

## A BIG DAY FOR THE PARKWAY

The Benjamin Franklin Parkway has played host to so many things that happen in Philadelphia, and to so many people who have visited. Now, it's the Parkway's time to be guest of honor.

Philadelphia's grand cultural boulevard, the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, is turning 100, and at a press conference today, the Parkway Council, a coalition of cultural and educational institutions, businesses and residences in the Parkway Museums District, gave a glimpse of the plans.

Parkway 100 will feature more than a year of activities to celebrate the centennial of the Parkway. Beginning September 8, 2017, and continuing through November 16, 2018, the Parkway Council, and its museums, attractions, institutions and neighbors, will present 14 months of Exhibitions, Events, Community Conversations, and Promotions to mark the milestone.

The vision is to celebrate the bold civic legacy of the creation of the Parkway; engage us all by providing opportunities to come together, learn and appreciate Philadelphia's grand axis and boulevard; and through art, community, cultural, educational, historical, horticultural and science activities and events, encourage us to commemorate the Parkway's transformative creation, embracing past and recent progress, and challenging us to think and act boldly to make additional improvements in the future.

There will be an emphasis on telling the Parkway's story, because there's a lot to the story and there aren't yet a lot of places where it is being told. A key theme will be "Connection" -- how the Parkway connects the city to the park; connects us to art and culture and science and nature; and connects us to each other.

Today's announcement was just the beginning. Programs are constantly being added to the calendar. There are already many partners, and still more that want to play a part, we're sure. This website, blog and the Parkway Museums District Facebook will be great sources of information on ways to engage with Parkway 100, so bookmark and follow us.

Here are just a few of the highlights:

### **Exhibitions: "Collections and Connections"**

For the first time in the history of the Parkway Museums District, each of the member institutions, attractions and organizations are collaborating to create a series of exhibitions sharing a common theme. Titled "Collections and Connections," these exhibitions will celebrate the collection of significant art, culture and architecture on the Parkway, and connect the institutions as one destination. The exhibitions will vary in

scope, size and length, all taking place some time during the celebration. Make plans to see them all!

This one will be a centerpiece:

*Winter Fountains for the Parkway* by artist Jennifer Steinkamp is commissioned by the Parkway Council with the Association for Public Art (aPA) for Parkway 100, and with major support from the William Penn Foundation. The nearly four-month public art installation will redefine the Benjamin Franklin Parkway after dark, illuminating the vast space and captivating the public as they transverse the Parkway at night. From December 2017 through March 2018, five dazzling, mesmerizing and enchanting *Winter Fountains*, inspired by the signature fountains of the Parkway landscape, will glow with animated video projections informed by the botanical, horticultural and related collections found in the cultural and educational institutions of the Parkway Museums District. Five architectural domes measuring 7.5 feet high and 35 feet in diameter will be covered with glass beading, producing a shimmering beauty during the day and providing a vintage-era movie screen projection surface at night for the artist's flowing video animations.

Winter Fountains for the Parkway is supported by a \$1.25 million grant from the William Penn Foundation, and is not to be missed.

There's more: *Corridor of Culture: 100 Years of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway* exhibit at the Free Library of Philadelphia; *Parkway as Civic Space* at Friends Select School; *A Peek at the Past* at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University; *Old Masters Now: Rediscovering the John G. Johnson Collection* at the Philadelphia Museum of Art; *Paul Crét and Dr. Barnes* at The Barnes Foundation; *Strange Neighbors* at Eastern State Penitentiary; *City Hall: The Design and Architecture of The People's Building* presented by the City of Philadelphia Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy in partnership with The Athenaeum; and an artifacts exhibit at the Philadelphia Mormon Temple.

## **Events**

The **Parkway 100 "We Are Connected" Kickoff Festival** from 4:00-10:00 p.m. on Friday, September 8, 2017, is the official launch of the centennial celebration. More than 100 free, family-friendly activities will take place indoors and outdoors at the museums and attractions, as well as in the Parkway's pocket parks, great public places, and many observation decks. Admission discounts to view the museums' collections and exhibitions during Friday evening hours will also be offered in the form of "pay what you wish" admission or a Parkway 100 coupon. Inside and outside activities will include entertainment, make-and-take crafts and highlights tours. Among the activities neighborhood residents and visitors can enjoy are a community art project; plein-air painting and art lessons at scenic vistas; photo walks; hand painting of frogs, swans and

turtles at Swann Memorial Fountain; mobile making; lighted balloon parades; guided architecture and public art tours; kids music jam sessions; line dancing with dinosaurs; storytelling circles and book carts. Park Towne Place will unveil a Parkway mural working with Mural Arts Philadelphia. A television special will be broadcast on 6abc in conjunction with the kickoff festival and showcase the many attractions that are part of the Parkway Museums District.

To conclude the Parkway 100 celebration, Parkway Museums District museums, institutions and attractions will simultaneously open their doors to the public on Friday night, November 16, 2018, for the **Parkway 100 Finale**. Installations, performances and concerts, premieres, docent tours, café talks and educational programs will encourage a progressive, visit-them-all experience.

Other Parkway Events include: Night Skies in the Observatory at The Franklin Institute, a City in Bloom Planting Day on the Parkway with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society; concert series at the Cathedral Basilica of SS Peter & Paul; and the summer 2018 season at The Oval, presented by City of Philadelphia Parks and Recreation and the Fairmount Park Conservancy.

### **Community Conversations: Telling the Parkway Story**

The development of the Parkway took place over decades, from the first proposal and signed petition received by City Council in 1891, to groundbreaking in 1907, and finally construction in 1917. "On November 16, 1918, Philadelphia's *Evening Public Ledger* announced the completion of the Parkway, reporting: "Uninterrupted Parkway at last leads from City Hall to Fairmount's entrance."

Chief Parkway historian and author David Brownlee details the creation of the Parkway in his book, *Building the City Beautiful* (1989), a great read. He will be updating this important Parkway history text and the Parkway Council will re-release it in 2018 in conjunction with the centennial.

Discussions planned in conjunction with the book re-launch, as well as a series of Community Conversations presented each month during the centennial, will tell the story of the Parkway and encourage residents and visitors to share their own Parkway stories. Among the education activities planned are community forums and lectures, behind-the-scenes tours, guided and self-guided walking tours, and a program of events called "Observe-a-Stories" held on the Parkway's many observation decks and overlook spaces, Parkway stories will be shared, informing audiences about the history of Philadelphia's grand cultural axis, the people who were instrumental in the development of the Parkway, and those who make the Parkway what it is today and might be in the future.

A few: a two-part forum presented by Center City District and Central Philadelphia Development Corporation; "Beautiful Parkway...But Where Did Everyone Go?"

presented by Eastern State Penitentiary; “Lost Buildings of the Parkway” presented by Hidden City Philadelphia; “Rocky Steps” presented by the Greater Philadelphia Film Office with filmmaker Garrett Brown. The Barnes Foundation will offer a four-week “History of the Parkway” course with David Brownlee.

By November 2018, we’ll all be experts.

### **Promotions**

Beautiful street banners, a “My Parkway” photo contest, restaurant promotions, hotel packages, and official Parkway 100 merchandise will add to the centennial celebration. Many of the events the Parkway hosts each year will feature centennial promotions and themes.

It’s a great time to shine a spotlight on one of Philadelphia’s truly great public spaces, and to celebrate what it means to all of us.

Parkway 100 is a result of the creative collaboration of 23 Parkway Council member organizations, including: The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, Aimco/Park Towne Place, Association for Public Art, The Barnes Foundation, Brandywine Realty Trust, Cathedral Basilica of SS Peter & Paul, Center City District (Cret Park, Dilworth Park, and Sister Cities Park), City of Philadelphia Parks & Recreation, College of Physicians/Mutter Museum, Eastern State Penitentiary, Fairmount Water Works, Fox Rothschild, The Franklin Institute, Free Library of Philadelphia, Friends Select School, Independence Visitor Center, The Logan Hotel, Moore College of Art & Design, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, Philadelphia Mormon Temple, Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Philadelphian, and the Rodin Museum.

Parkway 100 is made possible through the generous leadership support of the William Penn Foundation, PNC Bank and PECO, and the following sponsors: The Logan Hotel, Cooke & Berlinger, 6abc, Devine + Partners, LeftHand Creative, and Visit Philadelphia.