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**The Prospect Park Alliance and City Parks Alliance
Present a Special Public Film Premiere:**



Wednesday, August 4 at 8 p.m.

**Documentary on Frederick Law Olmsted's Life and Work Premieres at
Celebrate Brooklyn Festival in Prospect Park**

BROOKLYN, NY — A documentary exploring the formation of America's great city parks, including Prospect and Central Parks, through the eyes of 19th Century landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted will premiere Aug. 4 at the Celebrate Brooklyn Festival in Prospect Park.

Actors Kevin Klein and Kerry Washington, whose voices are featured in the one-hour documentary, are invited to join policymakers and national park leaders at the 8 p.m. screening at the Bandshell in Prospect Park. The screening is free to the public. The film's web site is www.theolmstedlegacy.org.

The film traces the life of Olmsted: his early struggles in school, his personal tragedies and his unorthodox career path, which included stints as a New York Times correspondent to the Confederate states, the manager of a California gold mine and General Secretary of the United States Sanitary Commission during the Civil War.

"The man was a workaholic by today's standards," recounts Rebecca Messner, the film's director. "He spent the latter half of his life devoting nearly every waking minute to creating restorative green spaces for overworked city dwellers."

(cont.)

Throughout his working life, Olmsted and his firm carried out more than 500 commissions, nearly 100 of which were public parks. The film explains how these 19th Century parks were the first real urban parks in America and explores what makes them so distinctive: the broad, pastoral meadows, the use of water and the underlying engineering that helps a manmade setting look so completely natural. It describes how, as a New York City parks superintendent, Olmsted fell into his first design project with Calvert Vaux: Central Park. And how, influenced by a stint in California's vast open spaces, he refined some of his design notions to create Prospect Park.

"It's fitting that this film should be premiering at Prospect Park, because Olmsted himself said he was most proud of the work he did at this amazing greenspace," said Tupper Thomas, the President of the Prospect Park Alliance, which is presenting the August 4th screening in partnership with City Parks Alliance. The public screening is made possible by support from the Speedwell Foundation.

The film uses Olmsted's own words, voiced by Klein, to weave together his engaging and poignant personal story with those of the lasting masterpieces he created. "Olmsted considered these parks to be vital democratic spaces in cities, where citizens from all walks of life could intermingle and be refreshed," Messner said.

The screening is at the Bandshell, near the Park entrance at Prospect Park West and 9th Street in Brooklyn. For directions, visit <http://www.prospectpark.org/visit/places/bandshell>.

The Prospect Park Alliance works in partnership with the City of New York and the community to restore, develop, and operate Prospect Park for the enjoyment of all by caring for the natural environment, preserving historic design, and serving the public through facilities and programs. For more information, visit www.prospectpark.org.

City Parks Alliance is the only independent, nationwide organization solely dedicated to urban parks. It unites and serves a growing network of hundreds of civic and community leaders, government agencies, park and recreation authorities, funders and others supporting urban parks from nearly every state and the District of Columbia. For more information, visit www.cityparksalliance.org.

The Speedwell Foundation supports the causes of inner-city education, study abroad programs and scholarships at colleges and universities. A new area of focus is urban green space. The Foundation is funding research with Georgia Tech and City Parks Alliance to determine the positive social and economic benefits for our cities if our nation transforms our dead malls and other underutilized commercial real estate to new, beautiful urban parks. For more information, visit: www.redfieldstogreenfields.org or www.moreparks.org.

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