

SAVING OUR SHIPS



HUGE NEWS!

It's sometimes easy to overstate a case or put a bit too much emphasis on a point but we believe it's fair to say this past year and the next 18 months or so could be the most impactful since this park was conceived nearly half a century ago.

The impetus for this newsletter was to provide the interested public with an inside view of the current and future efforts to not only preserve our ships, but to ultimately save them. That said, there could be few things more important than addressing their greatest vulnerabilities: their failing hulls and superstructures.

Our President and CEO, Paul Marzello, has been working tirelessly with public and private

sector partners to secure sufficient funding to begin the drydocking process in earnest. He, and our partners at the local, county, state and federal levels, along with generous private support, have come through - The Sullivans and Croaker are going to drydock - together!

In addition, we're blown away by the support we've been getting in our volunteer program. We've never experienced numbers like we've seen recently, and they appear to be only growing from here. As you read on, we want to express our gratitude to the organizations that have come through for us in such an impactful way - we want to recognize each and every one.

Please read on - we have much to share.

Work on PTF-17 continues this season with the introduction of the small utility "duck" boat placed aboard, and more attention to the 40 millimeter cannon aft of the pilot house.

Our volunteers Ryan and Joe, along with the team they've assembled have done amazing work in the restoration of this Vietnam War veteran boat.



While working in The Sullivans engineering berthing, our lead technical volunteer Mario found this Hohner Echo harmonica tucked deep in the overhead cableway, near where a canvas bunk had been previously. If anyone knows about these instruments, or about the one pictured here, we'd love to hear from you.



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THE SULLIVANS AND CROAKER ARE GOING TO DRYDOCK!

Sufficient funds have been pledged to the City of Buffalo to launch preliminary measures for The Sullivans and Croaker simultaneous drydocking.

While this project warrants its own dedicated newsletter, we'll cover the details in broad strokes and elaborate more fully as the project progresses.

Our prospective timeline, as we currently understand it, is an October 2025 departure to a drydocking facility. The work necessary to meet this timeline is complex and extensive. Here is a basic overview of the plan as it currently stands:

Phase I (ASAP) - The City of Buffalo hires a maritime project management firm to oversee the project in its entirety - something that has to happen as soon as possible. Secondly, the City will make its final selection of a drydock facility to reserve a place for The Sullivans and Croaker of those who've provided cost estimates at the time of the marine survey early in 2023.

Phase II (January 2025) - The administrative and environmental processes must begin relative to the site preparation, dredging and ships' movement planning. This phase includes coordination with the NYSDEC, Army Corps of Engineers and Coast Guard. Environmental impact studies, soil testing, permitting and dredging plan approvals all must be completed within this phase.

Phase III (March/April 2025) - Hazardous material mitigation aboard The Sullivans and Croaker - the shipyards we've interacted with require all oil, oil residues, asbestos and red lead paint to be removed in the areas of the vessels impacted by the proposed scopes of work. The time estimated to complete this phase for both vessels is approximately 2 to 3 months.

Phase IV (May/June 2025) - Site preparation equipment mobilization - heavy lift, dredging, dive, barge, safety and other equipment will need to be transported to the site in preparation for the next phase of the project.

Phase V (July - September 2025) - Dredging, ships' transit preparations, damage control, and tow preparations are completed.

Phase VI (October 2025) - Upon completion of the dredging plan, damage control and ship preparations, The Sullivans and Croaker begin their transit, via a 'dead-stick' fore and aft tow with tugboats, to their repair destination.

Phase VII (October 2025 - May 2026) - Hull repairs conducted and completed in the drydock facility.

Phase VIII (April - May 2026) - Site preparation for ships' return: hydrographic survey, equipment mobilization, any additional dredging.

Phase IX (May 2026) - Ships return to their permanent Buffalo Harbor moorings.

Phase X (May 2026) - Party like it's 1999.

SAVING OUR SHIPS



9/11 DAY OF SERVICE

Last year, National Grid and the Buffalo Naval Park spearheaded the first 9/11 Day of Service on the Buffalo waterfront. We couldn't conceive at the time how the success of that first event could ever be topped. And yet it was.

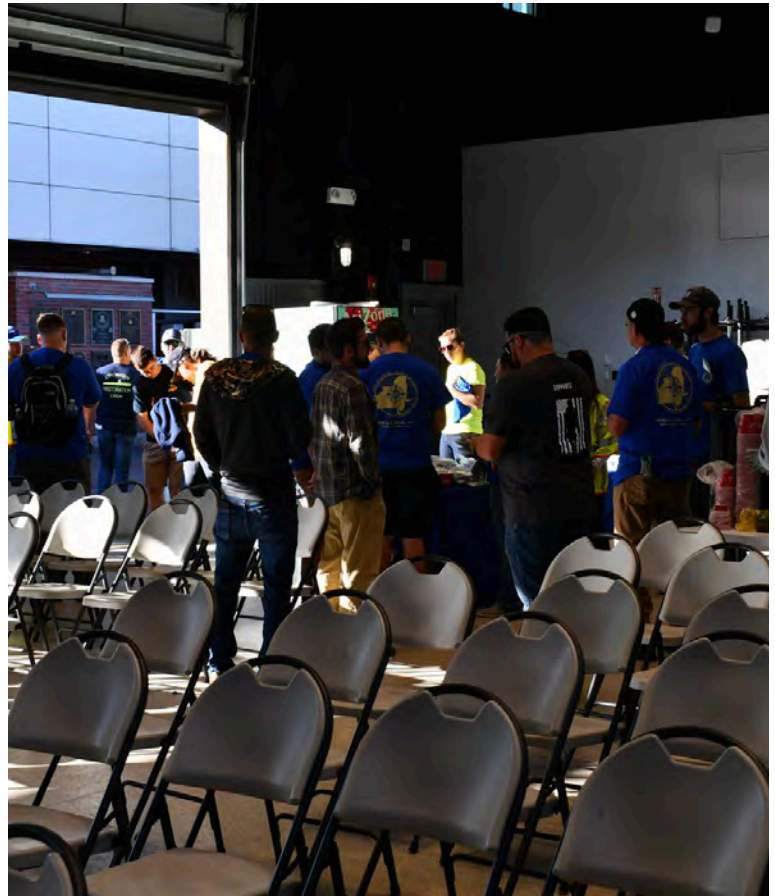
The Day of Service is intended to remember the terrible events of September 11th, 2001 and turn our energies to something positive - to serve others and use our labor and talents to rebuild and stand strong together.

With the leadership provided by the extraordinary people of National Grid, this Day of Service was made all the more impactful with volunteers from Highmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield, IBEW, M&T Bank, Turner Construction, Douglas Development, Harcat Fabrication, United States Submarine Veterans - Buffalo Base, USS Slater volunteers, Buffalo Naval Park docents, our in-house technical volunteers and our Buffalo Naval Park Ambassadors - all coming together to make this impactful day an unprecedented success. In all, over 300 volunteers converged on the park to give generously of their time and expertise. This army of people included electricians, welders, carpenters, administrative staff, taking on work within their areas of skill, as well as projects in our collections department, gardens and grounds, and marketing.

It is no way an overstatement to say that this group achieved more in a single day than our hard-working dedicated but very limited staff could do in a year or more.

In addition to the extraordinary labor provided, National Grid and others of our corporate partners provided financial support, food and water to ensure the day proceeded without a hitch.

The hundreds of participants left with a strong sense of contribution, and the Naval Park with enormous gratitude.



Above, the first wave of volunteers arrive for their safety brief, Park orientation, and objectives for the day.



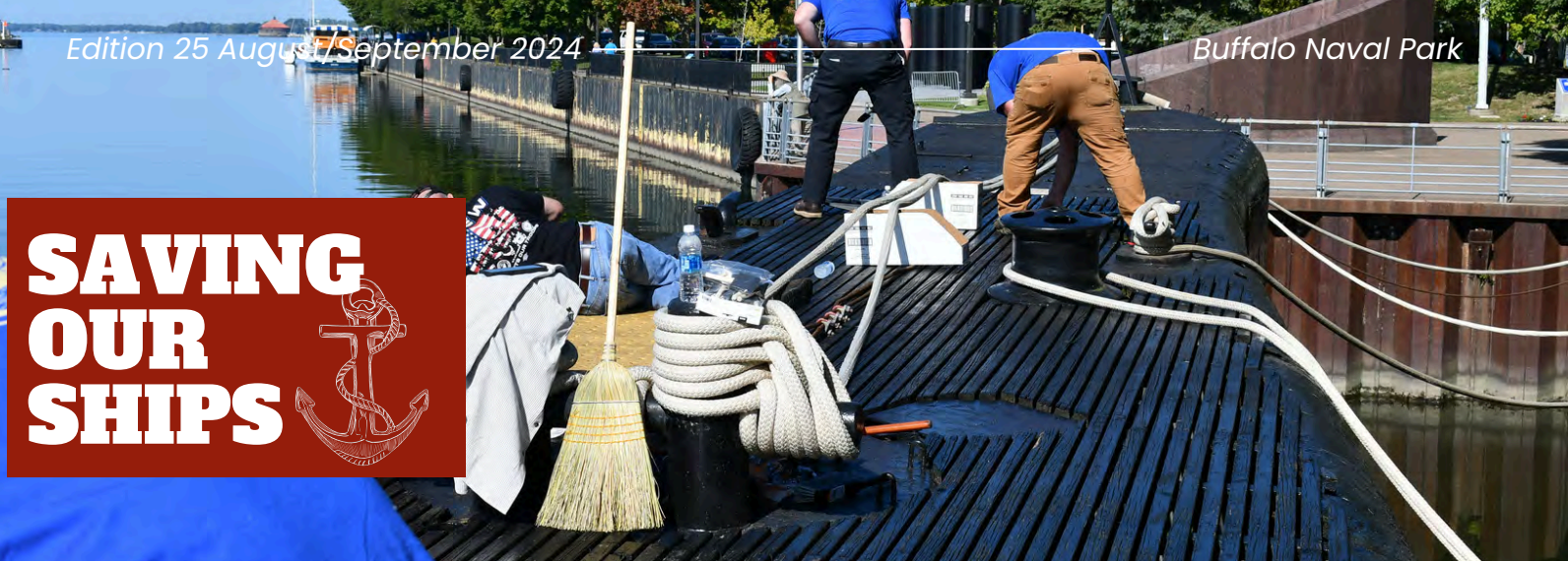
9/11 DAY OF SERVICE, CONT'D

Words, no matter how well articulated and assembled, are often insufficient to describe the extent of an achievement when compared to pictures. Below is just such an example - top is the 'before' image of the Little Rock's bridgewing rail and below is what it looked like after the National Grid carpenters were finished. Amazing!

Below is a picture of the Admiral's gig. Note in particular the wood rub rail, the top image from before the National Grid carpenters went to work, and the bottom image after they applied their expertise:

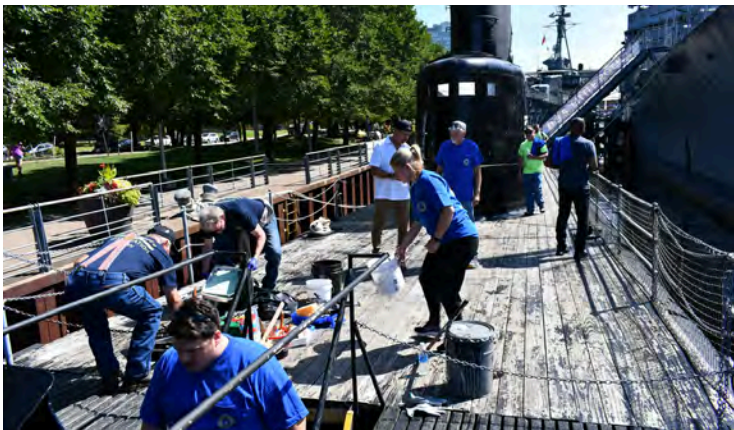


SAVING OUR SHIPS



9/11 DAY OF SERVICE, CONT'D

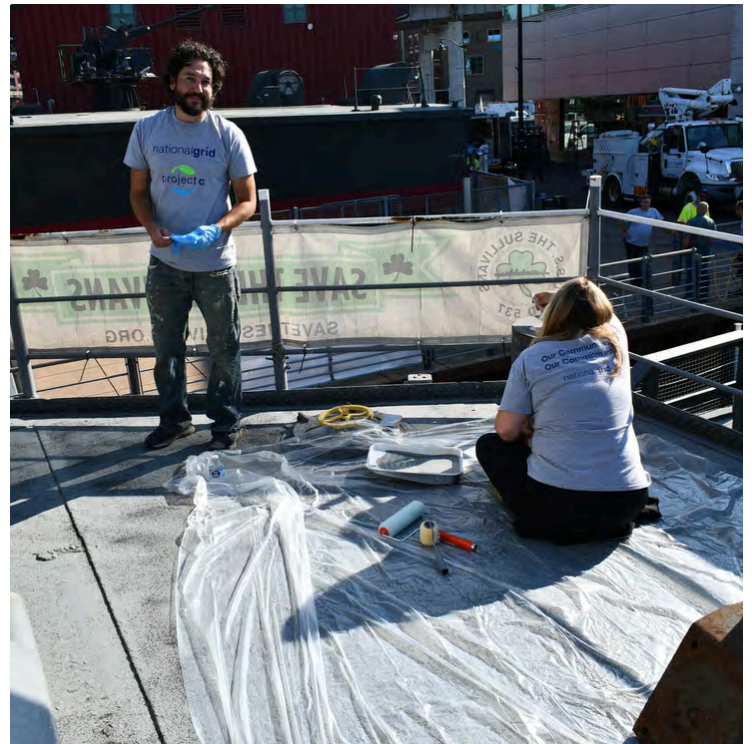
There hasn't been this much activity aboard the Croaker since she was in active service - literally. When the boat was patrolling the seas, she had a crew of roughly 80 sailors aboard. On the 9/11 Day of Service, we had 70 extraordinary volunteers from the IBEW, a half dozen submarine veterans, and a similar number of docents - all aboard to give some much-needed attention to the boat - well done!



SAVING OUR SHIPS



9/11 DAY OF SERVICE, CONT'D



Images taken around The Sullivans on the 9/11 Day of Service; painting, welding, electrical and mechanical work, all happening at the same time. It felt very much like the ship was alive with activity as it had been when she was in active service.



SAVING OUR SHIPS



THE SULLIVANS

Aboard The Sullivans, our primary focus has remained the restoration of the power distribution system. The challenges involved with bringing it safely back to full operation were its difficult-to-access location tucked in the cableways in the overhead, the pass-throughs in the transverse bulkheads, and identifying all the areas of damage that occurred at the time of her partial sinking.

Our lead technical volunteer Mario has been working for months under challenging conditions to say the least to restore these critical cables. With the assistance of the National Grid electricians, there is some minor installation work left to do, but we expect to begin testing and reviving the main circuits very soon.



Aboard The Sullivans, we've been working consistently through the summer scraping, painting, cleaning and organizing spaces. We were able, after many weeks of tough labor, to remove the floor leveler in the wardroom. We now have the opportunity to select the historically accurate deck surface as we continue the restoration of this important space.

Our goal is to share much more of the ship's spaces in the season preceding her departure for drydocking.

Above, BNP docent and technical volunteer Todd works with Mario and National Grid electricians on the 104 circuit cable passing through the aft engineering transverse bulkhead to the distribution panel. Left, our lead technical volunteer Mario and USS Slater's Barry Witte brief National Grid electricians on the differences between ship's power and shore side power, followed by a robust safety brief.



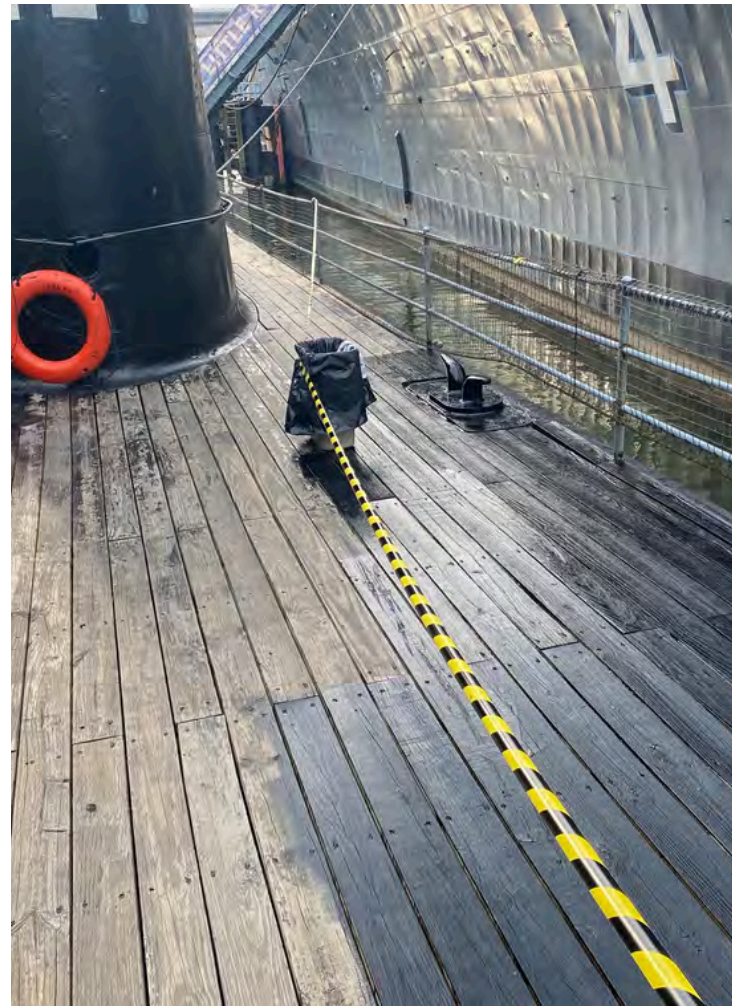
SAVING OUR SHIPS



CROAKER

Our Croaker caretaker Ken has been working hard on organizing interior spaces, developing maintenance plans, and mustering support from the submarine veteran community. Ken, a retired submariner himself, brings a wealth of knowledge of the silent service, submarine systems, and a passion for restoring the boat. He's been joined by volunteers Tim, Dennis and Fritz - all submarine veterans, in taking advantage of each opportunity to improve the boat, and our guests' experience when they visit us.

We've had multiple volunteer events this year dedicated solely to working inside the sub to clean, paint, and repair spaces and equipment. The 9/11 Day of Service, with its more the 70 volunteers aboard Croaker, focused on cleaning to the old-fashioned Navy Chief standards: start in the overhead - every pipe, cableway and vent, and worked their way down the bulkheads, including every horizontal surface, right down to the deck.



Above, Ken and Tim have started repainting the main walkway topside on the boat. Left, volunteers from the IBEW paint the open spaces between the deck planks, the 'dog house' access to the forward torpedo room, and the radar motor housing. Just beyond the range of view, dozens of IBEW volunteers work in the torpedo rooms, engine rooms, and virtually every space aboard the boat. Exceptionally well done!

SAVING OUR SHIPS



LITTLE ROCK

August and September aboard Little Rock have been exceptionally productive. In addition to all the work our volunteers have accomplished, our maintenance team hasn't slowed down at all.

In order for the 9/11 Day of Service, and the over 300 volunteers who participated, to be successful, an enormous amount of organization, planning and site preparation had to be completed. The maintenance team worked tirelessly to ensure the day proceeded without a hitch.

A major undertaking we were able to complete was the swapping out of a major main breaker in the forward electrical distribution panel. Its circuit controls power to important areas in the forward end of the ship, and the original breaker had suffered an internal mechanical failure at some point in the past. After a series of checks, and under the guidance of a retired Navy commander and electrical engineer, we shut down all power to the ship and removed the nonfunctioning breaker and replaced it with one that was in good working order. Once the necessary safety checks were complete, we reenergized power to the ship and verified the full function of the breaker.

During the 9/11 Day of Service, National Grid electricians went into the main engineering spaces and upgraded all the original light fixtures to LED. While we're not currently powering the light circuit, a repair is underway that will allow us to do so. No original lighting has been available in those spaces since the time of the ship's arrival

in Buffalo nearly a half century ago.

A very exciting project that we've just gotten underway is the restoration of the ship's Med lights - the lights that run the length of the ship from the masts. Work begins in the next couple weeks and, with luck, the ship will again be lit from bow to stern.



Top, the Little Rock with her Med lights arrayed while in active service and below with the sad condition of her nonfunctioning running rigging.

SAVING OUR SHIPS



CURATOR'S CORNER BY SHANE STEPHENSON

This corner is ever grateful to Gov. Hochul's office, along with Mayor Brown, County Executive Poloncarz, State Senator Ryan for the \$13 million recently given to the Buffalo Naval Park for ships maintenance and dry docking. USS The Sullivans and USS Croaker can now receive the care they need to help preserve the vessels and continue to tell their stories of sacrifice and service.

One of the most important Curatorial steps is to make sure the artifacts that are still onboard these vessels are removed for their proper care and protection while the ships are away. Hot work, so common to ship maintenance, can cut into artifacts if they are close to the hull. This can destroy the artifact while being a fire hazard for the compartment in which it is located, and for the vessel at large.

I will be putting together a team, similar to volunteers that helped with the cleaning and restoration of the Talos missile and The Sullivans artifacts during the sinking (see images). These important individuals will help remove, catalog, and index these items. They will be stored in a space which has yet to be determined.

These volunteers would be working under a volunteer captain, independent of much oversight, and will receive a training orientation from myself so they can learn the importance of the work and feel comfortable knowing what to do. Attention to detail is paramount for this assignment! This curator would appreciate any expression of interest.

Please send an email to:

info@buffalonavalpark.org and I will be reaching out to you directly. Thanks again, and "We Stick Together".





OUR VOLUNTEERS AT WORK

While the 9/11 Day of Service is a spectacular annual event, we're grateful to have volunteer groups from a wide variety of organizations join us nearly every month of the year. And we need them to maintain our fleet of historic vessels - no matter how dedicated our staff is, and they're mighty dedicated, there aren't enough hands, hours, or expertise to care for these ships without help from our community.

Some of the organizations that have contributed their time, personnel, and in many cases supporting financial resources throughout this year include L3Harris, National Grid, Independent health, Linde, M&T Bank, Key Bank, the United States Coast Guard, the United States Navy (Chiefs), Moog, Little Rock Association, United States Submarine Veterans - Buffalo Base, Tin Can Sailors Association, Eagle Scouts, KPMG, National Fuel, USS Slater, Northrup Grumman, Sea Cadets, Ford, and others. Additionally, our individual volunteers who volunteer their time on an ongoing basis - docents, landscape team, ambassadors, and technical volunteers. The difference they've made in the quality of our guest experience and in saving our ships is nothing short of remarkable. If you're looking for an opportunity to contribute to something deeply meaningful, please consider volunteering with us.



Online volunteer form: <https://www.buffalonaivalpark.org/volunteer>

Email: info@buffalonaivalpark.org

Phone: 716-847-1773

Website: <https://www.buffalonaivalpark.org>

Buffalo Naval Park Youtube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@buffalonaivalpark>



WANT TO JOIN OUR VOLUNTEERS?

DOCENTS/TOUR GUIDES: Our uniformed, trained cadre of docents are the guides and storytellers aboard our ships afloat. They know the histories, battles, sailors, and personal anecdotes related to these ships. If you're interested in becoming a docent, we'd love to hear from you!

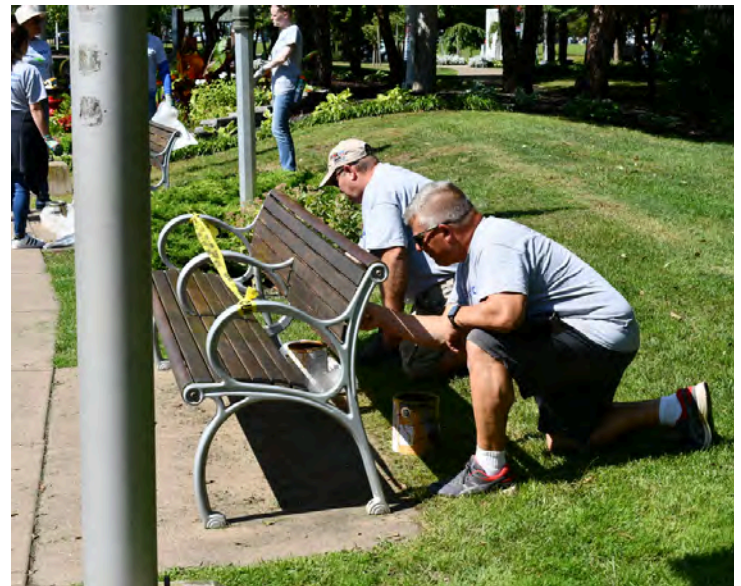
AMBASSADORS: The first people our guests meet most often are our Ambassadors, a dedicated and friendly part of our team that helps guide people along the promenade/sidewalk to more easily find their way around the park.

MAINTENANCE: If you enjoy working with your hands and have an interest in restoring rare artifacts so essential to American history, we've got an abundance of opportunities! We're especially interested in having skilled metal workers, electricians, plumbers and carpenters volunteer with us, but all, regardless of skill level are welcome.

COLLECTIONS: Caring for and cataloging our unique artifacts takes a great deal of time, patience, and dedication. Under the direction of our curator, you could help preserve these precious objects so they'll be available for future generations.

GARDENS AND GROUNDS: If you've visited the park, you've no doubt seen the immaculately maintained grounds enjoyed by so many. If you enjoy gardening and wish to be a part of this dedicated team, please let us know - we'd love to have you join us!

EVENTS: With the park rapidly becoming the epicenter for veteran events and activities, we have an ongoing need for volunteers with an interest in helping make these occasions successful.



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