

To the Editor:

Re “America Has Turned Its Back on Its Poorest Families,” by Ezra Klein (column, April 20):

The child tax credit, discussed in the column, would not only reduce child poverty, but would also have a profound effect on one of the most intractable problems our nation struggles to solve: addiction.

Addiction prevention is so much more than lectures in school classrooms about the effects of drugs. Child poverty is an underlying cause of adverse childhood experiences, which have long-lasting effects on mental health, well-being and the risk for substance use.

Poverty can physically alter a child’s brain structure, resulting in observable socioeconomic disparities in critical neurocognitive functioning, affecting learning and memory, attention, language, emotional stability, executive functioning and self-regulation.

In some cases, these effects can be observed even before a child’s first birthday. We have the means to invest in this critical early determinant of health by reducing child poverty and securing families’ income, food and housing stability.

While a child tax credit might seem far removed from addressing the devastating drug epidemic that has been ravaging our nation for decades, it is in fact a profoundly important element of the addiction prevention toolbox.

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The writer is vice president, prevention research and analysis, at Partnership to End Addiction.

Equal Access to Parks



Prospect Park in Brooklyn. Ruth Fremson/The New York Times

To the Editor:

Re “Olmsted’s Enduring Gift” (special section, April 26):

Our nation owes immense gratitude to the visionary landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted. But we must remember that his gifts endure only if we take care of them — something we haven’t always done.

New York watched the decline of Central Park and Prospect Park and then rebirth under pioneers like Elizabeth Barlow Rogers and Tupper Thomas. We have learned that parks need investment, care and community to thrive.

We know, too, that there is still more to do to live up to Olmsted’s democratic ideals. He believed that parks should benefit all people. Yet today, studies show that equal access to parks is still unrealized, especially in communities of color, where far too many lack thriving parks or parks close to home.

Let’s use this bicentennial of Olmsted’s birth to recommit our communities and our nation to a robust era of park-making for all people. That is the greatest thanks we could give Olmsted, and it would be a profound investment in our future.

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