

# the great connector

## WALKWAY OVER THE HUDSON

Spring Newsletter 2022

### Illuminate the Walkway

Have you seen the new lights along the North railing of the Walkway? Look up next time you are in the area, or join us for one of our Walkway at Night events to experience the Hudson Valley in a unique setting.

We are pleased to announce that phase 1 is complete. 454 motion activated, solar lights were installed from West Gate to East Gate as part of the Friends' efforts to illuminate the deck of the Walkway. These solar powered lights use no electricity and do not impact the overhead night time sky.

The next phase, the lighting of the belvederes, will be installed in 2022. This includes color changing, LED lights that can be changed rapidly for artistic and programming effects, as well as signaling to patrons in an emergency. We plan to complete this in time for Starry Starry Night on October 7.

This park improvement was accomplished in partnership with NY State Parks with assistance from the NYS Bridge Authority. Funds were raised through successful application of NY State grants and matching private funds from the Friends.

Many thanks to John Storyk, DGA, staff and the Amenities Committee for seeing the project through from concept to installation. Come see the lights for yourself! Check out the back page for our Walkway At Night schedule!

### Celebrating 12 Years of Great Connections

It's quite bittersweet to write my last letter to you as Executive Director. Though I'll soon be stepping down from my leadership role, I will remain forever grateful for your support which has made an incredible impact on the Walkway Over the Hudson.

We've been through a lot together since opening day in October 2009. In just over a decade, we've connected the bridge to an ever-extending network of rail trails, opened new visitors centers, built and refurbished an elevator offering 21 stories of river views, operated the popular Friends' pavilions and purchased the electric tram to assist visitors with limited mobility. Together, we have raised over \$15 million with almost half going directly to NYS Parks for amenities and improvements!



One of my proudest accomplishments is the growth and success of the Ambassador program. The commitment, dedication and enthusiasm of our red-vested volunteers makes the Walkway one of the friendliest parks in the nation.

I am still amazed at the enduring relevance of the bridge's 1889 moniker, "Great Connector." This iconic structure connects so many of us in different ways and serves as a tangible symbol of how important human connection truly is. Please take a moment to read about a few of our amazing Great Connectors, including our new Board Chair, a recent Steward, our Ambassador Board representative and our supportive members. They exemplify how a connection to the Walkway has become a positive and purposeful part of their lives. We invite you to make your own connection.

I will still 'See you on the Walkway,'

*Elizabeth Wilkerson*



## Welcome New Board Chair

### MAUREEN SOLERO

We are pleased to announce 2022 board leadership including new Board Chair, Maureen Solero, Vice Chair, John Storyk, Treasurer, Chris Cunningham, and Secretary, Anita Jones.

"I am honored to have been elected Board Chair of the Walkway organization," Maureen shared. "My first introduction to this bridge was that of a new resident when my husband and I relocated to the Hudson Valley in 2014 and volunteered to be Ambassadors. Our Ambassador experiences provided many opportunities to share the beauty of the Hudson Valley with our local communities and global visitors."

Maureen Solero is a globally recognized human resources and talent leader and is a certified Executive Coach. During her extensive 30-year career she has lived and worked in the US, Asia and Europe. Her experience includes serving as Chief Human Resources Officer and Global Executive of Talent with multi-national firms including Deutsche Bank and Novartis Pharmaceuticals. She founded Transformational Leadership and Coaching, LLC, providing strategic human resources and leadership services to clients regionally and globally.

She has been the recipient of dozens of awards for transformational culture change and organizational excellence, including the appointment to LinkedIn 100. In her current role as Vice President, Organization and Leadership Development at Nuvance Health, she is responsible for the firm's development, talent management, culture and engagement strategies.

"I look forward to further collaboration with my fellow Board Members, staff and New York State Parks, as we pursue opportunities to enhance visitors' experiences and seek resources for additional amenities and events. Our opportunities at the Walkway are endless, as is the beauty of the Hudson Valley."



## New Merchandise Launch

We are excited to launch our new merchandise items at our pavilion stores this season. These offerings will include drinkware, notecards, redesigned hats and shirts, train whistles and new items for your furry friends.

Our 2022 Marist Fashion collaboration will launch later this season with a line of items celebrating our LGBTQ community.

Stop by the East or West Pavilion on Fridays, Saturdays or Sundays to browse the full line of customer favorites and new items or shop with us anytime at [shop.walkway.org](http://shop.walkway.org).



## CURRENT PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS



Partners and supporters have a transformative impact on the Walkway and Hudson Valley. To learn more, visit [walkway.org](http://walkway.org).

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**MAUREEN SOLERO**  
Chair

**JOHN STORYK**  
Vice Chair

**ANITA JONES**  
Secretary

**CHRIS CUNNINGHAM**  
Treasurer

**DAN AHOUSE**  
**MICHAEL GRAHAM**  
**BOB KAMINSKY**  
**MAUREEN KEEGAN**  
**RON LANE**

**TONY PAGANO**  
**RACHEL REISMAN**  
**DORCAS ROEHRS**  
**EMILY V. SALAND**  
**HOWARD SCHWARTZ**  
**KATHLEEN SMITH**





## Ambassador Spotlight

### Rachel Reisman

Our Ambassadors are the face of the Walkway and are a vital part of our organization. Rachel Reisman is our Ambassador Representative on our Board of Directors.

#### How did you first become a Walkway Ambassador and what drew you to becoming one?

I was planning to retire in 2017. In 2016, I embarked on an effort to get involved in some new activities, knowing that I didn't want to wake up the day after retiring and ask myself - "What Now?" To that end, I started a book club with a few friends, signed up to read together with elementary school kids and signed up for Ambassador training with the Walkway - all ways I can give back to my own community.

#### What is your favorite part of being an Ambassador?

I truly enjoy the ambassador role. When I work at the Walkway, I can be outdoors and get fresh air without having to be a runner. I love to see the families who come for some fresh air with their young children and their pets. I love to be able to chat with visitors and especially enjoy seeing all the dogs that visit the Walkway. I don't have dogs, but I do love them and I don't realize how much I miss them until spring rolls around again and I begin to spend time at the pavilions for the season.

My most favorite part of being an Ambassador has to be all of the new friends I have made and my new interest in local history of the community where I have now lived for so long. In addition, a group of us Ambassadors have kept each other laughing at weekly Zoom get togethers throughout the pandemic (and beyond) where we have stayed safe and toasted to our friendship each week.

## Tram Service Available

Friday - Saturday - Sunday, 10 am - 4pm  
Weather Permitting. Check in at our volunteer pavilions for times and availability



## Remembering Tom Alfonsi

Steward gifts are generous donations that allow us to continue to add transformative amenities, family-friendly events, and community programs to the Walkway experience. Our newest Steward, Terri Alfonsi dedicated a bench plaque in memory of her husband, Tom, and shared her story with the Walkway.

"My husband Tom and I moved to the Hudson Valley after downsizing our home in Massachusetts. We chose this area because of its beauty and amount of activities to take part in. This also brought us closer to our three girls who are living in NYC and CT. Tom discovered the Walkway Over the Hudson before we even moved into our new home and thought it a great place for us to walk during the pandemic. We soon discovered the beauty and history it had to offer. We must have walked it 100 times during our first year in the Hudson Valley, it truly turned out to be 'our place'. Tragically, last September, Tom had a fatal heart attack. We felt it only natural to have a bench on the bridge named in his honor. This will provide a loving place for his family and friends to feel closer to him."



## Stewards of the Walkway

Interested in dedicating a medallion or bench to memorialize or honor a loved one? To learn more about our Steward program, please contact Diane Haight at 203-517-7318 or [dhaight@walkway.org](mailto:dhaight@walkway.org).





WALKWAY OVER THE HUDSON  
PO BOX 889  
POUGHKEEPSIE, NY 12602  
WALKWAY.ORG

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
WALKWAY.ORG

# Experience the Walkway at Night

APRIL 22   MAY 13   MAY 27   JUNE 10   JUNE 25  
JULY 15   AUG 12   AUG 26   SEPT 9   SEPT 23   OCT 28

The Walkway opens at sunset on select Friday nights for  
2 hours of amazing night time views. Tickets required.

**walkway.org/walkwayatnight**





# Become a Member

It's a fact. 90% of the Walkway's budget comes from donors, partners, and members. Contributions from people like you help us to provide ongoing capital improvements, inclusive community programming and family friendly events.

Join or renew your membership this spring and you will receive a coupon for a free lemonade or Italian ice from Walkway vendor Lemon Love!

All members receive The Great Connector newsletter, a 10% discount off the purchase of Walkway merchandise, and a window-cling decal.



Your membership keeps you connected to:

- Walkway at Night - Seasonal dates when the bridge is open late to enjoy breathtaking twilight and sunset views on the Walkway
- July 4th Fireworks Spectacular - Annual special access event
- MayFest & Walktoberfest Farmers & Makers Market - Food and beverage showcase
- The Great Connector Series - Engaging educational presentations on Hudson Valley themes

## Pet - \$25

- Colorful Walkway Pet Bandana
- 2-in-1 Walkway Pet Water Bottle/Bowl
- Walkway Pet Membership Certificate

## Individual - \$40

- Walkway Membership Card
- Walkway Window Cling Decal
- FREE ADMISSION to popular events like Walkway at Night, Sunrise Stroll, Walkway Lectures and more
- Discounts on events like July 4th Fireworks, MayFest & Walktoberfest

## Family - \$75

- All benefits of Individual Level *plus*
- Up to 5 Walkway Membership Cards

## Enhanced Family - \$100

- All benefits of Family Level *plus*
- Invitation to special members only history tours and info sessions
- Early access to discounted tickets for events including July 4th Fireworks, Mayfest and Walktoberfest

## Supporter - \$250

- All benefits of Enhanced Level *plus*
- Walkway art print
- Name included in donor listings

## Advocate - \$500

- All benefits of Supporter Level *plus*
- Limited Edition Walkway Notebook
- Invitations to exclusive events

**TO JOIN OR RENEW,  
USE THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE OR VISIT [JOIN.WALKWAY.ORG](http://JOIN.WALKWAY.ORG)**





**SAT/SUN MAY 21 & 22**



## **FARMERS & MAKERS MARKET**

The Mayfest Farmers and Makers Market showcases a curated selection of the Hudson Valley's finest producers - farms, distilleries, breweries, wineries, restaurants, artists, artisans, and more - at the Hudson Valley Rail Trail and West approach to Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Park. Vendors exhibit their wares for tasting or purchase and in support of our regional agribusinesses

Mayfest is a fun filled weekend with something for everyone! Join us for free family fun at the Walkway with glamorous princesses (sponsored by The Snooki Shop), children's craft activities, with over 150 vendors, offering something for everyone.

**AND** for only \$25 (per adult) purchase a tasting ticket for full access to beer, wine, spirits and cider from more than 20 area purveyors. Must be 21+ to purchase a tasting ticket. Members, veterans, military and seniors receive a discounted admission.

Get your tickets now at  
**[walkway.org/mayfest](http://walkway.org/mayfest)**

## **2nd Annual Walkway Over the Hudson's Golf Tournament**

**Mon. July 18 Shotgun start at 11 AM**

Includes 18 holes of golf, cart, food and drink for the day, & more.

**HOLE IN ONE CHALLENGE - Romeo Chevrolet Buick GMC**

**HOLE IN ONE CHALLENGE - SLEEP N' SPA HOT TUB**

**SAMPLING STATIONS - 1857 Spirits & Hudson Whiskey**

**DINNER - Post-round food/drinks/raffles 4:30 p.m.**

**MONDAY, JULY 18**

@ Apple Greens Golf Course

161 South Street, Highland

**[walkway.org/golf](http://walkway.org/golf)**

\$175 per individual

\$600 per foursome.

**FOR MORE EVENTS & GREAT PROGRAMS ~ VISIT [WALKWAY.ORG](http://WALKWAY.ORG). TICKETS SELL FAST. RESERVE NOW.**