

Spring 2025 ROBBINS FARM ALMANAC

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It was a spectacular day for the Classical Concert at the Park on June 8, 2024

Photo by Nan Neville

A Letter from the Friends President

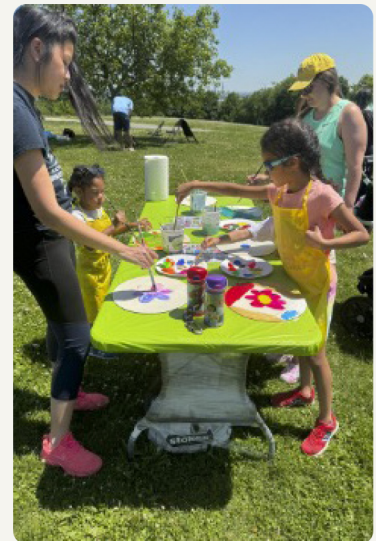
Dear Friends and Neighbors,

2024 was a busy and wonderful year at Robbins Farm Park, highlighted by the grand opening of Arlington's first inclusive playground, built with Universal Design principles. At the November 23rd celebration, a young girl in a wheelchair spinning joyfully on the new carousel reminded us all why this project matters.

The new space has something for everyone—musical features, quiet areas, new trees, and a play structure to discover. It's great to watch even the tiniest kids race up the hill, scale the hoops and boulders, and discover their own path to the new giant concrete slides.

In March, the Arlington Center for the Arts honored the Friends of Robbins Farm Park with the Alan McClennen Community Arts Award, recognizing both our work on the playground and our tradition of free cultural programs—made possible by volunteers and donors.

We are continuing our lively event schedule this year with concerts, a family art activity, spring and fall park cleanups, 4th of July celebration, Movie Night and Field Day. Robbins Farm Park remains a beloved gathering spot, whether it's for watching



Flags & Flowers Art Day



Music in the Playground

night sky events, playing sports, gathering with friends and dogs, or simply enjoying the view of Boston. The Friends of Robbins Farm Park is a volunteer-run organization. If you'd like to help at events or consider joining the board, I'd love to hear from you!

Warmly,

Mona ZefTEL
mzefTEL@gmail.com

FORFP 2025 EVENTS

- **May 31:** Robins & Friends Art Day
- **July 4:** 4th of July & Pie Celebration
- **July 19:** Rockin' Robbins Concert - Saklamara
- **July 31:** Jazz Concert - Harvard Alumni Jazz Band
 - **Sep 13:** Movie Night
 - **Oct 18:** Field Day
 - **Nov 8:** Fall Cleanup Day

See FORFP website for the most up-to-date schedule

Joyous Opening of the New Playground

by Jim Hampe



The Ribbon Cutting!



A New Hill to Climb



First Spin of the Carousel

On November 23rd 2024, an opening in the construction fence was created, a red ribbon cut, and a pack of happy kids cheered and descended upon the newly renovated playground. After more than two years, even a cold rainy morning couldn't dampen their enthusiasm. Since then, the playground has been full of families, rain or shine!

My elementary school sources on the ground report that it's great to have the huge slides back and that the playground is a good mix of challenging and fun for all abilities and levels of play.

The town wanted to open the playground as soon as it was operational, so there are a few sections that they are working to finalize, most notably the larger rain garden/catch between the playground and the community garden. The town expects that the remaining work will be completed sometime later this summer.

The goal of the Friends group was to raise \$63,000 to support the renovation. Thanks to more than 400 of our community members and local businesses, we are very grateful to report that we surpassed that goal and raised over \$70,000 in all!

We focused our fundraising awareness campaign on the idea of an inclusive playground that uses universal design features and equipment so that all kids can learn to play together. We were so excited to see kids of all abilities laughing and playing together on opening day!



Hurray for the First Day!

To everyone who donated, spread the word, or supported this project in any way - thank you for helping build not just a playground, but a more inclusive community for all our children.

Off-Leash Dog Hours

Sept 1 - June 30

Mon-Fri:

6-7:30 am & 8:30-9 am

Sat & Sun:

6-9 am

June 30 - Sept 1

6-9 am



Dog Days at the Park

Field Use Notes

If field is in use for school department activity, off-leash activity is allowed behind backstop only.

Fields are generally closed to all users in wet weather.

For e-mail alerts regarding park and field closures, subscribe to the Field Conditions Notification e-mail list at www.arlingtonma.gov/subscriber



Saklamara Brings Global Rhythms to Rockin' Robbins by Corinne Schippert

If you've ever stepped into Anthony's Barber Shop in East Arlington, you may have met Anthony Geannaris—not just a local hairstylist, but also the frontman of Saklamara, a genre-blending world music ensemble that's been lighting up stages across Greater Boston.

Saklamara's sound is a vibrant fusion of Eastern Mediterranean and Slavic folk traditions with funk, jazz, blues, and pop. Their performances — rich with bouzoukis, saxophone, upright bass, drums, layered percussion, and soaring vocals — have made them a staple at Porchfest and favorites at venues like the Town Tavern, the Capitol Theatre, and the Middle East in Cambridge. Their growing fan base knows they are anything but a "trifle"— the meaning of the Greek word saklamara.

Born and raised in Arlington in a Greek family, Anthony grew up surrounded by Greek music and learned to play the bouzouki — a stringed instrument — at a young age. By high school, he was performing in Greek bands while also exploring American jazz and rock. After opening his East Arlington salon to support his music career, he toured regionally and composed original music for The Steve Katsos Show. When the pandemic brought everything to a standstill, Anthony began writing new material that laid the foundation for Saklamara.

The project took off when vocalist and Berklee College of Music graduate Alena Sorokina (Aly) joined the group. Raised on Russian folk songs and classically trained in Moscow before moving to Berklee on a full scholarship, Aly brought not only a powerful voice but deep expertise in songwriting, arrangement, and production. When she and Anthony began working together, the chemistry was immediate. Aly started co-writing melodies, shaping arrangements, and contributing her production expertise. Together, they infused Saklamara's sound with emotional depth and cross-cultural richness. Their creative collaboration—and complimentary ethnic heritages—form the soul of the band's music.

Today, Saklamara includes Ken Paynter on upright bass; Larry Terry on saxophone, drums, djembe, percussion, keys, and vocals; Colonel Ron on electric bass; Stroker on keyboard; and David Mitchell on drums. They rehearse in Anthony's East Arlington salon, crafting joyful, layered performances that resonate with rhythm, color, and connection.

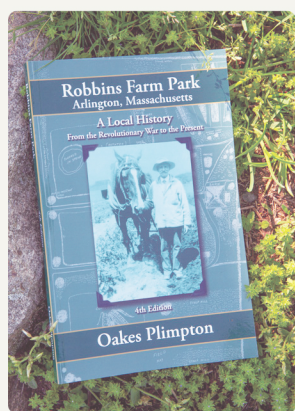
We're thrilled to welcome Saklamara to Rockin' Robbins this summer. Bring a blanket, pack a picnic, and take in the irresistible sounds of Saklamara! For more about the band go to www.saklamara.com/



The Band Plays the Park on July 19th!

Robbins Farm Park: A Local History New Edition Now Available!

by Judy Leich



Hot Off the Press!

The beloved local history book **Robbins Farm Park: A Local History** by former Arlingtonian Oakes Plimpton has just been released in its fourth edition! It's been a long time since the third edition was published in 2007. This updated version continues to explore the rich history of Arlington's Robbins Farm Park—from its roots as a working farm to its evolution into one of the town's most cherished public spaces. With expanded content, photographs, and community stories, the book captures the spirit and significance of the park through the decades. New pages tell the story of how we acquired our dog statue and our new playground. A must-read for longtime residents and newcomers alike!

TO ORDER:

Go to our website: www.robbsfarmpark.org/join-donate/

Book \$10.00 - with Arlington drop off. Please provide your address!

Book \$14.00 - with mailing. For all other USA destinations, we will mail your copy. Please provide your address!

Book Discount with FORFP Membership: The book is available at a discounted price of \$5.00 when purchased with a FORFP membership on same webpage.

Making Robins and Friends at Robbins

by Mona Zefitel

Saturday, May 31st from 1-3pm



Join us for a creative afternoon at Robbins Farm Park, when children can make a fun art project led by art teacher Kathy Lobo. In this hands-on workshop, families will have the chance to sew their own three-dimensional birds using cotton bird shapes, button eyes, and decorations. If you prefer to draw, we'll supply paper, bird books, and art supplies to inspire beautiful 2D bird creations.

We'll also tune into the real birds in the park! Together we'll listen for bird songs and try to identify as many species as we can. Families are encouraged to download the free Merlin Bird ID app from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology on your smartphone [<https://merlin.allaboutbirds.org>]. It's a great opportunity to sharpen your observation skills and learn more about our local birdlife.

Spring is a vibrant time at Robbins Farm Park, with birds and nature coming alive in the open fields. Lately, there have been many robins hopping about, searching for worms and bugs in the grass.

I've been using the Merlin app to hear a wide variety of birds as I wander through the park this spring. Just in the past few weeks I've heard Mourning Doves, Black-capped Chickadees, Tufted Titmice, Dark-eyed Juncos, European Starlings, Common Grackles, House Sparrows, Blue Jays, Cedar Waxwings, White-throated Sparrows, American Goldfinches, Brown-headed Cowbirds, American Crows, Wood Thrushes, Eastern Phoebe, Northern Mockingbirds, Chipping Sparrows, Carolina Wrens, and Downy Woodpeckers!

What birds can you hear and see in the park?



Bird Making Art Projects



Join Friends of Robbins Farm Park!

Support the Park and honor the legacy of Nathan Robbins, farmer-philanthropist. FORFP seeks to continue his tradition of bringing this community together and providing recreational space. *Funds go towards projects, events, and upkeep of our wonderful park.*

Join or renew your household membership:

1-year \$10, 3-year \$25

OR a gift of your choice \$____

Join or Donate Now at www.robbsfarmpark.org

Our Mission

- Promote the beautification, restoration, and improvement of Robbins Farm Park
- Sponsor and promote cultural, educational, recreational, and other community activities
- Invite active membership in the organization and represent the Robbins Farm Park community

FORFP is a 501 (c)(3) all-volunteer organization

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FORFP Receives ACA's
McClennen Award

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WEBSITE: www.robbsfarmpark.org



Sunrise over a Snowy
Robbins Farm Park