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*Tweet this:* Opening day at @TheOvalPHL by @myphillypark & @philaparkandrec [theovalphl.org](http://theovalphl.org)

## THE OVAL OPENS FOR FIVE WEEKS OF SUMMER FUN

**PHILADELPHIA – July 15, 2016 – Opening today and running through Sunday, August 21, The Oval presented by PNC features a mix of free movies, live music, kid-friendly activities, interactive games, a rotating lineup of food trucks, a beautiful beer garden, and an original mural across 33,000 square feet of concrete.** For the fourth consecutive year, Fairmount Park Conservancy and Philadelphia Parks & Recreation have partnered to transform the eight acres of London Plane trees, grass lawns, and public art encompassing Eakins Oval into a summer oasis for all ages. The Oval, at Eakins Oval, is at the southeastern edge of the Parkway at 2451 Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Philadelphia.

**New in 2016:** musical instruments for anyone to play in the “Orchestra Pit” plus world music classes on Sundays; Meltkraft grilled cheese sandwiches in the Beer Garden and extended hours on Saturday nights and Sunday afternoons; free classes from Philly Dance Fitness; Political Quizzo and drink specials during the DNC; and illuminated, programmable décor.

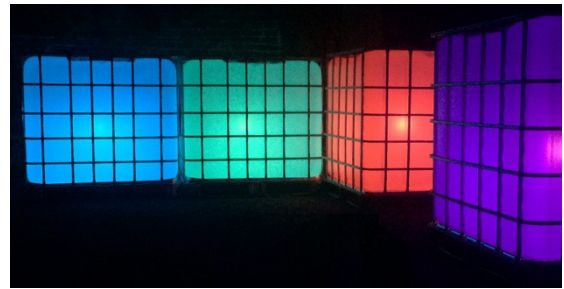
The Oval is presented for the third year by PNC, with additional support from Park Towne Place Premier Apartment Homes. The partners collaborated with the City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program to commission an original work of art, made possible this year with the support of Warby Parker.

**The look and feel of The Oval’s fourth season centers on *Rhythm & Hues*, an original 33,000-square foot mural** created by the City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program and lead artist Brad Carney. Using bold colors and whimsical gestures of movement and musical rhythm, Carney has designed a full-scale music-inspired abstract experience. *Rhythm & Hues* goes beyond the painted mural with complementary art activities all summer long like instrument-making crafts, music-inspired painting activities, temporary tattoos, and a new feature this season called “The Orchestra Pit,” featuring a collection of instruments for anyone to play.

Complementing *Rhythm & Hues*, landscape designer Brian Dragon has installed colorful, illuminated



furnishings in the shady grove that becomes The Oval Beer Garden. This year visitors to the Beer Garden will be surrounded by light and color, illuminated by over 100 repurposed containers. Liquid storage cubes (Intermediate Bulk Containers or “IBCs”) and rain barrels will be outfitted with light to complement the colors of the dynamic mural, and placed to create rooms, features, tables, and chairs. Many of the lights will be “smart,” and guests will experience changing color, effects, and moods throughout the day and evening.



### Highlights from this year’s packed schedule:

- **Wellness Wednesdays** with new Philly Dance Fitness classes plus yoga, kickboxing, and Indego-sponsored learn-to-ride bicycles
- Music Jam Series on **Arts & Culture Thursdays** (7-9pm) after “Yappy Hour” featuring \$1 off drinks if you bring your dog to the beer garden
- Popular movies on **Food & Flicks Fridays**: *Pitch Perfect*, *Finding Nemo*, *Men in Black*, *Dodgeball*, *Big*, and *Can’t Hardly Wait*
- Appearance by the Philly Phanatic on the first **Game Day Saturday**, with weekly fun from PlayWheels by Smith Memorial Playground & Playhouse
- All Around this World Music Class for all ages in the “Orchestra Pit” on **Family Fun Sundays**

In addition, to celebrate Philadelphia’s hosting of the Democratic National Convention, The Oval’s organizers are offering **Political Quizzo** featuring presidential trivia (Monday, July 25 at 7 pm) and \$1 off all beers at the Beer Garden during convention week (Monday, July 25 – Thursday, July 29, 5 - 7pm) including featured brews Ales of the Revolution from Yards Brewery. The organizers are also hosting **Truth Booth by Cause Collective** on Tuesday, July 26 (11 am – 10 pm). Presented in partnership with the City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program as part of its upcoming “Mind Over Media” project, the *Truth Booth* is an inflatable video-recording booth shaped like a cartoon speech bubble where visitors are invited to create two-minute videos beginning with the statement, “The truth is...” The goal is to collect diverse thoughts on the truth during this important upcoming election season and to record as many definitions, confessions, and versions of “the truth” as possible.

Another new addition for 2016, Fairmount Park Conservancy will be creating the “Fairmount Launch,” a locus at The Oval for public programs that link The Oval with Philadelphia’s premiere open space resource: Fairmount Park. The Fairmount Launch, designed and created by Public Workshop and their Building Heroes team, will be the place to joined a guided bike ride tour of Fairmount Park, to talk to a Fairmount Park Concierge, and learn history about Fairmount Park’s transition from private estates to a vaunted watershed park and destination for play, sports, culture and art. Residents and visitors can pick up the brand new “50 Unique Experiences in Fairmount Park” map, free at the Fairmount Launch. In late July at the Fairmount Launch, located at The Oval, guests can participate in an interactive art program with Camp Little Hope, an artists’ collective.

### **Standing features of The Oval's fourth season include:**

- **Recreation:** Little-kid-friendly equipment like sandboxes and sprinklers, big-kid games like oversized chess and checkers, plus mini-golf, a mini-disk course, and, on Friday afternoons, school-yard games and an obstacle course.
- **Regional Food and Drinks:** Food trucks this season will include savory and sweet options from Sum Pig, Mom Mom's Polish Food Cart, Jules Thin Crust, Sweetbox Cupcakes, and Rita's Water Ice. **The Oval Beer Garden** will feature Yards beer on tap, Pennsylvania wines from Blair Vineyards, and locally sourced grilled cheese sandwiches from Meltkraft by Valley Shepherd Creamery as well as unusual craft and foreign bottled beers.
- **Shopping:** The Warby Parker Class Trip – a classic yellow school bus reimaged as a mobile showroom – offers a selection of chic, affordable eyeglasses. Warby Parker is a lifestyle brand founded in 2010 at The Wharton School of Business.

**Tim Clair, Fairmount Park Conservancy's Interim Executive Director**, said that attendance at The Oval last year totaled 70,000 visitors. "What started as a pilot program of Fairmount Park Conservancy and Philadelphia Parks & Recreation has become a summer tradition," said Clair. "We are continuing to explore the potential of Eakins Oval to engage residents and visitors alike in outdoor recreation as well as family-friendly programming and dining in the heart of Center City."

**Kathryn Ott Lovell, Commissioner of Philadelphia Parks & Recreation**, noted that her staff works closely with the Conservancy's staff to develop programming that responds to visitors' interests. "We are continuously refining the formula," said Ott Lovell. "We know that Philadelphians have come to expect outdoor fun in a striking visual space and so we keep asking: how can we engage even more people, how can we make sure that kids and adults have a great experience?"

### **SCHEDULE**

#### **The Oval Regular Summer Season 2016 July 15-Aug 21:**

Wednesdays (Wellness): 11 am – 10 pm

Thursdays (Arts & Culture): 11 am – 10 pm

Fridays (Food & Flicks): 11 am – 10 pm

Saturdays (Game Day): 11 am – 10 pm (note Saturday closing time is extended this year)

Sundays (Family Fun): 11 am – 7 pm

#### **Beer Garden at The Oval**

Wednesdays - Fridays, 5 – 10 pm

Saturdays, 12 – 10 pm (note Saturday closing time is extended this year)

Sundays, 12 – 5 pm (note open for the first time on Sundays)

**For a schedule of events as well as high-resolution photos for media use, please visit the online press room at <http://bit.ly/ConservancyPressKit>.**

### **ABOUT THE OVAL**

Philadelphia Parks & Recreation, in partnership with the Fairmount Park Conservancy, revealed the City of Philadelphia's new "Park on the Parkway" in July 2013. The eight acres of public space located on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway known as Philadelphia's own "Avenue des Champs-Élysées," Eakins Oval (2451 Benjamin Franklin Parkway) became The Oval, a

park with community programming, events, and activities. Designed to promote the Parkway as a neighborhood park for all Philadelphians, The Oval offers a wide array of activities and amenities, and features park spaces that all ages can easily access and enjoy. [theovalphl.org/](http://theovalphl.org/)

**Brad Carney** is a Philadelphia-based artist and art educator, who has been creating and teaching art with the City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program for 14 years. After graduating from the Tyler School of Art, Brad chose to focus primarily on art education. He has created over 30 murals, worked with youth and communities all over the city, and assisted on over 20 other murals. Brad also manages Mural Arts' Summer Internship Program. His personal work is focused on abstract art.

**The Truth Booth** is a project by members of the Cause Collective: Hank Willis Thomas, Ryan Alexiev, Jim Ricks, and Will Sylvester whose projects explore and enliven public spaces by creating a dynamic conversation between issues, sites, and the public. Since 2011, the *Truth Booth* has travelled to Ireland, Afghanistan, South Africa, and various locations in the U.S., and has received over 4,000 statements.

**The City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program** is the nation's largest public art program, dedicated to the belief that art ignites change. For 30 years, Mural Arts has united artists and communities through a collaborative process, rooted in the traditions of mural-making, to create art that transforms public spaces and individual lives. Mural Arts engages communities in 50-100 public art projects each year, and maintains its growing collection through a restoration initiative. Core Mural Arts programs such as Art Education, Restorative Justice, and Porch Light yield unique, project-based learning opportunities for thousands of youth and adults. Each year, over 12,000 residents and visitors tour Mural Arts' outdoor art gallery, which has become part of the city's civic landscape and a source of pride and inspiration, earning Philadelphia international recognition as the "City of Murals." Follow along on social media: @muralarts on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), phillymuralarts on [YouTube](#), and MuralArtsPhiladelphia on [Facebook](#).

**Warby Parker** is a transformative lifestyle brand founded by four friends at the Wharton School of Business in 2010. Warby Parker offers high-quality, beautifully designed eyewear at an affordable price, and for every pair sold, a pair is distributed to someone in need. In addition to sponsoring The Oval's mural and bringing the Class Trip mobile showroom to The Oval, Warby Parker will host a free concert at The Oval on August 11. Later this year, the company will also be opening a permanent store on Walnut Street.

**Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (PPR)** advances the prosperity of the city and the progress of her people through intentional and sustained stewardship of nearly 10,200 acres of public land and waterways as well as through hundreds of safe, stimulating recreation, environmental and cultural centers. PPR promotes the well-being and growth of the city's residents by connecting them to the natural world around them, to each other and to fun, physical and social opportunities. PPR is responsible for the upkeep of historically significant Philadelphia events and specialty venues, and works collaboratively with communities and organizations in leading capital projects and the introduction of inventive programming. To learn more about Philadelphia Parks & Recreation, visit us at [www.phila.gov/parksandrec](http://www.phila.gov/parksandrec), and follow @philaparkandrec on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or Tumblr.

**Fairmount Park Conservancy** exists to champion Philadelphia's parks. Our mission is to work as a collaborative partner to lead and support efforts that preserve and improve the parks and recreation system in order to enhance the quality of life and stimulate economic development of the Greater Philadelphia Region. We fulfill our mission by leading capital projects and historic preservation efforts, fostering neighborhood park stewardship, attracting and leveraging resources for the parks, and developing innovative programs throughout the 10,200 acres that include Fairmount Park and more than 100 neighborhood parks around the city. The Philadelphia park system is one of the largest urban park systems in the world and includes some of the region's most famous attractions. For more information, please visit [myphillypark.org](http://myphillypark.org), join us at facebook.com/fairmountparkconservancy, and follow us on Instagram and Twitter @myphillypark.

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Photo caption: Rhythm and Hues by Brad Carney, photo by Steve Weinik for the City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program.