



**PHILADELPHIA  
PARKS &  
RECREATION**

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**RESTORATION OF HISTORIC BELMONT PLATEAU RUNNING TRAILS ATTRACTS OLYMPIANS TO FIRST-ANNUAL "BELMONT PLATEAU HALL OF FAME CLASSIC" RACE**

August 5, 2015 – Philadelphia, PA – **On Sunday, August 30, the Fairmount Park Conservancy and Philadelphia Parks & Recreation will join a group of local track coaches in unveiling the newly restored cross-country trails on the Belmont Plateau in Fairmount Park. The highlight of the day will be the first-annual Belmont Plateau Hall of Fame Classic, a 5,000 meter (5K) race and 1-mile run/walk open to all ages and featuring some of the region’s past and present track stars, including 2008 Olympic distance runner Erin Donahue and 1984 Olympic marathoner Gary Fanelli.** The event will also celebrate the launch of the newly established Belmont Plateau Cross Country Hall of Fame, founded by Philadelphia University head track coach Dave Thomas to honor the talented runners, coaches, officials and championship teams that have competed at The Plateau over the years.

After 50 years of heavy use by college, high school, and youth teams, the historic trails had fallen into disrepair. Recognizing the need for reinvestment in the course, in 2013 the Fairmount Park Conservancy, in collaboration with Philadelphia Parks & Recreation, began raising funds by selling charity bibs for the Broad Street Run and soliciting contributions from the run’s participants. Over three years, the fundraising effort has directed \$150,000 to the Belmont Plateau Trail Restoration Project, which has made landscape and trail improvements, installed new, clearer course signage, and allocated funds for future maintenance. Proceeds from the Belmont Plateau Hall of Fame Classic will benefit both the cross-country race course and the new Hall of Fame.

“When you have a trail used by Olympic athletes in the middle of your city, you’ve got to maintain that legacy,” said **Mayor Michael A. Nutter**. “The City of Philadelphia is thrilled to see renowned athletes continuing to make use of one of our park system’s iconic resources.”

**Michael DiBerardinis, Deputy Mayor for Environmental and Community Resources and Commissioner of Philadelphia Parks & Recreation**, said, “The restoration of the Belmont Plateau trails is a great example of what happens when the City, nonprofit partners like the Fairmount Park Conservancy, and local volunteers work together to prioritize what matters to the community.”

**Kathryn Ott Lovell, Executive Director of the Fairmount Park Conservancy**, said, “The Fairmount Park Conservancy is delighted to collaborate with committed citizens like coach Dave Thomas who recognize the value of maintaining the unique assets in our parks for the recreation and enjoyment of all.”

She added, “I’d like to especially thank the more than 250 people who’ve run on the Conservancy’s Broad Street Run team as well as the other runners who’ve made contributions to the Belmont Plateau restoration project.”

**Event Details:**

When: Sunday, August 30, 2015, 7:30am-11:30am

What: Speaking program with city officials and all-star athletes, 1-mile Run/Walk, 5K cross country race with prizes

Where: Belmont Plateau, Fairmount Park, Montgomery Drive & Army Road, 19131 (about 1/4 mile off the Montgomery Ave exit of I-76/Schuylkill Expressway)

Race Director: Dave Thomas, Head Track Coach, Philadelphia University and President, Philadelphia Athletic Charities

Registration: <http://myphillypark.org/event/belmont-plateau-hall-of-fame-classic>

## **About Philadelphia Parks & Recreation and The Fairmount Park Conservancy**

**Philadelphia Parks & Recreation** is the City department that is most engaged in the lives of residents and visitors alike on a daily basis. Through its programs, policies and physical amenities, Philadelphia Parks & Recreation promotes the well-being of the City, its citizens and visitors, by offering beautiful natural landscapes and parks, historically significant resources, high quality recreation centers and athletic programs, along with enriching cultural and environmental programs.

**The Fairmount Park Conservancy** exists to champion the Fairmount Park system. Its mission is to work as a collaborative partner to lead and support efforts that preserve and improve Fairmount Park to enhance the quality of life and stimulate the economic development of the Greater Philadelphia Region. The Fairmount Park Conservancy fulfills its mission by leading signature capital projects, innovative programs, and historic preservation efforts throughout Fairmount Park; by developing and leveraging resources for the park; and by promoting the parks' unique assets and contributions, including nearly 50 historic properties now under Conservancy management. The Fairmount Park system covers more than 10,200 acres and is considered one of the largest urban park systems in the world. It includes a network of more than 100 neighborhood parks and contains some of the region's most famous treasures and attractions. For more information, please visit [fairmountparkconservancy.org](http://fairmountparkconservancy.org) or [myphillypark.org](http://myphillypark.org). Like the Fairmount Park Conservancy on Facebook at [facebook.com/FairmountParkConservancy](https://facebook.com/FairmountParkConservancy) and follow on Instagram and Twitter @myphillypark.

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