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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FRIENDS OF WESTCHESTER COUNTY PARKS
2010 BEST FRIENDS AWARDS RECEPTION SET FOR WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14
Honoring James J. Houlihan; John B. Kirkpatrick and Oxman, Tulis, Kirkpatrick, Whyatt &
Geiger LLP; Henriette Suhr; Thatcher Drew**

The Friends of Westchester County Parks, Inc. will hold its 2010 Best Friends Awards Reception on **Wednesday, April 14, beginning at 5:30 p.m. at the Glen Island Harbour Club in New Rochelle, NY.** The event, “An Evening with Friends,” will honor four local individuals and a local law firm for their support of Friends and the County Parks Department.

The celebration kicks off with cocktails and hors d’oeuvres at **5:30 p.m.**; the award ceremony at **7:15 p.m.**; coffee, dessert, music and the raffle at **8 p.m.**

This year’s honorees of the Best Friends Awards are:

- **James J. Houlihan** of Bronxville, a partner at Houlihan-Parnes Realtors, LLC of White Plains. Houlihan is receiving top honor for his work as chairman of the Great Hunger Memorial Committee of Westchester County. The committee raised funds to help erect a memorial at Westchester County’s V.E. Macy Park in Irvington commemorating the Great Hunger in Ireland (1845-1851). Houlihan was also instrumental in the fundraising efforts for *The Rising*, Westchester County’s September 11th memorial at Kensico Dam Plaza in Valhalla. In 2004, Houlihan received the first-ever Chairman’s Medal of Gratitude from the Westchester County Board of Legislators for his work on *The Rising*. Houlihan served on the Westchester County Parks Department Board for five years and as a member of the board of trustees of the Friends for six years.
- **John B. Kirkpatrick**, a White Plains resident and partner in the law firm ***Oxman, Tulis Kirkpatrick, Whyatt & Geiger LLP***. Kirkpatrick and his firm are receiving **the Best Business Friend Award** for their active contributions and support of the Friends. Kirkpatrick, a highly regarded attorney and city planner, has been a trustee with the Friends since 2003 and is currently the board’s secretary. He has been co-chair of the

Land Use Committee of the New York State Bar Association Environmental Law Section and a director of the Westchester Municipal Planning Federation.

- **Henriette Suhr** of Chappaqua will receive the **Best Green Friend Award**. Mrs. Suhr, a retired decorator, and her late husband, William, an art conservator have bequeathed their 13-acre Rocky Hills property to the County Parks Department, which plans to operate it as a public strolling garden and a center for the study of horticulture. For nearly two decades, the public has been welcomed to view a world-class garden at created on eight acres of the property as part of the Garden Conservancy, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving extraordinary gardens.
- **Thatcher Drew** of Bronxville will receive this year's **Best Volunteer Award** for his founding in 2004 of the Bronx River Reservation vine cutting program, which aims to save the park's signature trees from invasive vines. He also designed, developed and maintains the program's website, www.vinecutter.com, which lists the group's schedule, tools used, techniques and methodology. Westchester County Parks, which administers and supports the program, has benefitted from the work of its many volunteers. Over the last six years, Drew and his volunteers have taught hundreds of people how to save thousands of trees along the 807-acre reservation, Westchester's oldest park.

Co-chairs of the Best Friends Award Reception are Christopher Cawley of Sleepy Hollow and Linda Carrington of Mount Kisco. Both are members of the Friends board of trustees.

Event tickets are **\$250** per person, or sponsor packages can be purchased – a bronze package for **\$4,000**, silver package for **\$5,000**, gold package for **\$7,500** or event sponsor package for **\$25,000**. Sponsor package purchases include 10 event tickets, 10 raffle tickets and a full page ad in the awards reception journal. Raffle tickets are **\$50** each or **3 for \$100**.

Five fabulous raffle prizes consist of: **West Point Weekend for Two** which includes an overnight stay and brunch at the Hotel Thayer plus Army Football tickets; **New York State of Mind Weekend for Two in NYC** which includes a two-night stay at the Andaz Hotel, Broadway theater tickets, dinner at Fresco by Scotto and round-trip limo service; **Sports Mania Package**, which includes tickets to Yankees and Mets baseball, Jets football, Rangers hockey, and Knicks basketball games and a 46-inch flat-screen TV; **Westchester Whirlwind Weekend for Two**, which includes an overnight suite and breakfast at the Ritz-Carlton, Westchester, dinner for two at 42, a golf foursome at Trump National and limo service between the hotel and the golf course; **Romantic Weekend for Two in NYC** which includes two nights at Loews Regency Hotel, tickets to Feinstein's at Loews Regency, and round-trip limo service.

For more information or reservations, contact William Bland at (914) 864-7032 or WEB1@westchestergov.com.

For more than 30 years, the Friends of Westchester County Parks has continued its tradition of helping to bridge the budget gap, raising thousands of dollars to buy equipment, fund children's programs, provide amenities and support the Westchester County Parks system.

The Westchester County Parks Department manages more than 50 parks and recreation properties, spanning 18,000 acres – a tribute to those people of vision who started a movement that created one of the finest park systems in the country. In 2003, the department was accredited by the National Recreation and Parks Association, the first county agency in New York and one of only 47 agencies in the country to earn that distinction. For more information, please check the Website at www.friendsofwestchesterparks.com.

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