NYC PARKS AND PROSPECT PARK ALLIANCE
UNVEIL TRANSFORMATIVE DESIGN
FOR STROUD PLAYGROUND IN CROWN HEIGHTS

Award-winning Alliance provides pro-bono design work
as part of NYC Parks’ Community Parks Initiative

BROOKLYN, November 19, 2015—NYC Parks and the Prospect Park Alliance today unveiled the design for the $5.1 million renovation of Stroud Playground in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. The Alliance provided pro-bono design services for the project, which is being funded through NYC Parks’ Community Parks Initiative (CPI) as well as through the support of Council Member Laurie Cumbo. CPI is a multi-faceted investment in smaller public parks located in dense and growing neighborhoods with higher-than-average concentrations of poverty.

Stroud marks the Alliance’s first major design project outside Prospect Park. In order to further its partnership with the city as well as its commitment to CPI, the Alliance has also committed to providing pro-bono design services to transform two additional CPI projects in 2016 and 2017. These three projects represent a total commitment valued at $700,000 of in-kind support.

"It was a thrill to hear passionate local community members voice their desires and needs for Stroud Playground at last fall’s meeting, and further, to take the next step toward bringing the design to fruition," said NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP. "This project is in the expert hands of our generous, dedicated partners at the Prospect Park Alliance, and we are so grateful for their contributions. Thanks to Mayor de Blasio’s vision for a more equitable and innovative park system, we are creating a bright, green future for New York City’s parks through the Community Parks Initiative. With the strong foundation of targeted capital investment, strong community partnerships, new programming, and dedicated maintenance, Parks will continue to invest in communities with the greatest need and to create thriving public spaces to enhance the livability of under-resourced neighborhoods."
“The Community Parks Initiative is a true testament of the City’s commitment to invest in the sustainability of our community through the enhancement of our parks. The transformation of Stroud Playground is an exciting time for the neighborhood of Crown Heights, particularly our children and families who deserve a park that they have truly made their own,” said Council Member Laurie A. Cumbo. “I applaud Mayor de Blasio, the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, and the Prospect Park Alliance for engaging our community in the renovation of our green space.”

The Alliance, which has designed several award-winning playgrounds in Prospect Park, developed a design for Stroud Playground that fits many amenities into a compact, one-acre space, which is an important community amenity as well as outdoor space for two public schools, PS 316 and MS383. In a public forum held last December, the community voiced a strong desire for basketball courts, play spaces, better lighting, and areas for parties and picnics. These elements are incorporated into the design, along with new play equipment and water features, shaded seating areas and picnic tables, handball courts, a jogging track, a turf field with misting spray, and a quiet garden that can serve as an outdoor classroom.

“The redesign of Stroud Playground is really an extension of our mission,” said Alliance President and Park Administrator Sue Donoghue. “We have decades of experience designing and building innovative and award-winning playgrounds in Prospect Park—from Imagination and Harmony Playgrounds, to Vanderbilt Playground and the Zucker Natural Exploration Area. The chance to share our expertise, and improve recreational opportunities for neighboring communities is an important park of our work, and we look forward to continuing to support CPI through our commitment to two additional projects.”

Environmental sustainability and cost efficiency also played a major role in the redesign of Stroud Playground. The project will reuse some of the existing materials for benches and paving, energy efficient lighting will be installed and nearly 30 new trees will be planted throughout the space. Additionally, the Alliance and NYC Parks are also working closely with the Department of Environmental Protection on storm water management measures for Stroud. Surface runoff water from the entire playground and surrounding streets will be absorbed on site by rain gardens, porous paving, and underground detention tanks. Stroud Playground will become an important piece of the larger network of storm water solutions in the city, alleviating loads on the overtaxed sewers and waterways of New York City.

Finally, the design focuses on incorporating the playground with the surrounding neighborhood. The high, chain-link fences that currently surround the space will be replaced a far more inviting tree perimeter with low fences to protect plantings. That effort is in line with Commissioner Silver’s Parks Without Borders strategy, part of Mayor de Blasio’s ONENYC plan.

The design for the transformed playground is in direct response to the needs and desires of the community. In addition to an initial community forum in December 2014, Parks and the Alliance presented plans for the playground’s redesign to the neighboring schools and to the community board, which approved the design in June. The Public Design Commission approved the design in September. Construction is slated to begin in 2016 and expected to take approximately one year to complete.
This playground and school are named for Elijah J. Stroud (1923-1972), a New York Police Officer who was killed in the line of duty. A veteran of the Police Department, Stroud was assigned to Grand Avenue Station, 80th Precinct, in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. A plaque in the school adjacent to the playground commemorates Patrolman Stroud, stating that he was “…a professional policeman, whose love and devotion to his children was outstanding. He gave his life so that we may live in peace. His sacrifice will not be forgotten. Killed in the line of duty, March 18, 1972.”

About the Prospect Park Alliance
Founded in 1987, the Prospect Park Alliance is a nonprofit organization that partners with the City of New York to ensure the ongoing care and long-term stewardship of Prospect Park. The Alliance preserves the natural environment, restores historic design, and provides public programs and amenities for the Park, which receives more than 10 million visits each year. Learn more at www.prospectpark.org.

Media Contact:
Grace McCreight, (718)965-8954/gmccreight@prospectpark.org
Maeri Ferguson, (212) 360-1311/maeri.ferguson@parks.nyc.gov