Fall has arrived swiftly. A month ago we were discussing lack of air conditioning in schools during a sweltering heat wave that had us all questioning the wisdom of the academic calendar and lamenting the inevitable effects of climate change. Today, it’s been cool mornings and wonderful early autumn weather.

And in stark contrast to the relatively quiet summer, it is the season of the big local event. This weekend will see two of the neighborhood’s biggest events – the Chestnut Hill Conservancy’s Night of Lights and the Chestnut Hill Community Association’s Black and White Gala. Both are important occasions to both celebrate Chestnut Hill and support it.

Night of Lights will be the first to take place on Friday, Oct. 5. Night of Lights is an event organized by the Chestnut Hill Conservancy to highlight the neighborhood’s rich history through the projection of photographs onto the sides of buildings along Germantown Avenue, from Willow Grove to Rex avenues “Lights” is more than historic photos. Business owners, residents and other volunteers will tell stories about photos along the Avenue, providing important oral histories of Chestnut Hill. I’ve said it before: a huge
part of Chestnut Hill's attraction as a place to live is that it has history, giving the streets and homes here a real sense of place and narrative. Night of Lights provides us with the opportunity to immerse ourselves in that history.

The next evening, Saturday, Oct. 6, is the annual Black and White Gala. The gala, organized by the Chestnut Hill Community Association is a celebration of the neighborhood's people and takes place on the grounds of Chestnut Hill Hospital from 7 to 10 p.m.

Gala-goers will be treated to what is always the biggest party of the year, with great food and drink, music from the Rich Posmontier Ensemble and more. This year's theme is a masquerade ball and guests are encouraged to bring masks along with their black-tie wear.

And in addition to a good time, the gala is one of the association's most important fundraisers. As one of the neighborhood's most important institutions, the CHCA has a stake in everything from the neighborhood's zoning process to supporting the planting of street trees. As an organization, it touches nearly every aspect of civic life in Chestnut Hill. Supporting the CHCA is directly supporting Chestnut Hill.

The event will also be collecting art supplies for the benefit of John Story Jenks Academy of Arts and Sciences.

This weekend is a great opportunity to support local organizations, so be sure to attend one or both. You'll learn something, have a good time and give back to your neighborhood in the process. For more on Night of Lights, see chconservancy.org/night-of-lights. For more on the Black and White Gala, including ticket purchases, see chestnuthill.org/black_and_white_gala.php.

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