

LEAFLET

THE NEWSLETTER OF *Partnerships for Parks*

fall2007

COME TOGETHER AND CARE FOR TREES ON IT'S MY PARK! DAY

JOIN THOUSANDS OF NEW YORKERS IN CARING FOR AND CELEBRATING NEW YORK CITY PARKS ON OCTOBER 20TH AT IT'S MY PARK! DAY, PARTNERSHIPS FOR PARKS' SEMI-ANNUAL CITYWIDE VOLUNTEER EVENT. In this issue of the Leaflet, you will learn about plans for the upcoming It's My Park! Day, and about the experience of one group who came to It's My Park! Day for the first time last spring and are excitedly planning to volunteer this fall.

On It's My Park! Day on October 20th, we will be offering special opportunities for volunteers to plant and care for trees. Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC calls for a million trees to be planted in the city by 2030; you can come out on It's My Park! Day to plant, prune, water, and learn how to help these trees thrive!



Volunteers care for trees in Rainey Park, Queens on It's My Park! Day.

Volunteers interested in planting and caring for trees on It's My Park! Day will have lots of opportunities to get involved. The Parks Department's Natural Resources Group will be leading tree-planting projects in five parks: Ferry Point Park, Four Sparrow Marsh, Kissena Corridor Park, the Staten Island Greenbelt, and Randalls Island. Besides these tree-planting events, many other It's My Park! Day sites will feature tree-related activities. Partnerships for Parks and Department of Parks & Recreation staff will be distributing information about the plan for planting a million trees and how to care for them at all It's My Park! Day sites. To find It's My Park! Day sites in your neighborhood, as well as bulb planting, painting and cleaning projects and free events at over 150 sites city-wide, visit our website, www.partnershipsforparks.org.

The focus on trees at this fall's It's My Park! Day complements Partnerships' expanding efforts to support street tree stewards. We offer free street tree care workshops and networking opportunities for tree volunteers throughout the year, some of which are also featured in this Leaflet. Take a look at the *Things to Do* section for more information about our "Root for Street Trees!" program.

DEAR FRIENDS,

Congratulations on another successful season. This summer, hundreds of parks volunteer groups organized events, thousands of people attended City Parks Foundation's free programs, and millions utilized our pools and ballfields.

Celebrate the conclusion of a busy summer in parks on October 20th at It's My Park! Day, Partnerships' semiannual citywide volunteer event. New to volunteering? Come out to get to know your neighborhood parks and the community groups that care for them. Already part of a parks group? Use It's My Park! Day to expand your efforts – invite your elected officials to your park, or join forces with other neighborhood parks groups to raise the profile of your organizations.

This issue of the Leaflet highlights the diversity of ways that volunteer groups of all kinds and sizes use It's My Park! Day. We hope to see you there this fall!

Sincerely,
Adrian Benepe, Commissioner,
Parks & Recreation
David Rivel, Executive Director,
City Parks Foundation

Whether coming out to plant trees, as thousands will this fall, or to care for their park in other ways, volunteers of all ages always work together and learn from each other on It's My Park! Day. It's My Park! Day brings new volunteers to parks for the first time and encourages



Long-time volunteer Epifanio Pacheco in the Kelly Playground garden.

experienced volunteers to celebrate their hard work. On Spring 2007's It's My Park! Day at Dr. Gertrude B. Kelly Playground in Chelsea, meeting a long-time volunteer helped a new generation of stewards get connected to their park.

In March, parents from Corlears Cares, a new community service program at the Corlears Elementary School on West 15th Street, called Partnerships' Manhattan Outreach Coordinator Sarah Fort to ask about opportunities to volunteer in parks. Sarah suggested they come out for It's My Park! Day that May, and worked with the group to identify Kelly Playground as an appropriate site. Corlears students use the playground during recess and with

their parents after school, and even the youngest ones understood the need to care for the place where they play.

The day before It's My Park! Day, Epifanio Pacheco approached Sarah in DeWitt Clinton Park in Hell's Kitchen and asked if there would be an event at Kelly

Playground the next day. Epifanio moved from Puerto Rico to Chelsea at the age of thirteen. He grew up playing in Kelly Playground and has been an active volunteer and advocate of the park for more than 30 years. Although he has moved uptown, Epifanio is still at the playground every Saturday, gardening, cleaning, and watching over the kids. He says, "My park is down there. I know everybody and everybody knows me. It's like home."

He's such a familiar presence that children ask him "Do you own the park?" Epifanio tells them, "It's your park. I just clean it, but it belongs to you." He drives this point home by encouraging kids to volunteer along-

side him. He has one special helper, 8-year-old Pupy.

On the morning of It's My Park! Day, Epifanio greeted the 30 Corlears Cares volunteers at Kelly Playground. Parent Sabrina Coughlin recalls, "We weren't aware of his involvement in the park, and when we got there we thought, 'Have we overstepped our bounds?' But Epifanio was incredibly welcoming and enthusiastic, and gentle with the children." He helped the parents teach about gardening and the importance of taking care of their community as they weeded, watered, and planted flowers. First grader Jorie Coe says she learned that "it is everyone's park and we can all make it prettier." Parent Gloria Lisa Baksh was so inspired by meeting Epifanio that she wrote an article about him in the group's newsletter, the *Corlears Cares Chronicles*.

Outreach Coordinator Sarah believes that volunteering alongside Epifanio "gave the children an opportunity to learn about how one person's dedication and commitment can really make

ROOT FOR STREET TREES! NEW FALL 2007 PROGRAM

Advance registration is required for all events; space is limited. To register or for information, contact channaly.oum@parks.nyc.gov or (212) 676-1929.

Not Just Your Average Greenstreet

Tour two greenstreets with innovative stormwater management systems and learn how to request a greenstreet for your neighborhood.

Saturday, Sept. 22, 10 am-12 pm
Upper West Side, Manhattan

Monthly Workshop: Caring for Street Trees

With the New York Tree Trust

In this basic workshop, you'll learn to care for young street trees, receive free tools, and get a Parks Volunteer

Permit, which will allow you to care for street trees and greenstreets. Choose one of the following sessions:

Monday, Sept. 24, 7 pm-9 pm
Washington Heights, Manhattan

Bilingual Spanish and English workshop

Monday, Nov. 5, 7 pm-9 pm
East Harlem, Manhattan

In partnership with the New York Restoration Project

Wednesday, Dec. 5, 7 pm-9 pm
Litchfield Villa, Brooklyn Boro Office

a difference. My goal as an Outreach Coordinator is to help groups become invested in their park in a long-term, sustainable way, and I couldn't have asked for a better example of that kind of involvement than Epifanio. The result was that long-time and new volunteers came together for a day of planting and learning and fun, but also began what promises to be a long-term collaboration to make their park and community better."

The children and parents of Corlears Cares are not only planning a bigger, better It's My Park! Day at Kelly Playground for the fall, they're also working with Sarah to develop a long-term plan for helping Epifanio water and maintain the garden. They plan to return regularly with students and use the park for environmental science lessons and community service. Eight-year-old Sawyer Smith is looking forward to volunteering in the garden again "because it's good for the earth," and to seeing Epifanio because "he was cool. I think he respects the park." 🌱

Dear Mary,

I'm not part of a parks group. How can I get involved in It's My Park! Day?

Partnerships' Volunteer Events Manager Eileen Remor is the best person to answer this question. In addition to our volunteer recognition events, Eileen has planned It's My Park! Day for the past six years. Eileen says, "I see It's My Park! Day as the showcase of everything parks have to offer. It is a day for everyone – volunteers, Partnerships, City Parks Foundation, all of the divisions of the Department of Parks & Recreation – to do what they do best."

Eileen recommends that potential volunteers visit our website in early October to read descriptions of planned projects. You can choose to visit a park in your neighborhood or travel to a site where interesting activities are taking place – if you have a green thumb, garden; if you're an aspiring artist, join a painting project! Individuals and small groups are welcome at any project. Groups of 15 people or larger must register with their local Outreach Coordinator by Friday, September 21, and small groups (5 to 14 people) should call to find out which projects need extra volunteers. For general questions and small group registration, call Eileen at (212) 360-8126.



did you know?

Out of the total 1.5 million daffodil bulbs planted to honor those lost on September 11, a quarter million were planted on Fall It's My Park! Day 2001.



Eileen Remor, Volunteer Events Manager, planting bulbs on It's My Park! Day.

New! Tree Talk

Meet, eat, problem-solve, and share ideas with other tree stewards! Upcoming sessions:

What's next for street tree stewards?

Learn what resources are available to tree stewards as PlaNYC's tree initiative unfolds, and hear the results of Partnerships' summer tree steward survey.

Wednesday, Nov. 14, 6:30 pm-8 pm, Manhattan

Children and street trees

Learn how to involve children in your neighborhood or school in caring for street trees. Date and location TBD.

GET READY FOR IT'S MY PARK! DAY ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20th.

Show your love for our city's public green spaces! Join thousands of other New Yorkers volunteering in parks all over the city. Visit www.partnershipsforparks.org to find an It's My Park! Day site near you.

In support of the Mayor's initiative to plant 1 million trees in the city by 2030, this fall's It's My Park! Day will include a special focus on trees. There will be tree planting led by Natural Resources Group at Ferry Point Park, Four Sparrows Marsh, Kissena Park, the Staten Island Greenbelt, and Randalls Island.

thingstodo

How to reach us

www.partnershipsforparks.org

www.nyc.gov/parks

www.CityParksFoundation.org

To contact Partnerships for Parks or for information on volunteering in parks, call (212) 360-1357 or call the City's non-emergency hotline, 311.

PARTNERSHIPS for PARKS



City of New York
Parks & Recreation

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PARTNERSHIPS FOR PARKS works to increase community support for and involvement in parks throughout New York City. Founded in 1995, Partnerships works to start, strengthen, and support neighborhood park groups; to link these groups together so that they can learn from each other and become stronger collectively; and to promote involvement in parks so people will join in efforts to restore and preserve them.

Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor
City of New York

Adrian Benepe, Commissioner
Parks & Recreation

David Rivel, Executive Director
City Parks Foundation

Jason Schwartz, Director
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GRANTS FOR COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Working on a project that builds community power? Citizens Committee for NYC's New Yorkers for Better Neighborhoods Awards support established and new grassroots volunteer groups across NYC. Grant deadlines are September 30 and March 31. For more information, contact Arif Ullah at (212) 822-9580 or grants@citizensnyc.org.



Many committed volunteers come out for It's My Park! Day every year, making an invaluable contribution to their communities by sprucing up their parks. Painting, planting, and cleaning are some of the most popular activities. In the Bronx this past spring, volunteers from Fordham Bedford Housing Corporation and Friends of Poe Park repainted the bandstand in Poe Park, and the Friends of Bronx Park planted flowers in the planters at the entrance to Waring Playground. Partnerships for Parks is honored to support these hardworking, consistent volunteers who make their parks beautiful year after year.

Return service requested.
Attention: For address corrections call (212) 360-1357

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