

PARTNERING WITH PARKS

PARKS EMPLOYEES: IMPORTANT ALLIES

A park does best when the community and Parks & Recreation work together as a team. When asked about their most important relationships, parks volunteers will often tell you that it's crucial to know and work with Parks employees, especially their park's Supervisor or Manager. Managers and Supervisors create the schedules of the other Parks employees who maintain your park. They can provide you with supplies for clean-ups, painting and planting projects; and they can help you partner with other City agencies such as the Departments of Transportation and Sanitation when you need their support.

TIPS ON BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

- ✓ **Introduce yourself** and your group members. Set up a meeting to discuss your shared goals and visions for the park.
- ✓ **Get to know other park workers.** Find out the district's regular cleaning schedule. This may help you plan your clean-ups for when the need is greatest.
- ✓ **Define shared goals.** The Park Managers and Supervisors know their parks. Work with them to develop realistic goals that work for both of you. Parks' staff performance is evaluated by the **Parks Inspection Program**, which rates parks on cleanliness (GLOW - Glass and graffiti, Lawns and litter, and Weeds) and structural quality (of safety surfaces, sidewalks, paved surfaces, play equipment, trees, benches and fences). As a result, these areas are priorities for Parks maintenance staff, and they will welcome your help in improving the park's rating.
- ✓ **Keep them in the loop.** District personnel need to know what's going on in their area. Send them your newsletter. Tell them far in advance when you're planning a clean up or event in the park, and where the event will take place.
- ✓ **Know their schedules.** Many Parks maintenance work from very early in the morning to mid-afternoon and are rarely in their offices because they have so much territory to cover, not just your park. Find out from them the best time to reach them.
- ✓ **Thank them, officially.** When Parks staff have been helpful, write them a thank you note. It's a good idea to send a copy to the Borough Commissioner to make sure that they get recognition for their efforts. Of course, if Parks people are rude or unhelpful, it's OK to let their supervisors know that, too.