackson Heights, NY 11372**

Membership includes a subscription to *Views from the Heights* and helps fund our numerous  
community activities. JHBG is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, so your contribution is tax deductible.

#### **Please check membership level:**

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|--|---|--|
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#### **Please print the following:**

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Address (Include apt. #): \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

If you're interested in being contacted about any JHBG activities, please email

[info@JHBG.org](mailto:info@JHBG.org).