

PAWLING COMMUNITY FOUNDATION UPDATE

BY THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



The Pawling Community Foundation (PCF) has launched a campaign called One Community, One Park to improve Pawling's natural resources at Lakeside and Murrow Parks.

PCF is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to using private funds for the betterment of the Pawling community. Board members are Pawling residents devoted to their town and committed to the values on which the PCF was founded.

Several years ago, the Pawling Town Board invited the Pawling Community Foundation to study the best use of its park resources. After surveying Pawling's leaders and residents, the result is One Community, One Park, a master plan to link Lakeside Park and Murrow Park and address the most urgent needs of the parks.

PCF began by surveying residents to hear what concerned people the most. One of the biggest issues raised was the condition of the Great Lawn at Lakeside Park. The Lawn is one of the most heavily used resources with over 15,000 people gathering yearly for events such as Community Day, the Triathlon, Fireman's Carnival, Rotary Fall Festival, Music by the Lake, summer day camps, and athletic events for young and old.

PCF paid for an engineering plan for the Great Lawn restoration and fundraising towards the \$480,000 project began. Fortuitously, the Trinity-Pawling School started construction on a new athletic center at the same time.

Trinity-Pawling (T-P) and PCF discussed the opportunity for T-P to donate the soil from the athletic center project in hopes of assisting the Foundation with much needed dirt to level the Great Lawn. Although the fill could have been used on the T-P campus, the School, wanting to be a community partner, offered it to the town and PCF for the Park project.



Everyone involved was extremely grateful for the donation. The topsoil itself has been estimated to be worth \$100,000. Additionally, Trinity-Pawling paid for the transportation from the school campus to Lakeside Park, saving the Foundation an additional amount toward the overall construction estimate of almost \$50,000.

The Pawling Community Foundation, with the support of town officials, intended to use the fill to regrade park's Great Lawn. Fundraising continued but proved more difficult than anticipated and progress slowed.

In the fall of 2019, PCF received a resolution from the Pawling Town Board, providing us with the necessary backing and renewed support of the town, assisting us with messaging and fundraising. While the Foundation's goal was to complete the project in 2022, the challenges of the 2020 pandemic led the Foundation to look for a realistic plan going forward. PCF knew two things: the residents of Pawling were concerned with the appearance of the dirt pile, and there was a renewed appreciation for Lakeside Park as an outdoor space that offered peace and a safe place to gather.

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