

# THE JAMES AND ANNE ROBINSON FOUNDATION, INC.

## Annual Report – 2008

### **Robinson Board of Trustees - 2008**

Jeffrey D. Ring, Chair

Eileen Shields

Mark Raab

### **The James and Anne Robinson Foundation**

**Enviro-Center**

**7761 Waterloo Road**

**Jessup, MD 20794-9793**

### **Message from Woodcock Central**

Thanks to a dedicated board, volunteers, staff, and other supporters, the Robinson Foundation made great strides toward fulfilling our mission in 2008. We continued to support the development of the Robinson Nature Center and to forge partnerships with diverse Howard County organizations and individuals sharing our commitments to environmental education, watershed initiatives, and stewardship of nature. In 2008, the Foundation supported research into the Robinson family history and the Simpsonville mill and sponsored or participated in a variety of events. Over \$4000 in grants and contracts were awarded to local environmental organizations. We expanded our staff to include a part time position for planning and development. The Foundation's work progressed throughout the year, with particular successes including the draft of a three year strategic plan and our first, professionally-designed website. My sincere thanks to our board members, volunteers and partners for their support in moving our mission forward. In particular I would like to express my gratitude to Marianne Pettis and Julie Dunlap, who filled in so ably for me during my 4 month leave of absence this year.

Mary O'Neill

*Executive Director*

### **Highlights of 2008**

- **Robinson Nature Center** Mark Raab, Superintendent of the Natural Resources Division of Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks, kept the Robinson Board informed on the status of the Robinson Nature Center project. The design development phase was completed by fall 2008, and construction

documents were then drawn up. Three factors affected the project budget: (1) The decision was made to obtain LEED platinum in the building design; (2) It was not possible to secure necessary easements to create a northern entrance to the site; (3) An archeological site was identified at the southern entrance, necessitating that the driveway be designed to circumvent the site. These three factors account for \$2.5 million of the total projected cost. By year's end the total project cost was estimated at \$17.6 million. The landmark Robinson Nature Center is scheduled to open in the fall of 2010.

- **Website** The design of a holding page for a Foundation website was initiated, with Marianne Pettis and Julie Dunlap heading up the project. The full website, targeted for completion in 2009, will include PayPal and Constant Contact features. The designer is Stacie Davis of 48<sup>th</sup> Ave Productions. [www.robinsonfoundation.org](http://www.robinsonfoundation.org) was launched in February 2009.
- **Three Year Plan** is attached at the end of this Report. Goal priorities include creation of a Memorandum of Understanding to define collaboration with Howard County Government and with the Robinson Nature Center, development of a fundraising plan, and preparations for the opening of the nature center in 2010.
- **Collaboration between Robinson Foundation and Middle Patuxent Environmental Foundation.** Informal discussions were held to improve communications and opportunities for collaboration between the two organizations.
- **Woodcock Glass Art.** An exquisite stained glass piece by Ellicott City artist Leon Bezdekian featuring the Foundation's woodcock symbol has been completed and is ready for framing.
- **Archaeological Research.** On behalf of Howard County Recreation and Parks, the Foundation commissioned M. Lee Preston, Jr. to research the history of the Simpsonville area, its residents, economic activity, land use, and the Simpsonville Mill. Mr. Preston's research will be used in the Simpsonville exhibit at the nature center and also in designing the layout of the trail system.
- **Howard County Legacy Leadership Institute on the Environment (HoLLIE)** This program originated in the Center on Aging at the University of Maryland, College Park to provide high-level training to retired and other individuals seeking opportunities for volunteer leadership with environmental organizations. Marianne Pettis and Mary O'Neill served on the steering committee. Seven partners supported the Institute in Howard County. A six-month planning period will be followed by the launch of the Institute in February 2009. The Robinson Foundation and Recreation and Parks are both partners in HoLLIE and expect to have one or two Legacy Leader volunteers assigned to them for an internship following the training. Each volunteer will donate a minimum of 150 hours during the internship period. A press release concerning the HoLLIE program is appended. For more information, see [www.HowardLLIE.com](http://www.HowardLLIE.com)

- **Advisory Board.** Under the guidance of Foundation Counsel Jeff Agnor, the Robinson Board of Trustees reviewed opportunities for growing the Foundation and possible models for developing cooperation with Howard County government. It was decided that creation of an Advisory Board would enable the Foundation to expand its focus to a wider segment of the community and to invite community leaders to play a role in shaping the future of the organization at a critical time in its development. The board determined a process for identifying candidates with a goal of having the Advisory Board in place by Spring 2009.
- **Theme of Nature through Art**
  1. The Foundation became a member of the Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art [www.nedsmithcenter.org](http://www.nedsmithcenter.org). A fine art print of a Woodcock by Ned Smith has been acquired for gifting or fundraising purposes.
  2. A lovely wood carving of a Little Green Heron was donated to the Foundation.
  3. Middleton Evans donated copies of his 2009 Maryland calendar. The Foundation has acquired several of Middleton's photographs, including the photograph of Patterson Park's wood ducks that hangs in the Foundation office at the Enviro-Center.
  4. Greg Mort – Art of Stewardship project. [www.gregmort.com](http://www.gregmort.com) offers a possible event in which the Foundation could collaborate with other organizations

**Public Events in 2008 attracted over 400 participants:**

1. April 29, 2008: with HoCoH2O: **Ravaging Runoff: A Call to Action Our Waters & Our Role from a Global & Local Perspective**  
Presenters:  
Mike Tidwell, Cheseapeake Action Council  
Fred Tutman, Patuxent Riverkeeper  
Delegate Liz Bobo, House Environmental Matters Committee  
Moderated by Ned Tillman, Growth Adventures
2. August 21, 2008: **Wil Hershberger, “Summer Serenades”**  
at the Howard County Conservancy. Songs of cicadas, crickets and katydids.
3. October 2008: **Hodgepodge Lodge** dedicated by Maryland Public Television at Howard County Conservancy in honor of Jean Worthley, pioneer in use of media for environmental education for children. (The Robinson Foundation donated \$1,000 in 2007 to prepare for the preservation of this historic landmark.)
4. November 2, 2008: **Lee Preston, “The Traces of History: A Guided Tour of Old Simpsonville”**

## 2008 Grants and Contracts Awarded

1/2/2008	\$200.00	MD Ornithological Society	Grant to support Breeding Bird Atlas
3/4/2008	\$250.00	Julie Dunlap	Installment 1 of 3 - Robinson Family Research
4/1/2008	\$200.00	Howard County Conservancy	Sponsorship of Raging Tide event 4/29/08
4/15/2008	\$400.00	Lee Preston	Archeology Consulting
5/20/2008	\$200.00	Patuxent RiverKeeper	Water testing kits
4/15/2008	\$400.00	Lee Preston	Archeology Consulting
6/25/2008	\$200.00	HoCoPoLitSo	Sponsorship of nature poetry event 10/08
6/30/2008	\$200.00	Patuxent Riverkeeper	Financial support for disaster fund
6/30/2008	\$400.00	Lee Preston	Archeology Consulting
11/24/2008	\$1,550.00	Director of Finance, HoCo	2009 MAOEE conference
12/9/2008	\$280.00	Lee Preston	Archaeology consulting
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,280.00</b>		

## A Look Ahead to 2009

- Green Fest 2009 will be held Saturday, April 4th, 2009 at Howard Community College. At this County-sponsored event, the Robinson Foundation will partner with Recreation and Parks to display information on the Robinson Nature Center. <http://www.howardcountymd.gov/OES/Greenfest.htm>.
- Columbia Festival for the Arts. The Foundation is exploring sponsorship of environmental entertainer Billy-B at the June 2009 Festival. <http://billybproductions.com/>
- Groundbreaking for Robinson Nature Center – anticipated in summer 2009. The Foundation plans to participate in celebrating the groundbreaking, in cooperation with Howard County Government.

## In Summary

We are confident that, with continued support from our leaders and the community, the Robinson Foundation will continue to grow and progress toward fulfilling our vital

mission. Our new Advisory Board and the contributions of Legacy Leader volunteers will greatly enhance the capacity of the Foundation as we look forward to celebrating our fourth year of service to the Howard County community. We thank all those whose vision, leadership and support has enabled this young organization to continue on the path of steady growth and progress. As we move ahead we remember with gratitude the inspiration and leadership of Mrs. Anne Robinson, who set a clear goal for this organization that was created by her generous act of philanthropy: “to serve as a source of inspiration, education and beauty for the general public.”

## **Addendum**

HoLLIE Press Release

## **HoLLIE Press Release**

### **Local Environmental Organizations Launch First Howard County Legacy Leadership Institute for the Environment (HoLLIE)**

January 29, 2009 marks the launch of the first Legacy Leadership Institute for the Environment in Howard County. Known as “HoLLIE,” this intensive environmental education program for adult volunteers is based on the award-winning model created by the Center on Aging at the University of Maryland, College Park.

The program provides six weeks of twice-weekly classes, followed by a six-month field placement for 150 hours in one of seven Partner Organizations. Following this intensive training, Legacy Leaders will serve these non-profit and county organizations as environmental educators, advocates, habitat restorers, and citizen-scientists.

While the Institute’s curriculum focuses on Howard County and environmental aspects of Maryland, it guides Legacy Leaders on a big picture exploration of earth systems science before focusing regionally and then locally on environmental issues. Several early classes will be conducted by NASA scientists and include a field trip to the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center with a guided tour of the remote sensing and visualization labs.

The only other Legacy Leadership Institute on the Environment in Maryland is offered on the Eastern Shore by three environmental organization partners: the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center, the Adkins Arboretum, and the Pickering Creek Audubon Center. This program has just graduated its fifth class of volunteers. “I can testify to the program’s effectiveness because a major part of my role at the Center on Aging has been program evaluation research on the impact of Legacy Leadership Institutes,” said Dr. Tracey T. Manning, research associate professor at the Center on Aging, and a HoLLIE Project Coordinator.

Dr. Barbara Schmeckpeper, a retired molecular biologist and a HoLLIE Project Coordinator, is a main force behind bringing the program to Howard County. She is the Volunteer Coordinator for the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center and Legacy

Leadership Institute on the Environment. “As much as I love the Eastern Shore, a dream of mine was to bring the Legacy Leadership Institute closer to home. Dr. Manning and I wanted to focus our energies on many of the wonderful opportunities in our own Howard County. With increasing interest in environmental issues in Howard County, we felt the time was ripe for public involvement in the program. And we were right.”

HoLLIE solicited applications in late 2008 before interviewing and selecting 17 participants. Though the program was originally to be limited to 15 people, the high quality of the applicants led to expanding the group. Many have graduate degrees in various fields - engineering, economics, political science, business, medicine, law - some have public policy backgrounds and want to advocate for better legislation and enactment, and some are hikers and gardeners who enjoy the out-of-doors.

The inaugural session will be held at the headquarters of the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks, Oakland Mills Road in Columbia, Md. The University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Service in Ellicott City, Md. and the Howard County Conservancy in Woodstock, Md. will also host HoLLIE sessions, which include regular fieldtrips.

Howard County Partner Organizations are the Climate Change Initiative of Howard County, the Friends of Patapsco Valley and Heritage Greenway, the Howard County Conservancy, the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks, the Howard County Office of Environment and Sustainability, the James and Anne Robinson Foundation and the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Service for Howard County.

The other HoLLIE Project Coordinators are Cathy Hudson of Elkridge, Md., Betsy Singer of Columbia, Md. and Audrey Suhr of Elkridge, Md. More information about HoLLIE is available on the website <http://www.howardllie.com/>