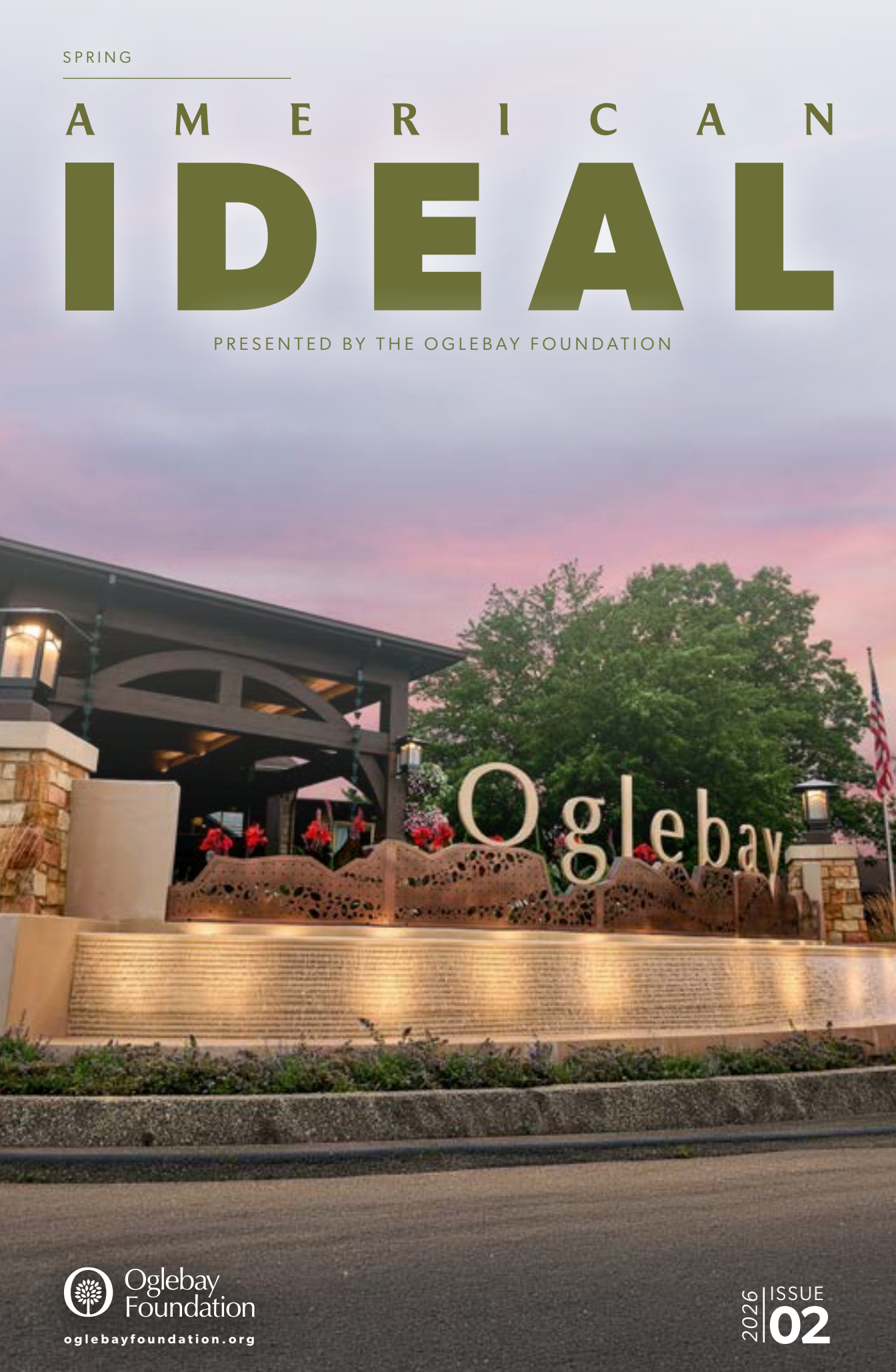
SPRING

AMERICAN IDEAL

PRESENTED BY THE OGLEBAY FOUNDATION



Oglebay Foundation
oglebayfoundation.org

2026 | ISSUE 02

> Community involvement has been the chief factor in the development of Oglebay as a self-sustaining enterprise and is one of the finest examples of what can result if we put the ***American Ideals*** to work.
>
> — Courtney Burton, Jr.
> *Grandson of Earl & Sallie Oglebay*

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The Oglebay Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation devoted to inspiring donors to invest in Oglebay and Wheeling Park. The Foundation raises strategic support through donations from private individuals, corporations and foundation giving. In 2025, the Foundation received record support for ongoing improvements in the parks. ***For more information, visit www.oglebayfoundation.org.***

Oglebay Foundation

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Welcome to the Oglebay Foundation

Amy Dobkin
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Marnie Hedges
Director of Operations

Dear Friends,

We're all on a journey — sometimes together, sometimes on our own — and the old adage still rings true: life happens while we're busy making plans. Across the parks, those plans are taking shape — often smoothly, sometimes through grit and perseverance — but always because of a committed community of donors and park professionals united by a shared vision for continued growth.

As we compiled this edition of *The American Ideal*, one theme kept emerging: partnership.

Wheeling Park Commission Executive Chef Adán Morales shares his path from dishwasher to chef, highlighting those who opened doors for him — and the team he's built to ensure every dining experience at Oglebay Park Resort exceeds expectations.

At the Good Zoo, the apprentice program offers recent graduates housing and a living stipend as they gain hands-on experience through an accredited program. Working collaboratively, the apprentices develop skills and solutions that benefit the animals in their care, guided by mentor Courtney Welsh — herself a graduate of West Liberty's Zoo Science program — underscoring the power of partnership at every level.

Missy and Paul Ashmore have turned their shared passions for Oglebay and disc golf into a new addition on the Par 3 Course.

The Fitzsimmons Family Foundation has made a leadership gift to support planning and design for a new recreation center at Crispin, positioning Oglebay as a regional leader in athletics and wellness.

Planning is never static. It evolves — through ideas, collaboration and shared vision — into something lasting. At the Foundation, that same process drives our work with donors to align priorities, refine plans and bring meaningful projects to life.

2026 is already shaping up to be a remarkable year. Your continued support makes it all possible.

See you in the parks,

ERIKS E. JANELSINS
President & CEO

FOREVER YOURS
The Campaign for an Enduring Oglebay

Then&Now

WHEELING PARK THROUGH THE YEARS

HICKMAN Lounge

Hickman Lounge, circa 1965

Hickman Lounge today

Kick off 2026 and take charge of your IRA.

Direct your distributions to the park you love.

You worked hard and made sacrifices to save for your future. Just because you now have to take Required Minimum Distributions from your IRA doesn't mean you have to incur taxes.

Let Us Help. Our Planned Giving Guide offers ways you can make a gift to support the park you love directly from your IRA.

Contact your IRA administrator **today** and tell them you want to support the Oglebay Foundation.

FOREVER YOURS
The Campaign for an Enduring Oglebay

Oglebay Foundation

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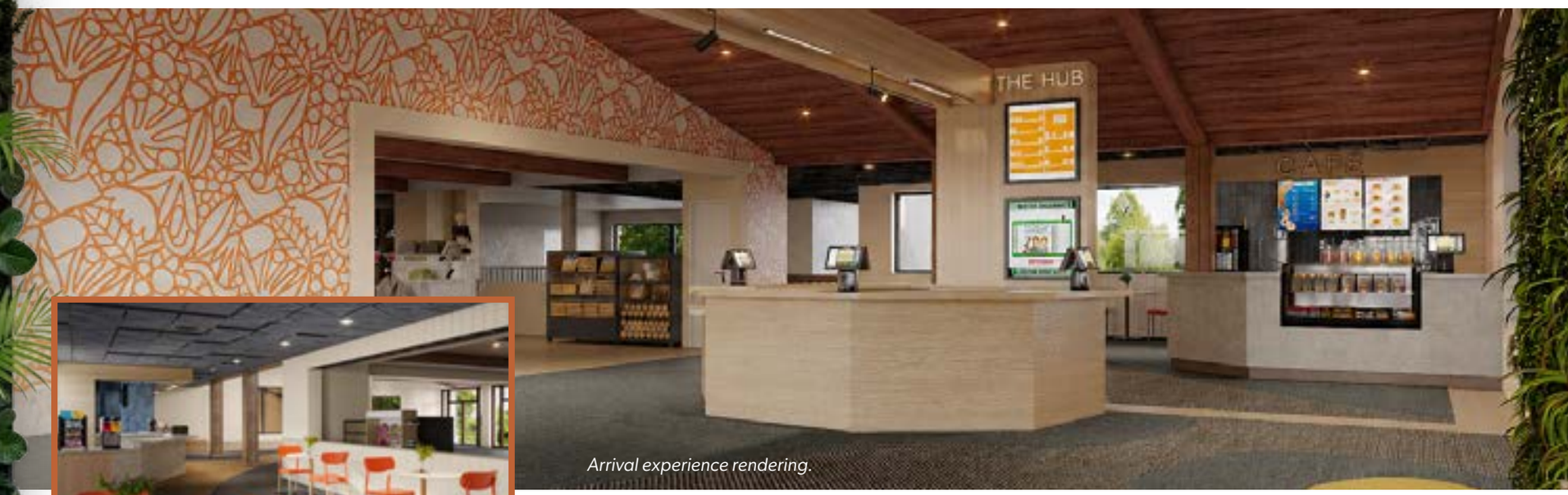
A Transformed Arrival Experience

Oglebay Good Zoo



Arrival experience rendering.

Rendering of updated café area.

Philip Mayer Good, the inspiration for the Good Zoo.

As the Oglebay Good Zoo prepares to celebrate its 50th anniversary, the guest arrival experience is being completely reimagined — a transformation designed to reflect the extraordinary evolution the zoo has undergone over the past five decades.

Construction on the project began in January, launching what leaders describe as a bold, new chapter for the zoo. The initiative includes the development of a new main entrance, lobby, gift shop, café and ADA-accessible restrooms — all thoughtfully designed to better serve guests and elevate the overall visitor experience.

"This project represents a meaningful step forward — not only in how we welcome guests, but in how we carry forward the mission of the Good Zoo," said Bob Peckenpaugh, president and CEO of the Wheeling Park Commission. "This elevated arrival experience will better reflect the sense of wonder, learning and conservation that defines the Good Zoo."

The reopening of the zoo's main entrance is slated for summer 2026, marking a significant investment in both hospitality and accessibility. ADA accessibility has been integrated into every element of the design, ensuring a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all visitors.

The project is fully funded through a West Virginia Economic Enhancement Grant authorized by the West Virginia Water Development Authority and secured by the Oglebay Foundation.

Rod Haley, executive vice president of operations for the Wheeling Park Commission and acting interim director of the Good Zoo, said the project underscores the zoo's steady and strategic growth.

"In the short time that I've been serving as interim director, I've learned just how unique this zoo truly is," Haley said. "We have an exceptional professional team, and what stands out most is the continued trajectory of evolution and growth. In nearly 50 years, the Good Zoo has had only seven directors. My role is to ensure the ship stays on course and that the significant projects now underway continue moving forward until our new director is in place."

The redesigned arrival space will serve as a central orientation point, helping guests navigate the zoo's distinct animal zones and activity areas. Upon exiting the main building and turning right, visitors can explore African Adventure, Australian Adventure, the West Virginia Conservation Center, the Wetlands and the Red Barn. Along the pathway are animal habitats and the Veterinary Hospital, as well as interactive amenities including the Low Ropes Course, Dottie and Del's ADA-accessible playground, the Rolli Bouncer and the Jumbo Jumper. Retail shops and concession stands are woven throughout the experience, creating a cohesive and engaging journey.

In addition to the entrance transformation, construction is also underway on the Gary E. West Prideland Villas and Hotel. Together, these projects reflect a broader, long-term vision to elevate the Good Zoo as a national leader in conservation, animal welfare and education.

The new facilities will strengthen Oglebay's ability to support advanced research, breeding programs and immersive educational opportunities, ensuring that the Good Zoo continues to inspire future generations while advancing its mission well into its next 50 years.

FINE WINE FOOD & FRIENDS 2026

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Celebrating 100 years of Service to the Community

Building the Team

One Course at a Time

Oglebay Executive Chef Adán Morales

Historically, Oglebay has not been known as a culinary destination. But that narrative is changing — deliberately and decisively.

Since June 10, 2024, Oglebay Park Resort has been guided in the kitchen by Executive Chef Adán Morales, a 30-year hospitality veteran with a clear mandate: elevate the dining experience across the resort's five restaurants and create meals as memorable as the setting itself.

"My goal isn't simply to improve what's on the plate," Chef Adán said. "It's to create consistently memorable experiences — flavors our guests will smell, taste and savor long after they leave."

A native son of Mexico City, Chef Adán brings his passion for enhancing food service through creative menu development and innovative presentation. His experience working at numerous upscale restaurants, country clubs and independently owned casual dining establishments has given him a strong command of a wide variety of cuisines.

From Dishwasher to Executive Chef

Chef Adán's culinary journey began as a dishwasher in the renowned Knollwood Country Club in Granger, Indiana, a subsidiary of the Club Corporation — a world leader in private clubs. Working alongside David Mosberg, Adán was given the opportunity to grow, mastering the culinary techniques and administrative savvy that led him to the position of sous chef and then executive chef of Cellar Door in South Bend, Indiana, at the age of 21. In 2007, he led the renovation and conceptual shift from American fare to Mediterranean cuisine in the then-newly conceived Volte Restaurant.

"Everywhere I've worked has been an opportunity to sharpen my skills and learn new techniques and flavor profiles. I've had my eyes opened to what a resort can be," Adán said. "I've been fortunate to have great mentors and the chance to continually refine my craft."

Adán relocated to the award-winning, five-star Ritz-Carlton in Key Biscayne Resort in Miami, Florida. He worked alongside George Fisrovich at the Italian/Mediterranean restaurant, Cioppino, and later transitioned to the Mexican restaurant, Cantina Beach, under the direction of award-winning chef, Jordi Valles. That was followed by several years at the one-of-a-kind Barton G. Adán then nurtured his passion for molecular gastronomy and daring plating techniques at the Restaurant Miami in South Beach while working with Six Star Diamond Award Chef Jeff O'Neil for five years.

Culinary Range Meets Operational Rigor

Over the years, Adán's repertoire has spanned Mediterranean, classic American, Italian and Mexican cuisines. His technical range extends from sushi to molecular gastronomy, complemented by refined plating and contemporary presentation.

Equally important, his experience evolved beyond the plate. As a certified learning coach and trainer, he managed staff development, inventory systems and front-of-house/back-of-house integration — mastering both the creative and commercial sides of hospitality.

His career next took him to Pittsburgh. He spent four years at Nemacolin, reopening Rockwell's Steakhouse and Barattolo Restaurant. The assignment required strategic vision, team building and the ability to relaunch brands with credibility and momentum.

"I know there's a balance between a chef's creative ego and what the guest ultimately wants," Adán said. "Finding that balance is paramount."

Building the Right Team

When Adán arrived at Oglebay, he recognized the great opportunity — but also understood that transformation would require the right team.

"Without the support of my team, I'm nothing," he said. "I believe in collaboration. Everyone's ideas are welcome. Shared innovation is how we grow, support one another and ultimately succeed."

His first key hire was Executive Pastry Chef Carlos Carlos, brought on within Adán's first month. A San Diego native, Carlos jokingly refers to himself as "just the muffin man," crediting his training to "the school of hard knocks." In practice, however, his impact has been substantial.

Guests at Sarita's Coffee have experienced his laminated croissants and pastries firsthand, while diners at Trace Chophouse frequently remark on the house-made breads and show-stopping desserts.

"Chef Adán encourages us to explore and bring something unexpected," Carlos said. "That creative flexibility makes working here a joy."

In January 2025, Chef Jeremy Woodcox joined as executive sous chef. A Michigan native and Le Cordon Bleu graduate, Jeremy contributes classical technique and disciplined execution. His most visible influence has been on banquets and large-scale events, where elevated presentation and thoughtful flavor composition have added new depth to the guest experience.

"I strive to boost flavors and creativity in the kitchen to elevate every culinary moment," Jeremy said. "Even the most humble ingredients can be showcased in innovative ways."

Oglebay Executive Pastry Chef Carlos Carlos stands next to one of his pulled sugar sculptures.

Oglebay Executive Sous Chef Jeremy Woodcox preps herbs in the Skyline demonstration kitchen.

A Vision for What's Next

Looking ahead, continued growth is planned — not only in staffing but in culinary direction. Seasonal menu rotations, stronger farm-to-table integration and expanded partnerships with local purveyors are central to the strategy.

"When I first came to Oglebay, I saw tremendous potential," Adán said. "We can build on the culinary tradition that's here while showing guests the full scope of what an Oglebay experience can be. Our park is for the people — and we should support our local community as much as possible by working with regional farmers and producers."

Adán also wants to continue to give back to the culinary profession that's given him so much. Oglebay will be partnering with the National Restaurant Association and West Virginia Northern Community College to create a new-certified culinary arts and restaurant management training program for high school students interested in beginning a career in the culinary arts and for culinary students to train at a more advanced level.

As the conversation concluded, the chefs reflected on gratitude — a shared sense that they are the right team, in the right place, at the right time.

For guests of Oglebay, that evolution is already evident. And if the culinary team has its way, the resort's reputation as a food destination will soon be as enduring as its landscape.

The team talked about the privilege of leading the culinary transformation at Oglebay. The privilege, it seems, is ours.

PLANS

Making a Difference
IN THE PARKS

Fitzsimmons Foundation

A new chapter is beginning to take shape at Oglebay Park Resort thanks to a $1 million leadership gift from the Fitzsimmons Foundation.

The gift will fund planning and design work for a new, state-of-the-art sports center that promises to redefine how residents and visitors experience the park. The investment, made through the Oglebay Foundation's Forever Yours: The Campaign for an Enduring Oglebay, represents both a significant milestone and a powerful statement about the future of the region's recreational landscape.

The exciting new project feels like a natural evolution for Oglebay. Long regarded as a year-round destination for hospitality, outdoor adventure and community programming, the park has continued to adapt to meet visitors' needs. The new sports center aims to build on that legacy — expanding access to fitness, recreation and social engagement in a single, centralized hub.

"Their remarkable generosity reflects the family's love of the parks as well as their willingness to be of service to our community," said Eriks Janelsins, president and CEO of the Oglebay Foundation. "Their strategic, visionary support continues to have incredible impact as we move the parks forward."

At its core, the proposed Oglebay Sports Center is designed to bridge two worlds: the welcoming accessibility of a community recreation center and the elevated amenities of a modern athletic club.

Early plans envision a flexible complex featuring both indoor and outdoor spaces tailored for a wide range of uses — from youth sports leagues and adult fitness programs to informal recreation and community gatherings. The goal is not simply to build a facility, but to cultivate a place where wellness and connection intersect.

Wheeling Park Commission President and CEO Bob Peckenpaugh sees the project as a defining moment. "The new facility is intended to strengthen community bonds, enhance quality of life and position Oglebay as a regional leader in recreation and wellness," he said. "The Fitzsimmons Foundation gift will be the catalyst to make this vision a reality."

For the Fitzsimmons family, the gift is deeply personal. "Our family is honored to support the transformative Oglebay Sports Center, which we believe will enhance the quality of life for our community for generations to come," Clayton Fitzsimmons said. "Oglebay has long been integral to this community and to our own family's lives, and we are proud to give back to the place we love."

Their contribution also serves as a tribute to Greg McDermott's leadership during his tenure as chair of the Wheeling Park Commission — an acknowledgment of the steady guidance that helped position the parks system for continued growth.

Since its founding in 2007, the Fitzsimmons Foundation has invested more than $4 million into projects that strengthen the Ohio Valley, with a focus on education, mental health awareness, support for vulnerable populations and the enhancement of community spaces. Their latest gift continues that tradition, aligning philanthropy with long-term regional impact.

"Oglebay has provided my family with cherished memories throughout the years. It is a special part of the Wheeling community, bringing people together through its beauty and traditions. We hope this gift continues to inspire joy and connection for generations to come," Kayleen Fitzsimmons Clough said.

The sports center joins a slate of transformative initiatives supported by the Forever Yours campaign, including improvements at Wheeling Park, the Good Zoo and Wilson Lodge. Together, these efforts signal a broader commitment: to ensure that Oglebay remains not just a destination, but a dynamic, evolving resource for our community.

As planning progresses, one thing is already clear — the next era of Oglebay is not just being imagined. It is being built. Talk about making a difference in the parks.

Opposite page from left: Kayleen Fitzsimmons Clough, Rocky Fitzsimmons, Sunni Fitzsimmons, Bob Fitzsimmons and Clayton Fitzsimmons.

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Benefits of a Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT)

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How It Works:

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Key Benefits:

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Is a CRT Right for You?

If you want to:

- Support a charitable mission
- Receive income during your lifetime
- Reduce taxes
- Create a lasting legacy

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Learn how a CRT can meet your financial and philanthropic goals.

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LEGACY SOCIETY

“

SPRING IS WHEN LIFE’S
ALIVE IN EVERYTHING.

— CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

BRINGING THE GAME HOME

DISC GOLF COMES TO OGLEBAY

For Missy and Paul Ashmore, a new disc golf course at Oglebay Park Resort is more than an amenity — it's the realization of a shared vision shaped by family, community and a passion for play.

Through a recent gift to the Oglebay Foundation, the Ashmores are funding the development of a disc golf course in the Par 3 area of Oglebay Park Resort, with plans to bring the project to life this year. The contribution reflects a natural intersection of their interests: Missy's deep connection to Oglebay and Paul's long-standing passion for disc golf.

"Oglebay has always been the backdrop of what we do," Missy said. "It's where we gather with family and friends. It's where a lifetime of memories continues to be made."

Disc golf, one of the fastest-growing recreational sports in the country, offers a simple but engaging premise: players throw flying discs toward elevated metal baskets, completing each hole in as few throws as possible. Much like traditional golf, courses can feature nine or 18 holes, but the barrier to entry is significantly lower.

"Can you throw a Frisbee? Can you play golf?" Paul recalled being asked when he was first introduced to the sport. "I told him, 'I'm really bad at Frisbee and even worse at golf — what could go wrong?'"

What followed was a surprise. A few solid throws quickly turned curiosity into enthusiasm — and eventually into a lifelong pursuit.

The sport's accessibility is part of its appeal. Beginners typically start with just three discs — a putter, mid-range and driver — often choosing lighter, slower discs to improve control and technique. Courses are relatively inexpensive to build and maintain, making them ideal for public spaces.

Beyond recreation, disc golf delivers broader community benefits. Courses activate underutilized land, create safe and welcoming outdoor environments, and support both physical and mental wellness. They also attract visitors, contributing to local tourism and economic activity. Disc golf offers a different kind of experience — one rooted in accessibility, community and healthy outdoor activity.

The Ashmores' journey with disc golf began in Charlotte, North Carolina, where they met in 2001. They married two years later, building their life together while frequently returning to Wheeling to visit family.

In Charlotte, disc golf wasn't just a pastime — it was embedded in the culture.

"We had more than 15 courses within 45 minutes of our house," Paul said. "It was everywhere."

His involvement deepened quickly. Paul volunteered at both the United States Disc Golf Championship (USDGC) and the World Disc Golf Championships, and worked closely with Innova Disc Golf, one of the sport's leading manufacturers based in Rock Hill, South Carolina.

When the couple eventually relocated to Wheeling, the contrast was stark.

"I did not want to return to Wheeling at the time," Missy admitted with a laugh. But Paul, a military brat, saw it differently.

"Wheeling is the only place that ever felt like home to me," he said.

Missy ultimately agreed. "Coming home felt like what we both knew — what we were used to."

There was just one problem: the nearest disc golf courses were more than an hour away, in places like Wexford, Pennsylvania, and Fairmont, West Virginia.

The idea of bringing disc golf to Oglebay began to take shape through a connection within the parks and recreation community.

Alan Beaver, a three-time national disc golf champion from Mecklenburg (North Carolina) County's parks system, would visit Wheeling for Parks & Recreation conferences. When Paul told him he was moving to Wheeling, Beaver said disc golf at Oglebay made sense and had the kind of potential that could be showcased to parks and recreation professionals from around the country.

That feedback reinforced what Paul had already seen in the park. He began meeting with park officials to discuss the idea, but leadership at the time was not ready to move forward.

For Paul, the idea had been years in the making — a vision he had revisited time and time again, waiting for the right moment and the right support to bring it to life.

Undeterred, Paul connected with Huntington, West Virginia, native Johnny Sias, a five-time world champion, to begin developing course concepts for the Wheeling area. While Oglebay was not ready to move forward at the time, that collaboration led to successful projects elsewhere.

In 2014, the pair designed courses at Grand Vue Park in Moundsville, West Virginia, which quickly gained national recognition. At one point, the Black Course was ranked as the top course in the state and one of the best in the country. They later designed a course at Brooke Hills Park, with both courses evolving into regional destinations and proving the area's potential for high-quality disc golf.

In the years that followed, life took precedence. The Ashmores raised their two children — Ben, now 21, and Samantha, known as Sammie, 18 — and professional and family commitments slowed progress on their vision.

Now, the timing feels right.

"Regular people need to make gifts — not just to support our incredible parks, but to fund their passion projects," Missy said. "That's how ideas like disc golf become reality."

Their gift represents both a personal milestone and a broader opportunity for the region. While the initial project will focus on a course designed to be welcoming for beginners, it will also provide experienced players with a place to refine their short game, with a broader long-term vision for expansion. This first course represents the foundation of a larger vision — one that could grow into a multi-course disc golf destination within the park system.

"Our dream would be to see multiple courses throughout the park system," Paul said. "To create a true disc golf destination here in Wheeling — maybe even host a national high school championship someday."

As the project moves forward, there will be opportunities for community members and local partners to be part of its growth.

For now, the focus is on building momentum — one course, one player, one throw at a time.

"Sometimes all it takes is a starting point," Paul added. "This could be the catalyst for something much bigger."

Disc golf basket

ENLIVEN THE PARTY!

Encourage your friends to join us

Waddington Farm Society members are generous donors who make annual contributions of $1,000 or more. Gifts may be made at one time or in monthly installments.

WADDINGTON
FARM SOCIETY

OglebayFoundation.org

THE POWER OF GIVING

2026 LEADERSHIP BREAKFAST

FunFest Fridays

Sponsored By
Belmont Savings Bank

Friday Nights Done Right at Wheeling Park

May 22 - Sept. 4, 2026
6 - 9 p.m.

Make the most of your Friday night at Wheeling Park with plenty to explore, taste and enjoy. FunFest Fridays bring together live music, local food, family-friendly activities and laid-back park vibes — all in one welcoming space, sponsored by Belmont Savings Bank.

Music Line-Up

May
22 | Carly Greer & The Hooch
29 | Matt VanFossen

June
5 | Full Circle Band
12 | Twice As Nice
19 | Poor Man's Heaven
26 | The Jukebox Band

July
2 | Eli and the Mojo Kings*
10 | Shelley Duff
17 | The Matt Barranti Band
24 | The Next
31 | Gage Joseph

August
7 | 7 South
14 | MSM
21 | The Muddle
28 | The Trainjumpers

September
4 | The Fantasy's

*Thursday

Sunday Funday

SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

Sponsored by ELIZABETH STIFEL KLINE FOUNDATION & expand

The Sounds of Summer Come Alive

May 31 - Sept. 6, 2026
6 - 9 p.m.

Enjoy free Sunday night concerts at Oglebay Park Resort in Wheeling, with live music, kids' activities, concessions and more. Music starts at 7 p.m. at the Oglebay Amphitheater, sponsored by Elizabeth Stifel Kline Foundation and Expand Energy.

Music Line-Up

May
31 | Eli and the Mojo Kings

June
7 | Taylor Jo & The Copper Creek Band
14 | Yacht Rocket
21 | Tongue 'N Cheek
28 | Van Morrison Act

July
5 | Surfs Up (Beach Boys Tribute)
12 | Michael Christopher
19 | Hard Day's Night (Beatles Tribute)
26 | Into the Blue (ELO Tribute)

August
2 | Hotel California (Eagles Tribute)
9 | Tumbleweed
16 | Hoard & Jones
23 | Pocket Change
30 | Bluegrass Day featuring Crandall Creek and Michael Cleveland & Flamekeeper

September
6 | Wheeling Symphony Orchestra

GOOD ZOO APPRENTICE PROGRAM GIVES NEXT-GENERATION KEEPERS A LEG UP

Clockwise from top: Elisia feeding Moon the alpaca; Alexa feeding Grover the sloth; and Kyla training Xena the red panda.

Thanks to a leadership donation from Marathon MPLX and a federal grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the Good Zoo has welcomed four apprentices — Elisia Frey, Ethan Garrett, Kyla Ingram and Alexa Talnagi — into a competitive, hands-on training program designed to prepare emerging professionals for careers in zoology and conservation.

The combined funding provides both a stipend and housing for the four recent college graduates as they pursue critical, resume-building experience within Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA)–accredited settings. That level of support is uncommon in the field and allows participants to focus fully on professional development rather than the financial strain that often accompanies entry-level conservation work.

"Getting both a stipend and housing is a huge blessing," Frey said. "Most organizations provide one or the other — sometimes neither — which means I'd have to cover the cost of living while pursuing this training and experience."

FROM INTERNSHIP TO PROFESSIONAL KEEPER

In the zoological profession, experience is currency. While internships often serve as an introduction — focused heavily on cleaning, diet preparation and learning animal-care protocols — apprenticeships represent the next tier of professional development.

Apprentices at the Good Zoo take on significantly more responsibility. They function as primary keepers within their assigned areas during shifts, make daily husbandry decisions and implement enrichment plans. A full-time keeper oversees their work, tracks competencies and advances their training milestones.

"The apprentice program has been a wonderful addition to the zoo," Good Zoo Associate Curator of Animals Courtney Welsh said. "The apprentices bring an invigorating eagerness as they begin their journey in the animal care career field. Their fresh ideas, innovative approach and sheer willingness to try something are helpful for brainstorming, particularly for things like novel animal enrichment."

This accumulation of six-month and year-long placements is especially valuable when applying for permanent roles or graduate programs. AZA-accredited facilities look for demonstrated, sustained hands-on experience — a credential that gives these apprentices a measurable competitive advantage.

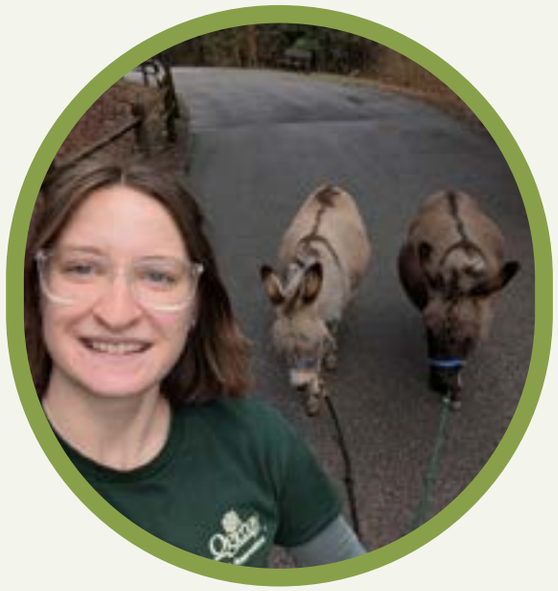
A SUSTAINABLE PIPELINE FOR CONSERVATION CAREERS

The apprentice program is intentionally structured as a professional pipeline. Participants receive direct mentorship from experienced zoo staff while applying industry best practices in animal welfare, enrichment, habitat management and conservation education.

In turn, the apprentices share their growing expertise with interns who are just beginning their own journeys. The result is a continuous cycle of mentorship and advancement — strengthening the profession while ensuring the animals in the Good Zoo's care continue to thrive.

Through strategic investment from Marathon MPLX and IMLS, the Good Zoo is not only caring for animals today but cultivating the next generation of conservation leaders for tomorrow.

MEET THE APPRENTICE KEEPERS



ELISIA FREY

At 21, Frey is the youngest of the cohort and a 2025 graduate of Malone University in Canton, Ohio. She works primarily in the zoo's red-barn area and raptor rehabilitation section, gaining experience with both domestic species and birds of prey.

Her dual assignment provides exposure to specialized rehabilitation practices — a breadth of experience that strengthens her long-term career trajectory. "Working with the Harris hawk, building a level of trust where the hawk will voluntarily hop onto my glove is really exciting to see."

KYLA INGRAM

Kyla Ingram, 23, a graduate of Montana State University, works closely with red pandas. Her role extends beyond daily care into enrichment design — creating tools and activities that stimulate natural behaviors and improve animal welfare.

"In addition to the security of housing and a regular paycheck, I've been given a great opportunity to express myself creatively while building enrichment tools for the animals here," Ingram said. "The payoff of seeing the animals interact with and use the enrichment tool as planned is incredibly rewarding."

ETHAN GARRETT

Ethan Garrett, 23, is a graduate of West Virginia University, where he shifted from physics to wildlife and fisheries management after discovering a passion for field biology. His current work includes caring for eastern hellbenders and monarch butterflies — species closely tied to habitat conservation efforts.

"I hope the experience that I'm getting at the Good Zoo will lead to doing field work — both research and conservation work to protect amphibian habitats," Garrett said. "Maintaining healthy populations in the wild and keeping streams natural makes me feel like, in a small way, I'm having an impact. It's very fulfilling."

ALEXA TALNAGI

Alexa Talnagi, 23, is a graduate of Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. She supports animal care in the zoo's main building, including sloths, small primates and armadillos. Her work frequently intersects with education programming.

"I was working with a group of 8-year-old kids for a sleepover at the zoo," Talnagi said. "One of our activities was to make scent bags for the armadillo. When the scent bags were placed in the habitat, the kids saw the result of their work firsthand. The pride on their faces was incredible and reinforced everything we had taught that evening about the animals and their need for enrichment."

THE POWER OF PREDICTABILITY

How Recurring Giving Sustains Oglebay and Wheeling Park

The Oglebay Foundation preserves two of West Virginia's most valued public spaces: Oglebay Park Resort and Wheeling Park. Together, the parks span more than 2,200 acres, welcome millions of visitors each year, and serve as economic drivers and cornerstones of recreation, tourism and community life in the Ohio Valley.

Behind the trails, festivals and year-round programming is a simple reality: The parks rely on consistent philanthropic support to thrive. Recurring giving helps secure that future.

From One-Time Gifts to Lasting Impact

A single gift can fund a project or program. Recurring donations — monthly or ongoing — provide something more powerful: stability.

Through the Oglebay Foundation, 100 percent of every gift is reinvested into maintaining, operating and enhancing the parks. Recurring support creates a reliable financial base, allowing for long-term planning, capital improvements and expanded access — turning giving from a moment into sustained impact.

Fueling a Regional Asset

Oglebay and Wheeling Park generate more than $355 million in economic activity while supporting local businesses and promoting health and wellness.

Predictable funding ensures this impact continues. From maintaining green spaces to supporting the Good Zoo and seasonal events, recurring gifts allow the Foundation to invest with confidence.

Enabling Long-Term Planning

Park operations alone cannot ensure long-term sustainability. Recurring giving helps close that gap by providing dependable monthly income that allows the Foundation to:

- Plan multi-year projects
- Match grant funding requirements
- Address maintenance needs quickly
- Expand programs without waiting for annual campaigns

This shifts the focus from short-term needs to long-term stewardship.

Expanding Access for All

Ensuring access for every family is central to the Foundation's mission. Recurring donors help make that possible.

Programs such as Access to the Parks provide thousands of visits each year for families who might not otherwise be able to participate, extending the parks' benefits across the community.

A Community of Stewards

Recurring donors are more than supporters — they are stewards of a shared legacy. From the founding of Wheeling Park in 1925 to the creation of Oglebay Park in 1928, community investment has sustained these spaces.

Today's recurring donors continue that tradition, providing steady support that preserves and strengthens the parks for future generations.

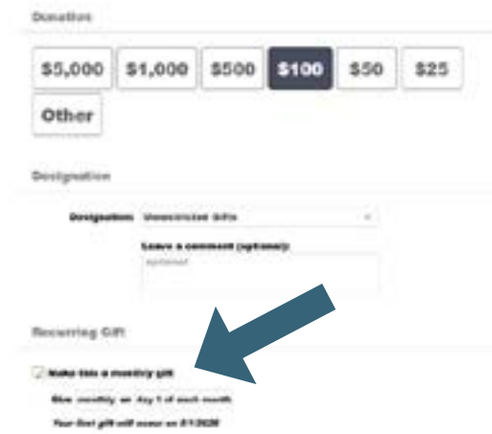
A Sustainable Path Forward

Sustainability requires consistency. Recurring giving provides the financial stability needed to maintain high-quality public spaces, expand programming and ensure broad access.

It allows the Foundation to think beyond the next campaign and plan for the next century.

Because when support is steady, impact endures.

To create a monthly recurring gift online simply check this box on the donation page.



SCAN NOW TO GIVE

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