



Chestnut Hill Local

(/)

Monday, February 1, 2021

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Together with our community champions: Looking back at 2020 for the Chestnut Hill Conservancy



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Still from “History at Home” narrated slideshow video series. All “History at Home” content can be enjoyed for free at chconservancy.org/history-at-home.

Posted Wednesday, December 30, 2020 4:00 pm

By Eileen Javers Chestnut Hill Conservancy Board President

Amidst incredible uncertainty this past year, we have all looked to our neighbors and our surroundings with new appreciation. Because of your support, the Chestnut Hill Conservancy has been able to sustain our stewardship of the history, architecture, and open space we treasure. The importance of home and the solace we find in our shared architecture, open spaces, and history have never been more apparent.

Although we have seen each other mostly through camera lenses, our planned 2020 focus on common ground has continued. In this past year, we have had some remarkable preservation successes, including the protection of the Keewaydin estate through listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, progress on the

revitalization of the Shipley White House at 717 Glengarry Road, and the creation of a new easement on 58 W. Willow Grove Avenue – the former home of noted conservationist Allston Jenkins.

Our online archives (<http://chconservancy.org/archives>) and onsite archivists have provided researchers and staff with information necessary to investigate home and family histories, and we have welcomed some remarkable new donations. As an archive of our social history, the Conservancy has also been working to document for the future the history that is being made right now. Through photographs, recorded stories, and other artifacts, we've recorded and will continue to record the evolution of how our community is experiencing and responding to the Covid pandemic.

While some Conservancy lectures, tours, and programs planned for 2020 were cancelled, more were creatively reimaged. With the virtual return of our Ask the Experts series this summer and our Discovering Chestnut Hill lecture in the fall, we were able to direct our appreciation for this irreplaceable community to thinking sustainably about how we can act to preserve and protect the open space that holds new value for us all.

Perhaps most visibly, our Night of Lights (<http://chconservancy.org/night-of-lights>) streetscape exhibition was converted from a single evening to a 17-night event that retained the core elements of this beloved new tradition, and added innovative virtual content – all while encouraging physical distancing. This year's event was an inspiring collaboration with our community partners in Chestnut Hill, Mt. Airy and Germantown, and Springfield Township, as well as with the small businesses and restaurants that are part of what makes our commercial corridor so special. The event, in part thanks to this year's new mobile experience, drew participants from around Philadelphia and beyond.

The Conservancy also created History at Home (<http://chconservancy.org/history-at-home>) in early March as a gift to you, highlighting the distinctive features of our community, so that we were able to nurture gratitude together for the Chestnut Hill area communities and the Wissahickon watershed. History at Home has included narrated history-themed slideshow videos, a monthly "Bloom Where You Are Planted" view into all things green, as well as activities and games – all free and openly available now on our History at Home webpage. New content will be added to History at Home through 2021 with each new email.

Because of you, the Conservancy has been able to continue our advocacy and education, and equally important, to connect and build community during this experience of isolation. Despite cancelling most of our in-person programs, including our major fundraiser, with your donations and membership we were able to marshal our resources and come together with our neighbors creatively and collaboratively.

Mark your calendars for the January 10 Annual Meeting

(<https://chconservancy.ticketleap.com/chestnut-hill-conservancy-2021-annual-meeting/>) where we will share more detail about these projects and the work to come in 2021. All members will receive an invitation to join the meeting virtually, although online registration is required to receive the link:

<https://chconservancy.ticketleap.com/> (<https://chconservancy.ticketleap.com/>)

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Call to action: Brainstorming future programs with the Chestnut Hill Conservancy

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Discovering Chestnut Hill: Women's Equality Day (<https://chestnuthilllocal.com/stories/discovering-chestnut-hill-womens-equality-day-observed,14766>)

Discover Chestnut Hill: remembrances of Chestnut Hill Past

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Chestnut Hill to host Hill on Ice two-day festival (</stories/chestnut-hill-to-host-hill-on-ice-two-day-festival,16317>)

Neighbor efforts helped secure former UCP site that fell prey to vandalism (</stories/neighbor-efforts-helped-secure-former-ucp-site-that-fell-prey-to-vandalism,16186>)

CHCA's Deck the door contest gets people out and walking (</stories/chcas-deck-the-door-contest-gets-people-out-and-walking,16165>)

New townhouses planned for 30 W. Highland Ave. (</stories/new-townhouses-planned-for-30-w-highland-ave,16161>)