



PATRONS *for* BELLAIRE PARKS

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Bellaire PATRONS Meet Wortham Foundation Challenge!

Bellaire's non-profit PATRONS for Bellaire Parks is happy to report that it not only met but exceeded the Wortham Foundation's fundraising challenge.

The Wortham Foundation's June 2006 Challenge Grant provided that the Foundation would make a \$250,000 donation to PATRONS' Bellaire Town Square project if PATRONS could raise \$500,000 in donations and pledges between June 1, 2006 and June 30, 2007. On July 2, 2007, PATRONS submitted a report to the Foundation detailing over \$630,000 in pledges and donations attributable to the challenge grant, well over their \$500,000 goal.

According to PATRONS president Mandy Nathan, PATRONS received an overwhelming response from Bellaire residents and businesses in the last few months. Approximately \$400,000 in pledges and donations were received since the beginning of March, with about \$130,000 coming in in each of May and June. "PATRONS conducted an intense publicity campaign asking for the community's support this spring with two different informational flyers included in the Bellaire water bills and postcards and our newsletter mailed to all Bellaire residences, in addition to our ongoing resident and corporate networking campaigns and usual press releases," said Nathan. "We had a tremendous response from the water bill flyers and newsletter, which we were able to track because of the unique pledge forms they incorporated."

During the course of the Wortham campaign, PATRONS received donations from hundreds of individuals and families, various local foundations, numerous community groups, and dozens of businesses. PATRONS largest individual donation was a \$30,000 pledge from a long-time Bellaire resident who still lives in the same home she and her husband purchased 35 years ago, and who said she wanted to give back to the community she has loved for so many years. The smallest was a crisp \$2 bill returned with a water bill donor form by another long-time Bellaire resident and volunteer. The majority of PATRONS' individual donors made donations or pledges in the \$1 to \$250 range, which PATRONS Vice President of Development Lynne Skinner said reflected the broad-based support PATRONS had hoped to obtain from the Bellaire community. Skinner reported that PATRONS' community support was also reflected in the contributions made by many of Bellaire's community groups, both adult and youth-oriented.

PATRONS' business donations included a \$100,000 pledge from Bellaire's First Street Surgical Center and Hospital, and a combination donation/pledge from the Bellaire New Home Showcase Builders, who donated over \$30,000 in proceeds from their May 2007 Showcase tour to PATRONS, and then followed that donation up with a June 2007 pledge of \$50,000 to be paid from proceeds from their 2008 and 2009 Showcase events. PATRONS also received donations in the \$15,000 range from various area businesses and banks, as well as many smaller donations and pledges from locally owned businesses and business owners.

Nathan expressed great appreciation on behalf of PATRONS for the Wortham Foundation's willingness to extend such a prestigious grant to the fledgling PATRONS organization last year, and said the Foundation's grant provided the necessary impetus to get PATRONS' fundraising campaign shifted into high gear even in advance of work beginning last year on the aquatics center. "We were very fortunate to have the Wortham Foundation take an interest in Bellaire Town Square," she said, adding that the challenge grant brought the immediacy and legitimacy of PATRONS' Bellaire Town Square goals to the forefront in the Bellaire community. "We were then even more fortunate to have the Bellaire community respond so enthusiastically and generously to the challenge extended by the Foundation."

Nathan reported that with the inclusion of the pledges and donations received through June 30, PATRONS has now raised over \$1 million in pledges and donations for the Bellaire Town Square project, not counting the funds anticipated to be received from the Wortham Foundation. She added that PATRONS is on track to make its \$1 million contribution to the City for the aquatics facility at the end of September, as pledged in 2006. After that commitment is met, funds raised by PATRONS will be earmarked for other features of the Bellaire Town Square complex, including the new playground, trail system, donor wall/water feature area, skate park, pavilion and great lawn.

Mayor Cindy Siegel said in hearing the good news, "I have always known how generous the Bellaire community is, but I'm overwhelmed by the number of Bellaire residents, community organizations, and businesses that stepped up to help the PATRONS' meet the Wortham challenge. To my knowledge this is the largest fundraising effort that has ever occurred in Bellaire. The fact that PATRONS exceeded the grant challenge is just more proof how much this community cares about and supports Bellaire."