

THE BACK / **BACKSTORY**REFILL
AS
NEEDED

LEFT

Robert Zarr, the founder of Park Rx America, walks in Meridian Hill Park in Washington, D.C., with María Rueda-González, a colleague at Unity Health Care.

TO HELP AILING PATIENTS, PARK RX AMERICA PRESCRIBES A DOSE OF NATURE.

BY JANE MARGOLIES

Imagine you go to the doctor with an ailment, and you're given a prescription—but not for medicine. Instead, the doctor instructs you to spend 30 minutes a day in a nearby park.

Sound far-fetched? If Park Rx America and other like-minded groups are successful, such “park prescriptions” will be increasingly common. Their movement is based on the growing field of ecotherapy, which says that exposure to nature can have healing effects for those suffering from depression, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and chronic conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure. Exercise isn't the main point, though vigorous walks or shooting some hoops can certainly help those who are inactive or overweight. Studies show that simply being in a natural setting—sitting on a bench, inhaling fresh air, and hearing the chirping of birds—can have benefits like lowering levels of the stress hormone cortisol.

Landscape architects may not know much about cortisol levels, but doctors do, and Park Rx America is directed at them—encouraging them to prescribe a dose of nature just as they prescribe a dose of pills. The group, in fact, was started by a physician, Robert Zarr, a Washington, D.C., pediatrician, who in 2010 launched

a local effort called DC Park Rx. The initiative has now expanded and has been renamed, reflecting the goal of one day operating coast to coast.

Zarr knows that his colleagues will be more likely to prescribe nature if it's easy to do so, so Park Rx America has been building a database of vetted parks and linking it to the electronic medical health records systems that hospitals, health clinics, and doctors' offices use. That way, a pediatrician who is treating a child with ADHD, for example, can, with a couple of clicks, find a park near the patient's home and prescribe visits to that park in the same window on the computer screen that he or she uses to prescribe Ritalin.

Landscape architects, of course, design the parks that doctors may be sending patients to. Certain landscape features such as trees and running water are believed to have the greatest healing effect, according to John Henderson, the executive director of Park Rx America. Incorporating these and other calming elements into designs for parks and public spaces “will maximize therapeutic benefits,” he says—not only for patients with park prescriptions, but all of us. ●

JANE MARGOLIES IS A NEW YORK-BASED JOURNALIST AND FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO THE *NEW YORK TIMES*.

KATE PATTERSON





NSDC-36 with New Spherical Dome



Sage Dual
US Patent D800,405 S.



RSDC-36
US Patents D671,289 S;
D661,857 S.



SDC-36



Sage
US Patent D785,269 S.



A-36
US Patents D487,537 S; D487,538 S;



SD-42 with Dome



DYN-SD-36 with Dome
US Patents D573,766 S; D542,993 S; D606,271 S; Canada © 114394.



SD-242 with Domes



SDRTC-40 with Dome

Being smart is always in style.

VICTOR STANLEY RELAY™ SENSOR AND SERVICE

Efficiency can be a beautiful thing. Our Relay technology continuously monitors fill level, conveys system temperature, weight, location via GPS and collection status, in real-time and historically. The sensor is invisible to the public eye, but you can log in and clearly see how to maximize efficiencies in collection planning, scheduling, and routing – an estimated 20-40% reduction in collection expenses. Whether you retrofit or make it part of new orders, Relay says a lot about how your community handles waste. Available in the styles and models above.



VICTOR STANLEY RELAY™
STREET LEVEL SENSING™ & WASTE CONTROL SERVICE

VICTOR  STANLEY

Create a timeless moment.®

VICTORSTANLEY.COM