



Coatesville's Palmer Park to Undergo a Green Makeover

MEDIA, Pa., August 16, 2018 – Officials broke ground today on construction of a unique nature and water play area in Coatesville's Palmer Park.

Palmer Park is a one-acre neighborhood park on the east end of Coatesville. Its new play space, which was designed with input from the community, will replace a long-closed swimming pool with an innovative approach to promoting natural play and environmental stewardship.

The water and play area is made possible through the Greening Coatesville initiative; a partnership of the City of Coatesville, Brandywine Health Foundation, and Natural Lands. Major financial support has been provided through a \$150,000 Building Better Communities Grant from the American Water Charitable Foundation and the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).

"The reawakening and renewal of our city parks translate into regeneration of the lives of our families," says Linda Lavender-Norris, Coatesville City Council president. "We will be forever grateful for the relationship that we've established with Natural Lands, the Brandywine Health Foundation, and supporters like the American Water Charitable Foundation for investing in our health and well-being."

The new play area will include a splash pad space with seven water features that will feed a short, man-made stream that leads to a shallow, rock-lined wading area. The top of the stream will originate in a circular plaza surrounded by benches, with an old-fashioned hand-pump that can also be used by children to interact with the water.

"We are excited to provide this opportunity for Coatesville residents to enjoy, learn about and appreciate the environment in a fun and engaging way," said Laura Martin, President of the American Water Charitable Foundation. "This addition to Palmer Park will benefit the children and families in this community while encouraging the continued viability and protection of our nation's water resources."

From the plaza, a series of concrete paths will wind through the park past inviting grassy areas, newly planted shade trees, scattered boulders, and seven "nature play" features, including an embankment slide, a post hop, web climber, tension line, log balance, stump jump, and branch climber.

"Investing in our parks has long-term benefits for the community as a whole in building social cohesion, creating healthy environments, and increasing opportunities for Coatesville residents to be active," says Vanessa Briggs, president/CEO of the Brandywine Health Foundation.

What's more, positive changes in urban parks and green spaces play a role in economic revitalization. Cities where parks, recreation, and trails play a vital role in the lives of their residents are vibrant places to live and are, therefore, attractive to businesses and residents.





“It has been truly energizing to see the community, private businesses, and government come together to begin the restoration of Palmer Park,” noted Molly Morrison, president of Natural Lands. “We are particularly grateful to American Water Charitable Foundation, NRPA, Chester County, and our other supporters for encouraging environmental stewardship by investing in nature play.”

Greening Coatesville was selected as a Building Better Communities grant recipient from the American Water Charitable Foundation and the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). The city is one of three communities awarded this grant in 2017.

“Today’s groundbreaking demonstrates that positive things will happen when community partners join forces for a worthy cause. We know that revitalizing Palmer Park means a great deal to Coatesville, especially by bringing families and neighbors together to enjoy this fun, safe recreational area for years to come,” said Terry Maenza, director of communications, Pennsylvania American Water.

For information about the Building Better Communities program, visit <https://amwater.com/corp/customers-and-communities/american-water-charitable-foundation/signature-program>.

Construction of the nature and water play area marks the first phase of implementation of the revitalization plan for the entire park, which was completed earlier this year. A community advisory committee helped to guide the planning process and several public meetings offered opportunities for neighborhood input. The plan was supported by grants from the Chester County Vision Partnership Program, ArcelorMittal, and Chester County Community Foundation. Chester County has also provided funds for implementation of the nature and water play area.

Chester County Commissioners Michelle Kichline, Kathi Cozzone and Terence Farrell noted: “Chester County’s focus on the development of our urban centers doesn’t just concentrate efforts on economic development. It’s a community-wide approach that relies on the strengths of many partners to address the health, the environment, the recreational and the neighborhood elements of a community, as well as economic development. The Palmer Park makeover is a prime example of this and is another project that shows great things are happening in Coatesville as the entire community works together. We’re pleased to be part of it.”

“Parks are always positive for a community,” said PA Senator Andy Dinniman. “But when they are done in a creative way like the redesigned Palmer Park, we go from positive to wonderful.”

State Representative Harry Lewis noted “It is always nice and rewarding when positive support for our children and community takes place. This construction site of such a significant and unique nature and water area in Palmer Park fits that positive step in the continued growth of our community.”

Lifelong resident and Coatesville Parks and Recreation Commission member James Bookman recalls when Palmer Park first opened. “Everyone went there,” he says. “It wasn’t just a park; it was like the hub of the community.” He is excited to see new investments in the park. “You might think, does it matter to change one





little park?” Bookman asked. “But, change one and who knows where it leads! The good energy in Coatesville is snowballing.”

This project also received support from NRPA and The Walt Disney Company’s Meet Me at the Park Play Spaces Program, ArcelorMittal, and gifts to Natural Lands’ Campaign for Humans and Nature.

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About Greening Coatesville: The Greening Coatesville initiative was launched in 2016 by the City of Coatesville, Brandywine Health Foundation, and Natural Lands, in order to improve access to inviting outdoor spaces, encourage healthy activity, and build community cohesion. It is guided by *Coatesville Parks 2021: An Action Plan for Thriving Parks and Healthy People*, which was developed with broad public input. In addition to the revitalization of Palmer Park, the partners have worked with the community to build a new playground in in the city’s Patton Park (made possible by PECO) and has helped to launch new Friends groups to help maintain and program the park.

The American Water Charitable Foundation was established in 2010 with a founding contribution from American Water, the American Water Charitable Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that provides a formal way to demonstrate the company’s ongoing commitment to being a good neighbor, citizen, and contributor to the communities where American Water and its employees live, work and operate. The Foundation helps support American Water employee-identified nonprofit endeavors. More information about the Foundation can be found at amwater.com

Pennsylvania American Water, a subsidiary of American Water (NYSE: AWK), is the largest investor owned water utility in the state, providing high-quality and reliable water and/or wastewater services to approximately 2.4 million people. With a history dating back to 1886, American Water is the largest and most geographically diverse U.S. publicly traded water and wastewater utility company. The company employs more than 7,100 dedicated professionals who provide regulated and market-based drinking water, wastewater and other related services to an estimated 14 million people in 45 states and Ontario, Canada. American Water provides safe, clean, affordable and reliable water services to our customers to make sure we keep their lives flowing. For more information, visit amwater.com and follow American Water on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

The National Recreation and Park Association is a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to ensuring that all Americans have access to parks and recreation for health, conservation and social equity. Through its network of nearly 60,000 recreation and park professionals and advocates, NRPA encourages the promotion of healthy and active lifestyles, conservation initiatives and equitable access to parks and public space. For





more information, visit www.nrpa.org. For digital access to NRPA's flagship publication, *Parks & Recreation*, visit www.parksandrecreation.org.

Natural Lands is dedicated to preserving and nurturing nature's wonders while creating opportunities for joy and discovery in the outdoors for everyone. As the Greater Philadelphia region's oldest and largest land conservation organization, Natural Lands has preserved more than 125,000 acres, including 43 nature preserves totaling more than 23,000 acres. Some 2.5 million people live within five miles of land under the organization's protection. Land for life, nature for all. natlands.org.

The **Brandywine Health Foundation** has distributed over \$16 million in grants and scholarships, and provides resources and leadership, bringing the community together to increase access to health care for everyone, to help young people grow up safe and successful, and to build a vibrant and healthier Coatesville. To learn more about the Brandywine Health Foundation visit www.brandywinefoundation.org or contact info@brandywinefoundation.org.

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