

ARMENIAN HERITAGE PARK PRESENTS NEW SERIES, CELEBRATING WHAT UNITES US



“Armenian Heritage Park is a treasured place in the heart of the city” is often heard. During these many weeks of isolation during this COVID-19 pandemic, many are commenting on social media what Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston means to them.

“One of the things I miss most is spending time in Armenian Heritage Park”, comments Steve Vilkas, who writes for the NorthEndWaterfront.com, “whether walking the labyrinth or reading on a bench-reconnecting, whether at dawn or dusk, with the beauty of nature and the peace of this special place. We’ll return to the oasis eventually!”

“The Park means so very much to me and my own heritage,” shared Vicki Adjami, principal and creative director of Communication via Design. “And it’s so very relevant to our world today – a unique place of peace and representation of inclusion and togetherness during this current time on earth.”

Many commented that they missed not coming together at the Park on April 24 this year for the annual Genocide remembrance and placing flowers on the rim of the Reflecting Pool. An annual program of the Massachusetts Armenian Genocide Commemoration Committee, this year’s virtual recognition was thoughtfully planned by Anais Astarjian, Committee Chair with Lauren Piligian and others.

While all programs at the Park are on hold due to COVID-19, Friends of Armenian Heritage Park in collaboration with Age-Friendly Boston has recently started a new series—Celebrating What Unites Us. The virtual program is held Fridays at 10am via Zoom. It started on May 8, and it will continue until June 5.

The five-week special series is being generously offered by the food and nutrition nonprofit OLDWAYS. Each week an instructor from OLDWAYS offers a cooking lesson on how to prepare a delicious meal celebrating the cultural heritage of the many residents of the City of Boston and Commonwealth. Participants can register **online**.

Inspired by the Park's design and key features, the Celebrating What Unites Us series exemplifies the immigrant experience while building community and cross-cultural understanding and promoting healthy and active living. Initially the two-part program, developed by Friends of Heritage Park in collaboration with Age-Friendly Boston and The KITCHEN at Boston Public Market, and supported by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, was held monthly from May to November. Each month highlighted the cultural heritage of many of the residents of the City of Boston and Commonwealth. Participants first met at Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway where a community leader shared his/her immigrant experience. Many walked the labyrinth, symbolic of life's journey and then walked to The KITCHEN at the Boston Public Market where a chef prepared a signature dish for all to enjoy.

Since The KITCHEN at the Boston Public Market is closed right now, possible venues near the Park are being explored to continue the two-part series, which was so well received and attended.

Each monthly program began at the Park with a leader sharing his/her immigrant experience, while standing in front of the Park's Abstract Sculpture. Annually, the Abstract Sculpture, a split rhomboid dodecahedron made of stainless steel and aluminum, is reconfigured – its two halves pulled apart and re-assembled to create a new sculptural shape, symbolic of the immigrant experience.

Among those who shared their immigrant experiences during the two-year series were Consul General of Ireland Laoise Moore, Councilor Lydia Edwards, Boston City Council; Tania Del Rio, executive director, Mayor's Office of Women's Advancement; Nicola Orichula, founder, I Am Books; Ronnie Millar, executive director, Rian Immigration Center (formerly Irish International Immigration Center; Emmanuel Owusu, executive director, African Bridge Network among others.

Notable Boston chefs who prepared a signature dish included Chef Nina Festekjian with Raffi Festekjian, anoush'ella; Chef Leo Romero, Casa Romero; Chef Tony Barros, Cesaria; Chef Hector Pina, Merengue; Chef Carlos Rodriquez, Orinco and chefs from Oldways.

Programs at the Park, planned for this year, are now on hold.

Gratitude is expressed to so many – the Park's benefactors and supporters, partners and collaborators, friends and greeters. Their ongoing generosity and commitment are just extraordinary.

To receive updates and announcements about programs and events, please email info@ArmenianHeritagePark.org.