



Friends of Washington Crossing Park

2023 Annual Report

A Mission to Preserve, Promote and Educate

The Friends of Washington Crossing Park shares the powerful story of General George Washington's daring crossing of the Delaware River on Christmas night 1776 and interprets its ongoing impact on world history for both today's citizens and future generations.

Through fundraising, the generous support of our donors and members, and our partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, we are able to maintain and sustain this significant historic site and welcome thousands of schoolchildren, families, individuals, and groups every year.



New Program Development

- In May, we were honored to receive two major federal grants from the U.S. National Park Service. The first allowed us to hire a research fellow to identify the important contributions by people of color to the Crossing. The second is funding an interior restoration of McConkey's Ferry Inn, from where Washington launched his legendary crossing of the Delaware River.
- More than 10,000 students visited the park for school field trips and Colonial Days living history programs!
- In January, PhD candidate Colin Zimmerman joined our team as military historian.
- We relaunched guided Fall Lantern Tours, which sold out in just two days.
- We produced a record-breaking Rebels & Redcoats Car Show with more cars and visitors than ever.
- We welcomed a new sheep, Inky, to the Thompson-Neely flock.
- We reestablished the spring Hibbs House kitchen garden.
- We revived the '76 Seconds of History video series in partnership with the Americana Corner Grant Program.
- We added a Juneteenth Celebration to educate visitors about the important contributions of Black soldiers during the American Revolution.
- We invested in our membership program by offering new members-only programs and events, such as our September Ten Crucial Days Bus Tour and November Lantern Tour.
- We presented our annual lecture series featuring award-winning scholars and well known historians, such as Carrie Fellows, in partnership with the David Center for the American Revolution and the Mercer Museum.
- Our Christmas Crossing saw record attendance as more than 10,000 visitors gathered on the banks of the Delaware for the 71st Crossing reenactment.

Our People



Friends of Washington Crossing Park Board

The all-volunteer Friends Board of Directors is made up of a diverse cross section of community members.

John Godzieba, President
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Robert West
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Mike Kuzar, ex-officio

Friends of Washington Crossing Park Staff

Under the direction of the Board of Directors, FWCP staff members run the day-to-day operations of the organization.

Jennifer Martin, Executive Director
Katherine Manning, Development Coordinator
Danielle Gress, Grants Manager
Katherine Heugatter, Educational Programs Coordinator
Gaetano Sava III, Visitor Services Coordinator
Anna Davis, Historical Horticulturalist
Ross Heutmacker, Farmstead Manager
Colin Zimmerman, Military Historian
Alex Robb, Interpretive Programs Specialist
Connie Unangst, Museum Shop Coordinator
Trish Rowen, Staff Accountant



Historical Interpreters

Guided tours led by trained historical interpreters are offered at the Historic Village and the Thompson-Neely House and Grist Mill. Visitors can trace General Washington's footsteps at McConkey's Ferry Inn, traverse the three floors of a 19th-century grist mill, and peek into the park's replica Durham boats used in the annual Crossing Reenactments.

Bruce Cobb
Sean Corcoran
Eric Flieger
Corinne Kauermann
Bunkie Maddock
Thomas Maddock
Patrick Murphy

Nancy O'Leary
David Price
Patricia Seabright
Kevin Zimmerman



Volunteers

In 2023, more than 500 volunteers contributed 7,678 hours in support of Washington Crossing Historic Park. Volunteers serve the park as historical interpreters, in visitor services, special events, gardening, animal care, school programs, and musicians in our fife and drum corps. Thank you to all!

Our Activities



2023 Visitation

Colonial Days Field Trips	10,000
Christmas Crossing	8,000
First Crossing	2,700
Spring Brewfest	1,750
4th of July	1,500
Lecture Series	700
Jazz Concert	650
Classic Car Show	550

Washington's Birthday	500
Wine on the Waterfront	450
Memorial Day	250
Juneteenth	200
Lantern Tours	200
Memorial Day	250
Ten Crucial Days Bus Tours	154
Wheat & Sheep	140
Book Club	140
Colonial Olympics Girl Scouts	125

Our Supporters

Foundations/Grants

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 Americana Corner Grant Program
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 Bucks County Tourism Grant Program
 Church & Dwight Employee Giving Fund
 Kiwanis of Washington Crossing - Yardley
 Lower Delaware Wild & Scenic River Management Council
 National Park Service: African American Civil Rights Grant
 National Park Service: Semiquincentennial Grant
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A Shop with a Purpose

The Friends of Washington Crossing Park runs the Patriot Gift Shoppe in the park Visitor Center. If you need gifts for a special child, we have a great selection of books, toys, T-shirts, and souvenirs. For adult history lovers, check out our curated collection of books about the American Revolution, clothing, soaps, candles, glassware, holiday tree ornaments, and Byer's Choice Caroler figures that are not available anywhere else—they are made exclusively for Washington Crossing Historic Park. In 2023, the Patriot Shoppe netted \$85,300 that was reinvested into our educational programs.





Thank You to our 2023 Donors

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THANK YOU!



Our Focus on Education

Serving as an Educational Keystone in our Community

One of the core values of the Friends of Washington Crossing Park is to serve our community through hands-on educational programs that inspire the next generation of historians.

Since 2009, our Colonial Days field trip program, specifically designed for school children ages 7-12 to supplement their classroom curricula, has served more than 85,000 students.

In 2023 alone, this program welcomed 10,000 students from more than 150 local schools throughout the tri-state area of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and beyond. Students have come from as far away as California as part of an extended Revolutionary War field trip to Philadelphia.

During the program, up to 300 students rotate through 15-minute hands-on stations. Some of the Colonial Days activities include:



- Participating in soldiers' and cannon drills;
- Taking part in candle dipping, gardening, spinning, woodcarving and natural dyeing;
- Playing with 18th-century children's toys and games;
- Visiting our blacksmith shop;
- Touring the boat barn to see and learn about replica Durham boats;
- Seeing presentations of 18th-century military life, soldiers gear and battlefield surgery.

Field trips end with a picnic lunch overlooking the spot where Washington crossed the Delaware River.

By engaging students in these immersive programs, we bring history to life through presentations of 18th-century military and civilian life. Our goal is that students not only leave with an understanding of the powerful stories of General Washington's Christmas Night Crossing in 1776 but also colonial life in 18th-century America. These programs promote civic education, foster

community pride, and spark a lifelong love of learning.

2020 inspired us to take the Colonial Days program out into the community with virtual presentations. Lessons by park historical interpreters were adapted from our most popular in-person educational experiences to accommodate partially and fully remote classrooms. Our educators have developed more than a dozen free lesson plans for teachers of elementary school students.

The "Camp Followers Digital Experience" helps students understand the important role played by followers: the women, children and others who traveled to encampments and worked for the Continental and British armies.

Our History Chests Travel Trunks give young historians an opportunity to experience colonial history firsthand by playing colonial games, making crafts and traditional recipes, and more.

Our Camp in a Box program provides individual students with all the hands-on educational materials needed for period cooking, quill pen writing, and other colonial life activities.

Finally, our free "76 Seconds of History" video series can be used to enhance learning before, during, or after a lesson. In 2023 we added six new video lessons!

During 2023 we also fine-tuned our outreach efforts and took our Colonial Days program directly to schools that faced challenges due to a lack of funding for bussing. We brought reenactors, toy muskets for drilling, soldiers' uniforms and gear, and even one of our replica Durham Boats.



Our Focus on Education

Seeing a need in our surrounding communities, we fundraised to help provide field trips for schools receiving Title I funding. These schools, due to a lack of resources, often do not have the same access to high-quality educational programs and field trips. Our “History for All” Fund includes stipends to supplement transportation to the park to ensure all students can experience this program, feel connected to their history, and be proud to be part of our

community. We are thrilled to have provided hundreds of children with free or discounted field trips through this program.

Through the continued support of our donors and members, we can continue to serve as an important educational keystone in our community, and we are excited to plan new activities and interpretive programs for our students in 2024!



Adding Videos to Enhance Education

This year, thanks to a generous grant from Americana Corner, the Friends of Washington Crossing Park (FWCP) was able to expand its popular “76 Seconds of History” video series with six new segments that were published from 2023 into 2024.

“These videos were designed with students in mind as a way to assist educators with lesson planning, both for local students visiting the park as part of our Colonial Days Field Trip Program and for students living throughout the county,” said Jennifer Martin, FWCP Executive Director.

She adds, “We have also

worked with several schools to create virtual programming, which was especially impactful during COVID. We are pleased with how well this form of outreach has been received by a range of audiences both near and far.”

Video topics range from “How Accurate is the ‘Washington Crossing the Delaware’ Painting?” to “What is a Durham Boat?” and “What Was Life Like in the Bucks County Encampments?” In just over one minute, a compelling and interesting story unfolds with details that hold the viewer’s attention with portrayals by first-

person reenactors. In the videos entitled “Who were the Marbleheaders?” and “What were the Roles of Women in the American Revolution?” we highlight lesser-known contributions by Black soldiers and female camp followers. To learn snippets of information about Washington Crossing Park and the historic events that occurred here, delve into the



video series, “76 Seconds of History,” found under the Education link on the park’s website at <https://www.washingtoncrossingpark.org/education/>.

Each segment, hosted by our narrator “Matt,” offers concise, easy-to-understand facts and visuals centering on a thematic question that relates to the crossing, the Continental Army, or the park itself.

To date, a total of 11 segments have been produced by FWCP, with plans for more to come as we continue to prepare the park and our educational program for visitors and viewers from all over the world!



Looking Ahead to 2026

A personal letter from the executive director to members and donors as we continue to prepare for the Crossing's 250th anniversary in 2026

Dear FWCP Supporters:

2023 was an exciting year for Friends of Washington Crossing Park! We developed several new programs, such as our Juneteenth Living History Program and Evening Encampment at Thompson Neely Farmstead, and we brought back some old favorites, like Washington's Birthday and Fall Lantern Tours. We also received three major grants and had record attendance at our Wheat and Sheep Day, Memorial Day Ceremony, Rebels & Redcoats Car Show, and Annual Crossing Reenactments.

As we continue to look forward with great anticipation towards America's 250th celebration in 2026, we want to take a minute to say thank you and acknowledge how instrumental the support of YOU—our members, donors, and community—have been in helping us accomplish our mission and vision.

Support comes in many forms, and there are a variety of ways you can make an impact on the park. No act or contribution is too small and there is no better time to get involved or expand your support. Here are some of the ways you can support Washington Crossing Historic Park:

Join the Friends of Washington Crossing Park as a member and enjoy many benefits, including 12 months of free admission for daily tours and park events, invitations to members-only events, and gift shop discounts.

Make a contribution toward a specific park project or campaign. Each year the park does dedicated campaigns for Sponsor A Sheep, Giving Tuesday, and the Annual Crossing Reenactment.

Take a tour of the Lower Park, Bowman's Tower, and the Thompson-Neely House and Mill. Daily tours are offered April through November and select days and times December through March.

Attend an event that shares the unique history of the park and commemorates important patriotic holidays. Our Annual Washington's Birthday, Wheat and Sheep Program, Memorial Day Ceremony, 4th of July Living History Program, and Crossing Reenactments are some of our most popular.

Become a volunteer and contribute to our educational and public programs. There are



countless volunteer opportunities for people of all ages. For most roles, no experience is necessary, but if you have a special interest or talent, we'll find a role for you.

Serve as an ambassador for the park by telling your friends if you enjoyed a program or event. Better yet, bring them back for a visit and share your experience on social media.

Leave a Legacy Gift or bequest to ensure that our important educational mission continues to be shared for future generations.

Purchase a park souvenir or a special holiday gift from our Patriot Gift Shoppe. All funds raised are directly reinvested into the park for education and public programs. Our shop is also easily accessible from our website.

Stay tuned in by subscribing to our monthly newsletter at www.washingtoncrossingpark.org or following us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (X), and YouTube—there is always something going on at the park.

We have several new programs, exhibits, and preservation projects planned for 2024, including weekly living history programs, a Colonial Days Mini Camp, interior renovation of McConkey's Ferry Inn, reopening of the Thompson-Neely House for daily tours, the reinstallation of the Thompson-Neely Garden, a members-only art class, the 15th Anniversary Celebration of the Friends of Washington Crossing Park, and much more.

Thank you for making an investment in the future of the park. We are honored to serve Washington Crossing Historic Park with all of you. Stay tuned for exciting things to come!

*Jennifer Martin
Executive Director
Friends of
Washington Crossing Park*

