



ANNUAL REPORT 2024



MISSION

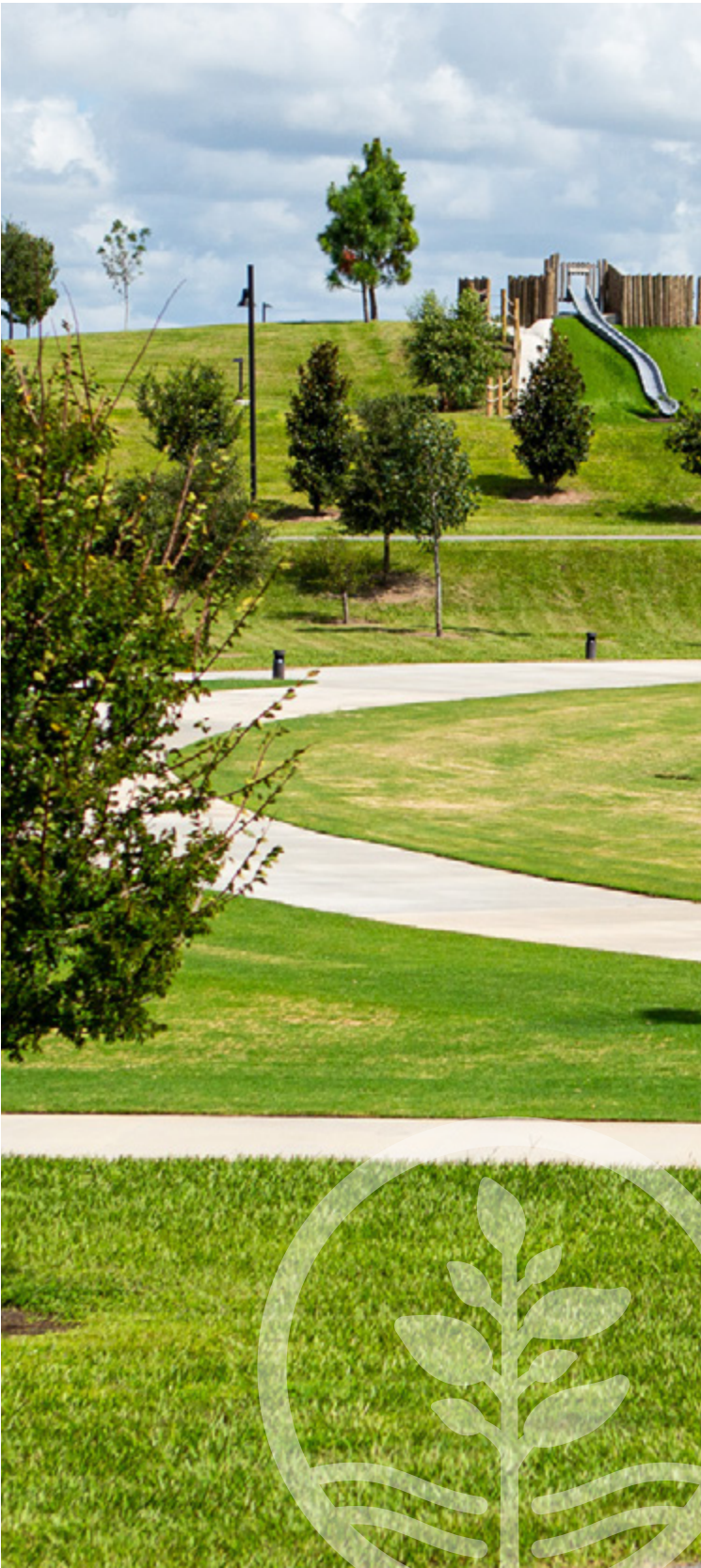
The mission of Bonnet Springs Park is to enrich our community through nature, culture, recreation, and education. Our Park serves to unify the city’s diverse population, offering public spaces that serve the needs of many by providing engaging and diverse opportunities in education and recreation to residents and visitors.

VISION

Great parks complement the personality of a city and serve to unify its diverse populations, offering public spaces that serve the needs of many. Bonnet Springs Park is a place within walking distance to our city’s urban core where art, recreation, fun, and tranquility intersect by design. This blended urban/natural park provides spaces to escape, engage, and explore with one another and with nature while experiencing and learning about the extraordinary history of Central Florida.

The uniqueness of this location enables a needed connection from downtown to the northwest quadrant of Lakeland, while promoting the economic development and expansion of the downtown area. Even more, Lakeland’s strategic position between Tampa and Orlando on the I-4 corridor makes Bonnet Springs Park accessible to many guests.

Visit us at Florida’s BEST
FREE Natural Attraction!



A NOTE
FROM OUR CEO

As we reflect on Bonnet Springs Park’s second full year of operation, I am filled with deep gratitude and pride for all we’ve accomplished together as a community. What began as a vision to reconnect people in the heart of Lakeland has blossomed into a vibrant, welcoming destination for residents and visitors alike.

This year we proudly hosted a wide variety of free community programs, including cultural celebrations such as the Polynesian Celebration and Hispanic Heritage Festival, which brought joyful energy and rich expressions of heritage to the park. These events not only celebrated the diversity of our community but also highlighted Bonnet Springs Park as a space where all are welcome.

Education continues to be a cornerstone of our mission. Through initiatives such as Full STEAM Ahead during Spring Break, school field trips, and a wide range of interactive learning experiences, we’ve empowered young minds to discover, create, and explore the natural world. These programs—offered at no cost to participants—are made possible thanks to the generosity of our supporters and the dedication of our team.

We also faced challenges, including the unfortunate impact of Florida heat and weather; Specifically, the unexpected damage from Hurricane Milton, which caused temporary closures and the unfortunate cancellation of the Central Florida Food Fest. Despite these setbacks, our community rallied together, and the park’s resilience shone through, reminding us of the strength and spirit that define Bonnet Springs Park.

One of the year’s most magical moments was Light Up BSP, which brought thousands of visitors, including many from across the country, to experience the park aglow with lights, music, and holiday wonder. It was a beautiful reflection of what we stand for: joy, connection, and unforgettable memories.

As we look ahead, we do so with an enduring commitment to accessibility, sustainability, and community impact. Thank you to everyone who has walked our trails, supported our mission, or simply spent time in the park—we’re honored to grow with you.

 JOSH
HENDERSON
CEO



TWO NEW Heritage Celebration Signature events were launched!



SIGNATURE EVENTS

On Saturday, March 23, Bonnet Springs Park hosted its second 5K in partnership with the Lakeland Runners Club! More than 900 racers participated and experienced the beauty of towering oak trees and rolling terrain while fundraising for the Park! The race sold out over a month ahead of the event and raised **\$19,330.23** for the Carol Jenkins Barnett Endowment, to be matched 2:1.

Thanks to Valiant Products and Lakeland Runners Club!



Bienvenido a BSP celebrated its second anniversary and brought in over **6,000 guests**, making the night a celebration to remember!

HEADLINER SPONSOR

Florida Blue 
Your Health Solutions Partner



Bonnet Springs Park hosted its second annual Full STEAM Ahead Spring Break Festival from March 17 - 21.

Over **26,000 guests** attended the event. Each day, vendors provided interactive and engaging stations that highlighted each topic of STEAM - Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math.



ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING

In 2024 we had seven Mind, Body, Movement Events, which saw a total of around 400 people. We held seven additional wellness events in partnership with Lakeland Regional Health that provided fun family activities, resources, and education to guests on heart health, bike safety, and so much more.



We celebrated Latino Conservation Week from September 14 to 22. Spanish-speaking volunteers engaged guests at key locations around the park. Signs led guests to Spanish-language park resources, and other promotion of LCW highlighted BSP as a welcoming and accessible place for the Latino and Hispanic community. The week started with a Mind, Body, Movement activity. Eighty guests joined us for two Sound Baths, one led in Spanish and one in English.

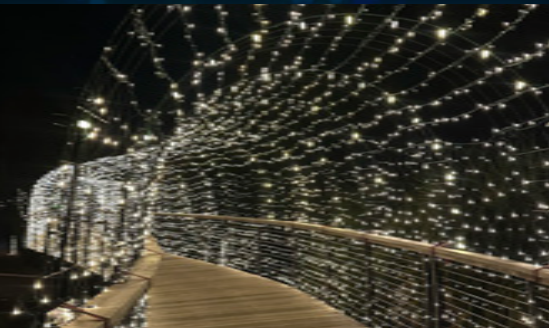
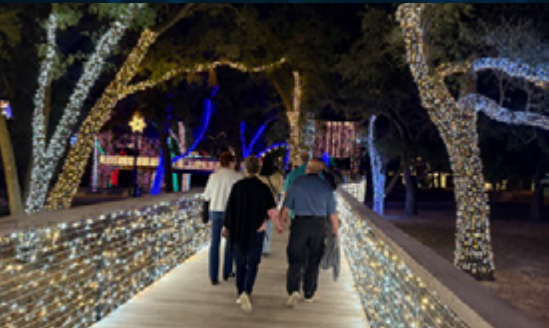


COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Bonnet Springs Park and United Way of Central Florida joined forces to provide FREE, nutritious snack packs for kids and teens. Through the Power Packs program, we served 115 families over the summer, while Polk County Public Schools were out of school session.



After Hurricane Milton, BSP was a distribution site for water and Meals Ready to Eat (MREs). Over **1,000** households were served by our distribution site in one day. Thanks to our staff members, Polk County Emergency Management, United Way of Central Florida, One More Child, The Freedom Tour Florida, and Polk Sheriff's Office for braving the roads after the hurricane to help our community.



Light Up BSP

Light Up BSP 2024 ran for 18 days with fun-themed evenings that featured a dazzling roster of performers, activities, and community partners. This event brought in over **80,000** guests!

Thank you to our sponsors!

PRESENTING SPONSOR



CHRISTMAS TREE SPONSORS



SANTA CLAUS SPONSOR



LIGHT UP THE NIGHT SPONSORS



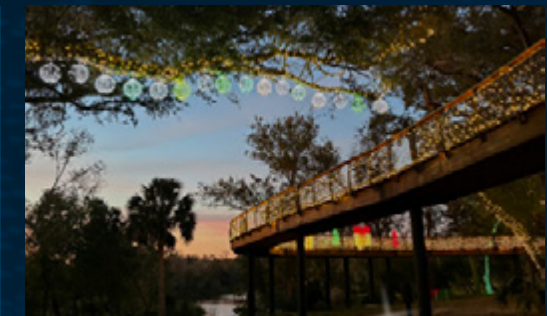
47 STATES
REPRESENTED
AND CANADA!



OVER
ONE MILLION
LIGHTS



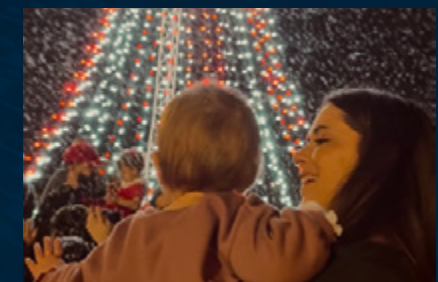
378 MINUTES
OF FLORIDA SNOW



OVER 100 DOZEN
COOKIES
PURCHASED



520+ GALLONS
OF HOT COCOA SOLD



EDUCATION

COMMUNITY EVENTS TOTALING:

22,911 Attendees
52 Saturday Programs and
34 Other Educational Programs

51 Partners Offered Education
Programs with BSP

6 College Interns

1 Teacher Night

3 Professional Development
Workshops for Teachers

Hosted **104** total field trips
and **5,794** students.



VOLUNTEERS

307 Individual
Volunteers

472 Group
Volunteers

779 Total
Volunteers

5,742.95 Hours
Volunteered

"Having the opportunity to build the volunteer program at BSP has been an honor. We have an amazing group of volunteers at the Park. We wouldn't be able to run our many free programs and events without their help"

Volunteer Manager | Kaitlin Wilson

STUDENT VOLUNTEERS | **54** students in 9th-12th grades.

Students earn community service hours when volunteering with BSP!

OUTREACH VOLUNTEERS

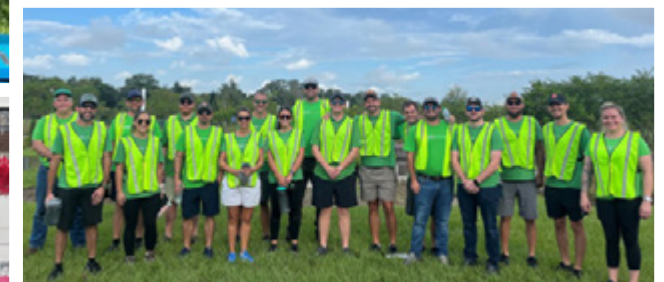
spread awareness of the Park or provide an education activity:

Approximately **20,022**
people reached

Visited **20** locations

"Volunteering at Bonnet Springs Park can provide an opportunity to practice skills that may have been dormant or to develop an interest that had never been indulged. Most volunteer positions require some training, so the volunteer can better match skills and interests to a position. I started as a greeter, qualified to work with student groups because of a teaching career, and trained to work in the Gift Shop. There is a feeling of self-worth in being able to contribute to an organization by donating time. The time I donate frees paid personnel to more appropriately fulfill the goals of Bonnet Springs Park."

Volunteer | Fred Ankersen



STAFF

100
TOTAL EMPLOYEES
AT EOY 2024

43 on Revenue Team
42 on Operations Team
15 on Administrative/
Programming Teams

6 SAFETY TRAININGS *Covering 10 topics!*

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Ladder Safety | Basic Electrical Safety |
| Golf Cart/ Tram Safety | Pesticide Certification
<i>(Horticulture Team)</i> |
| Heat Safety | RCS Alcohol Safety
<i>(F&B Team)</i> |
| Back Safety | Workplace Investigations/
Workers' Compensation
<i>(Leadership Team)</i> |
| Slip, Trip and Fall Safety | |
| Carbon Monoxide and
Carbon Dioxide | |

*Josh Henderson,
CEO, graduated
from Leadership
Lakeland Class XL*

*Kellie Phillips,
Director of
Development,
started Leadership
Tampa Bay Class
of 2025*

JOB FAIRS

- 2 with Lake Gibson High School
- 1 with Career Source Polk
- 1 with Florida Southern College

LAKELAND CHRISTMAS PARADE

11 Employees and 6 Family
Members walked in the parade.

STAFF COMPLETED FITNESS CHALLENGES

**SPRING INTO
FITNESS**

10,259,510
Million Steps

35
Participants Total

MINUTE TO WIN IT

22 Games Played





BSP BOARD

John Attaway
Barney Barnett
Nick Barnett
Wesley Barnett
Marcy Benton
David Bunch
Jean Bunch
Jeff Cox
Kimberly Elmhurst
Josh Henderson

Donna Henricks
Justin Hollis
Kathleen Munson
Sara Roberts McCarley
Tim Rice
Jennifer Royal
Martha Santiago
Bill Tinsley
Martha Tinsley
Bill Vass

We lost a cherished leader, mentor, and friend in Jack Harrell, Jr. Jack was known for his philanthropic spirit, faith, and dedication to our community. Alongside his wife Tina, Jack's generosity touched countless lives and supported numerous causes throughout Lakeland. His dedication to Bonnet Springs Park was truly remarkable.

A strong belief in the mission led Jack and Tina to be among the founding donors. We are forever grateful for Jack's contributions and the lasting mark he left on our community.

On the left: Mentor, friend, and former Board Chair, Jack Harrell, Jr.



CAROL JENKINS BARNETT ENDOWMENT

We are deeply grateful to our Endowment Committee for their guidance and hard work advancing our long-term funding goals. Their contributions have been vital in creating a sustainable future for Bonnet Springs Park and strengthening our mission of community enrichment through nature, culture, recreation, and education.

- Ralph Allen
Barney Barnett
Nicholas Barnett
Wesley Barnett
Josh Henderson
Donna Henricks
Justin Hollis
- Peter Munson
Paul Noris
Kellie Phillips
Greg Ruthven
Tim Rice
Marsha Vass

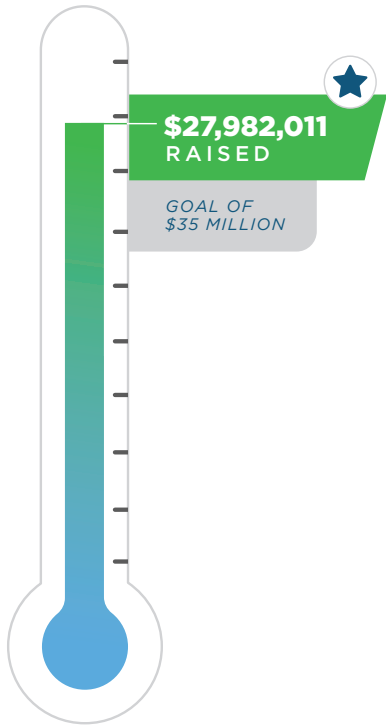
National Philanthropy Day celebrates the charitable work that EVERYONE does to make a difference and create impact in their communities. Members of the Association of Fundraising Professionals, Greater Polk County Chapter, highlighted honorees throughout Polk County, showcased outstanding donors, volunteers, corporations, foundations and others who have shown their commitment to their communities through philanthropy and volunteerism.

Bonnet Springs Park nominated **Allen & Company as Corporation of the Year** for their tremendous support that has propelled us to reach new heights during our fundraising campaigns and allows us the opportunity to host free and engaging programs on the Allen & Company Family Lawn. We nominated **Tim Rice as Individual of the Year** for his service on the BSP Board of Directors and the CJB Endowment Committee. Tim has been an advocate and avid supporter since the Park’s inception.

CJB ENDOWMENT MATCHING PROGRAM

2:1 Match by the Board of Directors

Every \$1 contributed gets matched by \$2, allowing every gift to have an even greater impact.



ROUND UP TOTAL

Our round up program encourages visitors to round up their purchase to the nearest dollar at any one of our facilities. This program supports the Carol Jenkins Barnett Endowment Fund and every single cent is matched 2:1.

Round Up Total for 2024
\$11,184

ENDOWMENT DONORS

GRANDFATHER OAK

- The Barnett Family
- Ann and Ward Edwards*
- The Jack and Tina Harrell Family
- The Ronnie and Terry Hedrick Family Foundation
- Sharon A. Miller
- The Ruthven Family
- Taylor Family Impact Foundation and Coca-Cola Beverages Florida
- The John Watkins Family

QUEEN PALM

- AgAmerica
- Bell-Barnett Family Fund*
- Boar’s Head Provisions, Co.
- Linda and Alan Rich Family
- Nicholas and Ashley Barnett Foundation*
- The Risener Family

MAGNOLIA

- Anonymous
- Joanne and Ralph Allen
- Blue Steel Development
- City of Lakeland
- Marilyn and Jeff Clyne
- Barbara O. Hart and Family*
- Kate and Ford Heacock
- Donna and Bret Henricks
- The Hollis Family
- The George Jenkins Foundation
- Dorothy and Charlie Jenkins
- Rupal and Piyush Patel
- Tina and Pranay Patel
- The David and Peggy Roberts Family
- Watson Clinic LLP

CYPRESS

- Olga and John Alvarez
- Jean and David Bunch
- Citizens Bank & Trust
- Kim and Kurt Elmhurst
- Linda and Bob English
- Austin and Courtney Jones
- Steven T. Moore
- The Lunz Group
- Tracy Shirah Peyton
- Buddy and Dama Register Family
- Jo Ann and John Rice

CITRUS

- Payton and Keith Albritton
- Bank of Central Florida
- Marcy and Steve Benton
- The Catherine and Iam Bhisitkul Family
- Judy and Harry Bopp
- Marie and Terry Borglund
- Harriett and Dean Boring
- Danielle Drummond and Jeff Lenderman
- First United Methodist Church
- Fourshore Capital
- Frank and Patti Foster
- Scott Friedman
- Meghan and Edward J. Garcia
- Adriana and Jim Hall
- Hillcrest Partners Limited Partnership
- Ann and Keith Hilliard
- Beverly and Clayton Hollis
- Rachel and Justin Hollis
- Hudson Family
- Christina and Eric Jackson
- Tom Joyner
- The Luffman Family
- Marcobay Construction
- Janice H. Martin
- The Meadows-Hacker Wealth Management Group of Wells Fargo Advisors
- Deb and Dave Misch
- Ann and Steve Moore
- Kathleen and Peter Munson
- Lynn and Paul Noris
- Jane and Mark Phillips
- Peterson & Myers, P.A.
- David and Janice Ramos Family
- Linda and Tim Rice
- Jennifer and Dwight Royal
- Karen and Joe L. Ruthven
- Saddle Creek Logistics Services
- Sasaki & Associates, Inc.
- Tammy and Steve Scruggs
- Christine Sikes Family
- Martha and Bill Tinsley
- The Trohn Family
- The Tye Family
- The Max and Maxine Uzelatz Family

*Fund Within GiveWell Community Foundation



bonnet
springs
PARK™

escape. engage. explore.