



A NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATION
SUE WOLFE, PRESIDENT



Thanks to the work of the **Friends of Thomas Greene Park, Inc.**, a once neglected park is being revitalized and provides fun and interesting programming to hundreds of local families.

Thomas Greene park located on a Avenue and DeGraw Streets in 4)



Park is a multi-faceted public full city block between 3rd Nevins Street, and Douglass and Gowanus, Brooklyn. (See page

Just a few blocks from Barclays Center – the children’s playground with a water feature, “Double D” pool, free swimming lessons, cooling center and hosts a free lunch program

park has a skate area, a picnic tables, the popular basketball courts; and is a during the summer.

The Friends of Thomas Greene Park continue eventual 200,000 Brooklynites annually from Gowanus, Boerum Hill, Carroll Gardens, and Park Slope as neighborhoods continue to develop and expand.

to ready the park to receive an

Programming & Activities



The Friends of Thomas Greene Park plan, organize and fund various activities throughout the year with the help of local businesses, organizations, partners and community residents. Activities include skate boarding, rock climbing, movie nights, a Halloween parade and Holiday Tree Lighting event, as well as fundraiser and cultural events.

The Friends of Thomas Greene Park Story

The Friends of Thomas Greene Park, Inc. formed out of a neighborhood-wide search for green space in the downtown Brooklyn area. The Boerum Hill Association initiated the search with a study conducted in 2005 by Phillips Preiss Shapito with funds from a grant from the JM Kaplan Fund.



The study concluded that this park was profoundly underutilized and had not been updated in decades. The neighborhoods of Boerum Hill, Carroll Gardens, Park Slope, and Gowanus, the Wyckoff Gardens and Gowanus Houses each appointed representatives to establish a Board of Directors, under the direction of Sue Wolfe, who was President of the Boerum Hill Association at the time.

The group originally created a new name to accommodate the varying identities of this block-long recreation area. For pool users, this well-kept pool complex is known independent of the park as "DD" or "Douglass" pool. To honor the work of dedicated community activist Thomas Greene, the name "Friends of Douglass Greene Park" was originally incorporated but later changed in 2015 to Friends of Thomas Greene Park.



Public Participation: Final plans incorporate community’s visions.

In 2008 a "Listening Session" sponsored by the Friends of Thomas Greene Park, Inc., and led by the Brooklyn Parks Department, asked neighbors what their vision was for the Thomas Greene Park. The NYC Parks Department incorporated many of the suggestions into a bold, beautiful plan. In early spring 2013 Phase 1 of the park’s renovation on its Third Avenue side was completed.

Conceptual (not yet funded) plans for the rest of the park include: A NEW swimming pool, basketball courts, handball courts, an open green plaza, a year-round multi-purpose building containing a comfort station & community spaces with a green roof, as well as more trees and plantings throughout the renovated park.

Gowanus Canal Industrial legacy, Environmental Cleanups and Advocacy

In 2010, the nearby Gowanus Canal became an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Superfund cleanup site, and Friends of Thomas Greene Park (FOTGP) joined the EPA Gowanus Canal [Community Advisory Group](#) (CAG) as an organizational member. During the EPA Remedial Investigation process the community learned that land beneath the skatepark, basketball courts and pool at Thomas Greene Park contains remnants of the former Fulton Manufactured Gas Plant (MGP), which operated onsite from 1879 to 1929, and continues to leech coal tar waste underground into the Canal. NY State and the EPA will require energy giant National Grid to clean up the area and a Feasibility Study was released in 2015. Final agreements between the agencies and National Grid are still anticipated to determine the length of time and amount of disruption that will take place on site at the Park. Community priorities regarding temporary and permanent replacement facilities have been committed to by the EPA but details and orders have yet to be finalized.

To add to the challenging position of being an advocate for the environmental cleanup of the Park, while still waiting to learn the level of detail in which the Thomas Greene Park and Double D Pool will be impacted, in December 2012, the EPA added the potential siting of a raw sewage retention tank to be built beneath the Double D Pool in its proposed cleanup up plan.



In April 2013, before the public comment period on the EPA Superfund cleanup closed, FOTGP launched a change.org petition that gathered over 1,000 signatures to the EPA asking for the sewage tank to be located elsewhere and to provide guarantees to the community that any displacement or disruption to the Double D Pool as a result of these cleanups provide for seamless transition of the

park facilities and services at a nearby location. (www.change.org/petitions/epa-make-the-polluters-pay-not-our-community-save-the-double-d-pool).

Those comments, along with Friends of Thomas Greene Park's advocacy for our community concerns within the EPA Community Advisory Group, were recognized in the EPA's final Record of Decision (ROD) released on September 30th, 2013. The EPA acknowledged the Double D Pool to be a "valuable community resource" and removed their previously proposed measure that the City place a sewage retention tank beneath it, while still mandating that two raw sewage retention tanks be built.

In 2016 EPA entered in an Administrative Settlement Agreement with the City of New York to avoid locating the sewage and stormwater retention tank within the Park. Thru this agreement, the current estimated number of years of planned disruption for remediation efforts within the Park would be cut in half, from approximately 10 to 12 years to between 4 to 6, and this agreement also avoids taking an estimated 1/3 of the Park which would constitute permanent alienation of park space for the sewage and storm water retention tank facility head house. FOTGP also views this agreement a big victory for our Park advocacy and stewardship because it also presents an opportunity to increase parkland and access to the Canal waterfront in an area already highly deficient of greenspace that serves low income populations and public housing residents that presently suffer disproportionately from the lack of access to open space.

Despite the improvement of locating the sewage holding tank across the street from the Park, the former Fulton MGP site remediation and the sewage tank construction will still temporarily disturb as much as two-thirds of the Park for excavation operations. Therefore FOTGP remains a member of the Gowanus CAG and continues to advocate for strong community based planning and coordination amongst the multiple agencies involved. We strive to provide a platform for our communities' health, benefit and future that can address environmental remediation and raw sewage overflows in our neighborhood, while minimizing disruptions, and preserving and improving the Thomas Greene Park and Double D Community Pool for generations to come. Members of FODGP working to protect this valuable community resource have been featured in the New York Times, on TV at CBS New York and Channel 12 News, and in the Brooklyn Paper, Brownstoner, and DNA Info.

PARK HISTORY

The 2.525 acres of Thomas Greene Park came under NYC Parks jurisdiction in 1938. What was known as Double D Playground opened in 1935 and was renamed for local community activist Thomas Greene in 1988. Thomas Greene was born in Savannah in 1911, lived in the nearby Gowanus Public Housing and worked for Cornell University's New York City office.

The Friends of Thomas Greene Park, Inc., a 501(c)(3) organization, works with community and business partners to enhance the quality of life in the area through programming & special activities for all ages, creates much needed green space, works with the NYC Parks Department to assure completion of the park's renovation, was successful in its appeal to the NYC Council in 2010 to restore funds to keep the



park's "DD Pool" open, and advocates for the renovation and accessibility of the pool.

For more information on the work and current activities of the Friends of Thomas Greene Park, go to

<https://friendsofthomasgreenepark.org>

Find us on Facebook at **Friends of Thomas Greene Park – Gowanus**

