Hillcrest Cemetery Memorial Association INC.

If this newsletter has reached you at a time of loss, please accept our apologies and condolences.

Volunteer days every Saturday April 1 through May 6, 2023.

Dear Hillcrest families and friends,

We have had a successful, if slow, start to 2023. Due to family obligations and other issues, I have not been as deeply involved *on site* at Hillcrest this year as with last year's crazy spring. But a our longtime local volunteer Marcia has continued to go out and take care of litter and fallen limbs while keeping me informed of issues. A new volunteer, David, has been out for the last several weeks doing a huge amount of brush clearing in areas we have so far bypassed, such as the hillside facing onto Stanton Road. It looks so much better already! Were it not for these folks, I would probably not be as excited as I am now to finally get deeply involved again. Here are some brief updates:

- The **mowing contractor**, Blue Cloud Lawn, has been hired for the year. They just completed a full detailed cleanup of the whole cemetery. I was able to get out and inspect their work and found a few spots that need touching up and will be sure they get taken care of, but they did an overall excellent job. They will break down the mowing to do about 1/3 of the cemetery each week, such that the whole property will be cut every 3 weeks, but not all at once.
- **Volunteer days** are set for each Saturday April 1–May 6 from 10am–2pm, tentatively. Details are on our **Facebook page**. Please RSVP if you can so we can know how many to expect and so you can see updates in case of cancellation or changes. These are always a great day for families to just visit—no obligation to help. I always carry a binder of information to locate graves if help is needed, and I know some just prefer to visit when others are around.
  - **April 1** — General call for volunteers to move already cut brush into piles so that the city can get to them. (Morning rain is forecast but we will start when it ends, if so, and go as long as we can.)
  - **April 8** — (Easter weekend) A couple of us will be working out there and others are welcome to join. We will likely be continuing to move brush into piles from the areas where a volunteer has been working, or doing general cleanup.
  - **April 15** — Hands on Atlanta volunteer event, but all are welcome to join us. We will be beginning work on clearing the undergrowth in the wooded area behind the historic Section 1. There is also a side project to use string trimmers to help make the flat markers that are being lost in the grass readable so transcribers can be efficient in documenting all these graves in the coming months.
  - **April 22** — We have a volunteer group coming to work on a project on their own. Meanwhile, I will be training volunteers on locating graves and doing the headstone transcription. If you want to help with that long term project, please sign up. We could also use a few folks with string trimmers to carefully edge some obscured headstones in advance of the group doing the transcription.
  - **April 29** — Hands on Atlanta volunteer event, but all are welcome to join us. We will be continuing work on clearing the undergrowth in the wooded area behind the historic Section 1.
  - **May 6** — We have a volunteer group coming to work on a project as a team. We need others to help us make a final pass through the cemetery making sure all projects are wrapped up for the season.
- Progress on getting the **new board** together and changing to a **501(c)(3)** have been paused while I was relatively inactive but should begin again right after this series of events.
- **Fundraising** has slowed over the past few months. We always get a surge of donations when we send out a newsletter. For that, and just to keep you updated, I will try to send these out more often. We have had an increase in monthly and quarterly donations through DonorBox and Paypal, which allow recurring automatic donations by credit or debit card. We also recently added Zelle as a donation option.
- Phase 2 of the senior housing across the street is nearing completion, and it looks great! Unfortunately, some of the contractors there have been parking in Hillcrest or turning trucks around by driving through the cemetery roads. I have been in touch with the developer and the general contractor and they

have agreed to do some **driveway repairs** when they have contractors out to re-grade their site and install the driveways and parking lots. I will do all I can to be sure we are made whole or even better than before when this happens. That said, we desperately needed driveway repairs before this. The drive going up the hill from the Veterans Memorial has been washed out for over a decade and is getting worse. The pothole at the main entrance predates the new construction. After they do all we can get them to do, we will be looking for quotes to do anything else that is needed, and possibly start a separate funding campaign for that or look for a corporate sponsor for this one-time project. We really need to repave the main entrance and the hill up from there to prevent it from washing out again, but that is probably beyond our dreams now.

- We are seeking someone with the proper skills to **professionally restore the historic Hillcrest sign** in the southern end of the cemetery. We want to have it carefully repaired and painted. Some of the metal clips that hold the letters to the wire have rusted away, and I'm worried this sign will be lost if we don't do something soon. I have photos showing it in its original location dating to about 1935!

Finally, **THANK YOU** to all of you who continue to support us, whether through physical or financial contributions, prayers, spreading the word about us or sharing our Facebook posts!

Kevin L. Hudson
Volunteer and President

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How to make a tax-deductible donation:

Checks — Make payable and mail to: Hillcrest Cemetery M.A., 140 Birch Valley Dr, Athens, GA 30605-4246

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