CAMPAIGN FOR THE
MAURICE STEPHENS HOUSE
VALLEY FORGE PARK ALLIANCE HEADQUARTERS AND
CAFÉ ON THE GRAND PARADE
The Valley Forge Park Alliance

(the Alliance) was founded as the Friends of Valley Forge Park in 1976. Today, thousands of supporters and volunteers work to fulfill the Alliance’s mission which is, “to inspire appreciation of and support for Valley Forge National Historical Park.”

vfparkalliance.org
Valley Forge National Historical Park attracted 2.2 million visitors in 2020, despite the pandemic. Hundreds of millions of Americans know Washington’s ragtag army endured unbearable suffering here, only to rally and go on to win independence for our fledgling country. It’s part of our identity as Americans.

As eager visitors return to the Park in even greater numbers, they’ll want meaningful experiences that will deepen their understanding of Valley Forge. They’ll need a break along the 10-mile encampment route, a place to pause, rest, and refresh themselves before exploring more of this iconic Park.

They’ll need the new Valley Forge Park Alliance Headquarters and Cafe on the Grand Parade.

“As not only a habitue but also an avid aficionado to our country’s state and National Parks, I am continually entranced by the physical and spiritual hold Valley Forge has on me. Each time I step onto the Park’s hallowed grounds I am transported through a portal of American history. One can emotionally feel the perseverance of George Washington, the elan of the Marquis de Lafayette, the martial professionalism of the Baron von Steuben, the intensity of Alexander Hamilton, all of whom over one brutal winter helped to transport a ragtag collection of state militias into a Continental Army that birthed our nation.”

BOB DRURY, CO-AUTHOR OF “VALLEY FORGE”
The Need
The Alliance’s current home is a failing structure far from visitor trails and historic sites. Cramped and shabby with precarious stairs, it’s a dreary space. The Alliance has outgrown its current headquarters, which were far from ideal to start with. To embed the Alliance in the Park’s historic core is to imbue the organization with greater ability to meet its mission to inspire appreciation and support for the Park.

The Solution
Turn a building into a welcoming home. The Park is providing a remarkable opportunity to the Alliance, the Park’s philanthropic partner, to lease the Maurice Stephens House (1816) through the Park’s adaptive re-use program. To participate, the Alliance must raise construction funds for the house to transform it into the Alliance’s spacious new home. The building will also house a café and facilities where weary visitors can rest and learn more about the Park and our important work which supports it.

The Vision
Central, of service, and increasingly sustainable. With our headquarters at the Maurice Stephens House, the Alliance will have a presence in the heart of the Park. We’ll be able to talk to visitors every day. We will invite them to participate in our expanded programs and events which, with the café, will generate earned income. This will make the Alliance more sustainable, and therefore, more able to support the Park.

The Plan
We’ve gathered a committee of experts in construction, fundraising, leasing, and small business that could partner with the Alliance in this endeavor. They are working hand in hand with the Alliance and Park leaders to finalize the construction plans, agree on lease terms that satisfy both the Park and the Alliance, plan the public use of the space, and raise the funds required to make it all happen. With your help, we will preserve an historic structure, making it a living, breathing place where visitors can gather and celebrate the beauty and greatness of Valley Forge National Historical Park.
Our Park

1777-1778: General Washington famously wintered the American Continental Army at Valley Forge and transformed sick and starving amateurs into a disciplined militia that beat the British. Valley Forge represents a critical juncture when our leaders pulled together to overcome adversity.

1877-1878: Anna Morris Holstein, a civil war nurse, led volunteers to raise funds to acquire, restore, and preserve General Washington’s Valley Forge Headquarters and the surrounding area. Shortly after, Valley Forge became Pennsylvania’s first State Park.

1976-1977: During the Bicentennial, another group of volunteers rallied, forming the nonprofit Friends of Valley Forge Park (now the Valley Forge Park Alliance). Valley Forge became a National Historical Park in 1976.

Since 1978, the Park has welcomed 96.6 million visitors; 2.2 million came in 2020, despite the onslaught of Covid.

Here, visitors learn about the fragility of our democracy and how perseverance through hardship protected it.

They can safely enjoy 35 miles of trails. They find comfort in the beauty and diversity of the Park’s ecosystems, its river, streams, forests, wetlands, and the largest contiguous meadow in southeastern Pennsylvania.

Today, Alliance volunteers raise funds for and facilitate the Park’s educational, recreational, and interpretive programs. The Alliance is committed to ensuring that our Park remains a place for inspiration, refuge, community, and commemoration for generations to come.

The Alliance needs a central presence to deeply and frequently engage Park visitors.
The Need

Valley Forge Park attendance is expected to grow rapidly in the years ahead. Covid-19 has created pent-up demand for travel within the country and a preference for outdoor activities. Source: https://www.ustravel.org/research/monthly-travel-recovery-data-report

Tourists: There is no place in the country quite like Valley Forge. It connects visitors intimately with an iconic moment in American history. Valley Forge holds a unique place in our American story. General Washington chose this place, this landscape, this soil to rest and rebuild a tattered hodge-podge of militias into a united Continental Army.

Valley Forge makes an unforgettable impression on every visitor. Our cafe will be a unique spot in an iconic location where you can survey the Grand Parade and be totally immersed in history and nature.

Neighbors: The Park welcomes local recreational visitors through every season. Runners and cyclists fly along the trails. Birders seek a glimpse of the 227 species that inhabit the Park.

Anglers ply their rods over Valley Creek. Families picnic in summer and sled gleefully down our snowy hills in winter. The Park is a bucolic spot that neighbors of all ages treasure.

A critical juncture: The Park’s entrance features a newly rehabilitated, $12 million Visitor Center, drawing more guests than ever. Its modern exhibits and conveniences set a high bar for visitor expectations. The Alliance has a rare opportunity to capture this surge in visitors, enlisting them in the critical work of supporting this precious National Park. We must seize the moment.

The Alliance is housed far from the visitors we seek to inspire and engage: Its current inadequate office is located on the edge of the Park, far from trails and tour routes. Over two miles away from the Visitor Center and on a busy road, we are missing the opportunity to connect with millions of visitors when they are most inspired by Valley Forge. Moving our headquarters to the Maurice Stephens House would enable us to connect with visitors in countless ways from providing them a place to rest to letting them know all the different ways they can support the Park. The House’s location, at a trailhead for the new Grand Parade Trail, would put the Alliance in the heart of the Park.

The Grand Parade is the valley where Major General Friedrich Wilhelm Baron von Steuben took on the training of the Continental soldiers, beginning their transformation into a single army that ultimately won independence from the British.

Today, the Grand Parade is midway through its own transformation, providing essential habitat for birds and other animals, as well as outstanding natural experiences for visitors.

Revitalization of a core historic structure in a bucolic and historic setting: The Park has limited resources to preserve and maintain the numerous historic structures in its 3,500 acres. One such structure is the Maurice Stephens House, which was built in 1816 and stands on the site of General Huntington’s 1777-1778 quarters. Oral history recorded in 1850 in Henry Woodman’s “The History of Valley Forge” indicates that the
property was the site of Brigadier General Jedediah Huntington’s quarters during the Valley Forge winter encampment. The Provincial tax record for the property indicates that in 1769 the property was occupied by one Zachariah Davis, and it was likely Davis’ log house which Woodman states served as General Huntington’s quarters. Woodman goes on to state that there were a number of huts erected on the property as well, one of which was occupied by General von Steuben, who would drill soldiers on what would become the Stephens property.

The Maurice Stephens House has stood vacant and deteriorating for decades. Turning it into the Alliance’s Headquarters and Cafe would bring the building back to life with ongoing relevance and ensure its upkeep for years to come. Located in the historic core of the Park, the Alliance will transform the House into the soul of the Park where all visitors are welcome and invited to claim their birthright, Valley Forge National Historical Park.
The Solution
For the first time, the Alliance has an opportunity to create a highly visible community outreach presence within the Park. The Maurice Stephens House is the first historic property the Park has chosen to rehabilitate with its philanthropic partner, the Alliance. Through its adaptive reuse program, the Park leases historic structures to generate rental income that it can then use to rehabilitate more structures. Through a rigorous process, the Park has partnered with the Alliance and committed over $1 million to the project if we can raise the remaining nearly $1 million by 2023. The Alliance is honored to partner with the Park on this unique and significant project.

Perfectly situated: Because of the House’s prominent location, Park Superintendent Rosalyn Fennell saw it as the ideal home for the Alliance. The beautiful building in its bucolic setting overlooking the Grand Parade contains ample space to house the Alliance’s office as well as a small public café and restrooms. Here the Alliance can offer expanded programs and events and host Park activities, drawing attention to the Alliance and its mission. The Maurice Stephens House will be perfectly positioned to welcome and engage visitors from near and far.

Expert advice: The Alliance convened the Maurice Stephens Advisory Group, which is composed of community leaders with expertise in construction, fundraising, and leasing.
They are working hand in hand with the Alliance and Park leaders to finalize the construction plans, agree on lease terms that satisfy both the Park and the Alliance, plan the public use of the space, and raise the funds required to make it all happen.

A restored Maurice Stephens House will offer a panoramic view of the Grand Parade, providing a place for visitors to pause and enjoy the panoramic views.

It is a peaceful spot. Guests coming to refresh their bodies and enlighten their minds may find their spirits uplifted as well, as they reflect on the Park’s significance.

“\textbf{The Alliance’s rehabilitation and operation of the Maurice Stephens house would serve as a shining example of the capacity of public-private partnerships to restore and breathe new life into historic structures.}”

\textit{Patrick Madden, VFNHP, Business Manager.}
Our Vision

National Parks belong to all of us and all of us should feel welcome on this hallowed ground. Membership in the volunteer Alliance is open to all, and all visitors are valued in Valley Forge National Historical Park.

Creating a new home for the Valley Forge Park Alliance in the Maurice Stephen House is more than the wise reclamation and reuse of an underutilized historic property. It is more than a public-private partnership or adding convenient resources for visitors. It is more than a sustainable future for the Alliance in perilous times. It is more than providing a well-deserved facility for hard-working volunteers. It will dramatically expand our ability to connect people to the Park. It will increase our ability to accomplish our mission of inspiring appreciation and support for Valley Forge National Historical Park.

“Inspiring Appreciation”

The preservation of Valley Forge National Historical Park and the capacity to continue to provide meaningful experiences for Park visitors is interconnected with the success of the Valley Forge Park Alliance. For the Park to truly thrive, we need people to join us in supporting Valley Forge Park Alliance.”

LATRESSE SNEAD, NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION CHIEF PROGRAM OFFICER

THE ALLIANCE
FUN FACTS:

28,000
*NAMES ON THE VF MUSTER ROLL

6,315
FOLLOWERS

409
ENTRIES
IN FALL 2020 PHOTO CONTEST

3,500
ACRES IN THE PARK

730
SPECIES
OF PLANTS
IN THE PARK

* The Valley Forge Muster Roll is dedicated to the memory of those who were at winter quarters from December 19, 1777 to June 19, 1778. The Continental Army used monthly muster rolls to track the army’s strength. Visitors can use the kiosks located in the Visitor Center to look up their name, perhaps discover an ancestor or simply learn more about those that encampment including ranks, dates of enlistment, and other notes on soldiers’ assignments, activities, or conditions.
The Plan
Valley Forge Park Alliance
Maurice Stephens House, Alliance HQ and Cafe Campaign
$980,000

Fully backed: The Alliance begins this campaign with the full endorsement and support of Valley Forge National Historical Park, which has invested in planning for, and preparation of, the Maurice Stephens House property. The National Park Foundation recognized the project’s value in 2020, awarding the Alliance $25,000 in seed funding.

Strategically aligned: The Alliance has long desired offices within the Park, suited to its needs and mission. Desire turned to determination in the Alliance’s 2019-2022 Strategic Plan. The Plan’s four initiatives include two directly linked to the Maurice Stephens House project:
1) enhance the Alliance’s ability to raise funds for both the Park and the Alliance and
2) work with National Park Service leaders to increase Alliance sustainability by creating a reliable source of earned income.

Leadership: Current and past trustees, with long-standing donor relationships and institutional knowledge, are leading the campaign. The Alliance can’t wait to get started, and has embraced a “build as we go,” approach to committee development. As new gifts are received, donors will be invited to join the effort. The Alliance’s Planned Giving Chair is an integral part of the Campaign Committee, to encourage legacy gifts to maintain the renovated building and support its expanded programming.

Goal and Timeline: The Alliance has set itself an audaciously daring goal…to raise $980,000 over the next two years, more than four times its operating budget. The Alliance’s campaign will launch in the fall of 2021, securing 80% of needed funds by December of 2022. The clean-up portion of the campaign will take place in early 2023, when the Alliance will seek gifts of all sizes from direct marketing, social media, and outreach to grassroots groups.

Please give to support the Alliance and to steward our shared history in the future.

Molly Duffy
Executive Director, Valley Forge Park Alliance
PO Box 117, Valley Forge, PA 19481
610-783-1777
info@vfparkalliance.org
Campaign Committee
Molly Duffy
Amy Johnson
Don Naimoli
Scott Sibley
Sherrin Baky-Nessler
William E. Nessler III

Maurice Stephens House Advisory Group
Jeff Devlin
Eric Goldstein
Tom Heisey
Ken Lawrence
Michael Malloy
Marian Moskowitz
Phil Ritter
Robert Ryan
Meg Veno

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Jeff Devlin
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Scott Sibley
Tracey Sisko
Fazal Syed

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