

A note to Guild Park supporters

As 2025 wraps up, I'd like to send a note of thanks and a few reflections on the year at Guild Park – along with a look ahead to what's unfolding next.

It was such a pleasure meeting so many of you at Guild Park this year. Whether you joined a tour or talk, came to an event, or simply spent time wandering through the 88 acres, I'm sure you felt the same inspiration that keeps drawing people here – the unique way art and nature come together across this landscape. Of all the 1,500 parks operating across Toronto, thank you for choosing Guild Park to visit.

Some meaningful milestones in 2025

One of the most visible was **unveiling the official Heritage Toronto plaque for the Greek Theatre**. The community support behind this was remarkable, including the Guildwood Village Community Association making the unveiling part of its annual Guildwood Day.



Unveiling the Heritage Toronto Plaque for Guild Park's Greek Theatre, June 2025.

Heritage Toronto said this plaque was the result of one of the strongest grass-roots campaigns they had ever seen.

This is now the second Heritage Toronto plaque at Guild Park. It follows the 2020 plaque Friends of Guild Park sponsored to recognize the Guild of All Arts and its founders, Rosa and Spencer Clark. Together, these permanent signs affirm how important Guild Park is to our city's cultural history, how strongly the community supports park improvements, and how our collaborative efforts help make the park even better.

Arts, Culture, and Community in Action



Nagata Shachu drumming up a storm, July 2025

There was wonderful excitement from programs sponsored by **Toronto Arts in the Parks**, with Friends of Guild Park serving as the active community partner.

Japanese drummers, Nagata Shachu, returned to the park for a hands-on drumming workshop, followed by an unforgettable concert at the Greek Theatre.

Summer poetry readings hosted by Tender Possibilities helped hundreds of young adults from across Toronto discover the power of the spoken word and Guild Park's inspiration setting.

Family Fest launched the season of live comedy and drama by **Guild Festival Theatre**. The 2025 productions had more sold-out shows than ever before and brought the Greek Theatre to life.

During the **Guild Alive with Culture Arts Festival**, hundreds of people stopped by the Friends of Guild Park booth to learn about the site and pick up collectibles - vintage postcards to art prints.

All summer long, guided walks, nature talks, shoreline clean-ups, and other **activities took place with partners including Jane's Walk, Doors Open, Toronto Nature Stewards, and the Scarborough Historical Society.**

Volunteer gardeners tended the **Native Pollinator Garden** each week, part of the award-winning initiative led by the **Guildwood Butterflyway Project.**

Watch for news about the programs returning to Guild Park, along with new initiatives coming in 2026.

The Sculptor's Cabin: A Bigger Welcome
Elsewhere on site, **the Sculptor's Cabin had its busiest year yet.**

More than 2,100 people used the cabin this season – a **166% increase since 2023.**

This increase reflects Guild Park's continuing rise in popularity. It also shows how the cabin has become an established place to welcome park visitors and host community activities.

Friends of Guild Park is proud to operate the Sculptor's Cabin in partnership with the City of Toronto since 2019.



A busy year at the park with (from top) poetry readings, Family Fest, Guild Alive Festival and Doors Open guests at the Sculptor's Cabin.

Community Impact Recognized

Another highlight was **the Toronto Urban Design Award presented to the Clark Centre for the Arts.**

Guild Park’s new arts facility received the special Jury Award for community impact. The award recognized the work of **Taylor Hazell Architects** as building architect. The jury also praised the community for its persistence in bringing informed and valuable input to the project.



The Clark Centre for the Arts received a 2025 Toronto Urban Design Award for community impact.

Friends of Guild Park began collaborating with the City and local arts and community groups on the future arts facility back in 2016. The concept, design and name we put forward reflected Guild Park’s artistic legacy and were all incorporated in the Clark Centre. This 2025 design award represents nine years of volunteer effort and affirms the important role that community advocacy plays at Guild Park.

Strengthening Friends of Guild Park

For Friends of Guild Park, 2025 marked a turning point as a not-for-profit organization. In August, the Board agreed to add a professional leadership position to its operations. I’ve had the honour to serve as the organization’s **first Managing Director** while continuing as President. This change increases our group’s capacity and supports a more consistent approach to our work.

Friends of Guild Park exists because people believe in the power of art, nature, and inspiration. **Our vision is simple and ambitious: to ensure Guild Park is a spectacular and sustainable destination that welcomes the world.** If you’ve attended an event, shared a story, become a member, or supported the park in any way, thank you. You’re helping shape Guild Park’s future.

Staying Better Connected

A lot more happened in 2025 — including the unexpected hacking of one of our social media accounts. But there was one thing Friends of Guild Park could have done better. We didn’t always stay as closely connected with our members and supporters as we should have.

I promise that’s changing.

As we move into 2026, you can expect **clearer communication** from us, **more regular updates** about what’s happening in the park, and **more insight** into the stories behind the



art, the landscape, and the remarkable people associated with this place. There'll also be **more ways for people like you to engage with Guild Park**, including opportunities to volunteer and participate more actively.

You'll be hearing from us more consistently in the months ahead. In the meantime, if you'd like to stay connected, share a thought, or explore ways to become more involved, I invite you to get in touch at president@guildpark.ca.

Listening to Guild Park supporters is always informative – and genuinely appreciated. If there's a particular part of Guild Park you care about most - or have always wondered about – I'd be glad to hear about it.



City of Toronto officials and Friends of Guild Park directors visit the park's newly-installed **Head of a Horse**, November 2025.

In 2026, Friends of Guild Park looks forward to introducing our members to the popular sculpture that was reinstalled on-site last fall – **Emanuel Hahn's Head of A Horse**, also known as **The War Horse**.

This bronze artwork will be featured on many of the scheduled guided tours taking place at Guild Park throughout the year.

To close this note and the year, I'll echo what I said when we lit up Guild Park's Christmas Tree Lighting this season:
See you at Guild Park in 2026!

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John P. Mason". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John P. Mason,
President & Managing Director
Friends of Guild Park
president@guildpark.ca

PS: If someone in your life loves Guild Park — or would enjoy learning more about its art, history, and future – please feel free to share this note with them. Curiosity, conversation, and shared enthusiasm are exactly what help Guild Park continue to thrive.