

OCTOBER 2021

FRIENDS OF OXON RUN
PARK



CELEBRATE URBAN BIRDS

Susan Williams

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BIRD EXPERIENCE IN OXON RUN PARK



Vision

The Friends of Oxon Run Park are delighted to have received funding for Celebrating Urban Birds in the District of Columbia's largest park in Ward 8.

The vision is to teach our most precious resource, our children, to appreciate the beauty of birds that live in this beautiful park.

Mission

FOR's mission is to preserve green space to ensure that generations to come are able to appreciate the eco-system that parks bring. We strive to educate community in interesting ways to help them learn more about what exists around them naturally.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Washington Highlands

The children live in Washington Highlands, a public housing complex. They are a part of the Exodus Summer Camp program. We were able to accommodate 30 children for this event.

Oxon Run Park

The location for the event was centered around the James E. Bunn Amphitheater and the Mother's Peace Garden. The children had the experience of counting birds as they saw them and documenting the information on the bird sheets.

The Excitement

Those little ones with those little hands pointed at birds in the sky or in the trees that they saw on the sheet with different birds. They were mesmerized by it all.



THE COUNT



PEOPLE IN THE PARK STARTED TO LOOK UP BECAUSE THEY WERE CURIOUS TO SEE WHAT THE CHILDREN WERE LOOKING AT.

The bird count and artistic bird house building event was held on a beautiful sunny day in Ward 8 in Oxon Run Park. The Friends of Oxon Run Park also partnered with LYL 365. Two representatives from the LYL worked with the children on building bird houses that they were able to paint and take home.

After they built the bird houses we looked for birds in the Mother's Peace Garden and the James E. Bunn Amphitheater. Their findings are attached. There were many birds flying around the majestic trees. We also partnered with the DC Department of Transportation's Urban Forestry Administration as part of the festivities

LESSONS LEARNED

The children never really paid attention to the birds before.....

Part of the day was designed to have the children learn about the trees the birds were perched in as well. It was a very full day that lasted 4 1/2 hours. The beauty of the event was the children's excitement to find a bird, count it and try to figure out what kind of bird it was. Overall it was a wonderful education experience for the youth. We plan on implementing the 2nd phase before April 2022.

The pictures reflect how engaged the children were during this exercise. We are grateful to the "Celebrate Urban Birds" folks for providing the funds to help us organize something this special for our children who are often in traumatized communities riddled with crime and violence. This was a bit of a healing experience for them as well. They felt safe in the park and freely ran around to participate in this effort to celebrate birds.

We are looking forward to doing this again to ensure that our youth are connected to their environment by paying attention to what they see and hear. The most striking thing we learned is that they didn't realize that there were so many different birds in the park.

