

EAST

THE EAST HAMPTON STAR MAGAZINE

July 1, 2022

CHARITY SPOTLIGHT

The Parks and Recreation Association of Sag Harbor

By Stephanie Villani

The iconic Mashashimuet Park in the heart of the village is privately owned and operated by the Parks and Recreation Association of Sag Harbor, a 501(c)3 organization which does not receive funding from any local, town, county or state municipalities.

In 1879 a half-mile track was built here for horse and carriage races, along with a Fair Grounds Exhibition building for judging produce, poultry, flowers and baked goods. In 1893 the park hosted the Great Bicycle Tournament, with over 1,000 spectators.

The park grounds had deteriorated over the years when Sag Harbor's benefactor, Mrs. Russell Sage, stepped in to buy the property and begin improvements. A grandstand was constructed, and the land surrounding Otter Pond was purchased and added to the Park property.

In 1920 Mrs. Sage's Foundation deeded the Park property to the Park and Recreation Association of Sag Harbor, with the goal of "...the mental and physical development and improvement of children and young people as a means of equipping them for good citizenship; the providing of opportunities for wholesome recreation; the ownership, operation and maintenance of parks, playgrounds and recreation buildings, and the carrying on of such other activities as may be helpful to these ends."

The Park continues to be an important resource for the community. Park facilities host Pierson athletes, the Sag Harbor-Bridgeton Little League, the Sag Harbor Soccer Club, Sag Harbor Tennis, and the Hamptons Collegiate Baseball League Sag Harbor Whalers team.

Events and improvements are ongoing at the Park. A favorite long-running event is the Sag Harbor Lion's Club annual Easter Egg Hunt, which began in 1960. In 2016, the playground was renovated using designs and ideas from the students of Sag Harbor Elementary School.

This May, in collaboration with East End Tick & Mosquito Control and The Suffolk County Department of Health, the Park installed tick awareness signs at the head of both trails that lead to the Long Pond Greenbelt, as well as two new kiosks. The kiosks will house tick spray and tick information which will be helpful to anyone who uses the trails.



Photo by Fishtail Media Studios



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And coming up on Sunday, September 18 the Park will host the 2nd Annual Mashashimuet Park Friends and Family 5K Run. All proceeds will go toward improvements and refurbishment at the Park.

For more information, visit www.mashashimuetpark.org.

