Institute for Urban Parks
Webinar Series

June 19, 2018
Signature Events Spotlight: The Frederick Law Olmsted Award Luncheon

Wendy Martin, Associate Vice President for Development, Women’s Committee & Special Events | Central Park Conservancy
Webinar Objectives

- **Describe** the Conservancy's Women's Committee
- **Share** a brief overview of the Frederick Law Olmsted Awards Luncheon
- **Discuss** the calendar timeline, preparation, and steps involved
- **Examine** pre, during, and post-event production
- **Identify** three or four critical takeaways for gala events for parks
The Central Park Conservancy Women's Committee

- Founded in 1983 by Jean Clark, Norma T. Dana, Marguerite Hillman Purnell and Phillis Cerf Wagner
- Park-wide programs: Adopt-A-Bench, Tree Trust, Playground Partners, Tulips and Daffodils, Perimeter Association, and Conservancy Docents
- Raises $10 million of CPC's $67 million annual budget through memberships and fundraising events. Since 1983, the Women’s Committee has raised over $175 million for the Conservancy.
The Frederick Law Olmsted Awards Luncheon: An Overview

Evolution of the Event:

1983 – Tavern on the Green – 300 guests – $175,000
1987 – Bethesda Terrace – 900 guests – $300,000
1991 – Conservatory Garden – 1100 guests – $500,000
1995 – First year we broke $1 Million
1999 – First year we broke $2 Million
2012 – First year we broke $3 Million
2017 – First year we broke $4 Million

Location: Conservatory Garden
Attendance: 1,200
Audience: Invite only to WC’s Patron level members ($1,000) and above, major donors & Trustees
Format: 1 hr. reception, seated lunch, brief remarks by Women’s Committee President, award presentation
The Frederick Law Olmsted Awards Luncheon: An Overview

Successes:
- Date consistency – first Wednesday in May
- Event sponsor & corporate sponsor
- Showcases the Park
- Has become known as the “Hat Luncheon”
- Incredible benefit committee
- Generous underwriting support

Challenges:
- Space limitations
- Weather
- Menu limitations
- Seating arrangements
- Getting guests’ attention during presentation
Event Preparation

Annual Luncheon preparation steps:
- Yearly calendar and timeline established
- Selection of Co-Chairs and Honorees
- Determine décor and menu
- Identify and contract vendors
Donors and Event Attendees

- Receive mailing lists from co-chairs and honorees, pull mailing list
- Thank donors as gifts come in/tax acknowledgments
- Determine any underwriting opportunities
- Solicit for Underwriting
- Contact ticket and table buyers for guest names
- **Important**: make each donor feel appreciated
Inter-department Coordination

Enlist help from other departments:
- Graphic Design
- Public Relations
- Finance/Gift processing
- Operations and field staff

Remember:
- Contact each department early
- Clearly communicate your needs
- Schedule meetings to review all logistics
- Recruit Volunteers for Event day
Pre-Event Production

Working with Operations and Vendors:
- Prepare and submit event physical to appropriate parties
- Hold an on-site meeting with vendors and necessary staff
- Develop show-flow and contingency plans
- Notify public of park landscape closures
- Meet with all Volunteers to communicate their responsibilities and flow of the Event
Day of the Event

Day of event tips:

- Stay on schedule
- Have volunteers serve as greeters
- Keep presentation as short as possible
- Double check all place settings
- Stay in constant contact with key vendors and event team
- Thank guests as they leave
Main actions post event:

- Send out any post event releases to Press
- Schedule recap meeting with all major players
- Send thank you gifts to Co-Chairs
- Thank donors with notes and pictures
Key Takeaways

 ✓ Plan Ahead

 ✓ Communication is key

 ✓ Keep donors happy

 ✓ Pray for good weather!
For more information about Institute programs, please contact:

Maura Lout, Director
mlout@centralparknyc.org

Chris Cousino, Associate Director
ccousino@centralparknyc.org

Samantha Marsden
Program Coordinator
smarsden@centralparknyc.org

Learn more at: centralparknyc.org/institute | institute@centralparknyc.org | @cpcinstitute