

Friends of Spy Pond Park Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2019

Hurrah for Volunteers!

By Lally Stowell, Beautification Committee Coordinator

PHOTO BY KAREN L. GROSSMAN



Noa Roisman (behind the polka dotted balloon) enjoyed her birthday party with day care center friends and their families in Spy Pond Park on FSPP's July 27th Work Day

A huge thank you to all who volunteered during our monthly Saturday Work Days this past spring, summer and fall. Spy Pond Park would not be the beautiful, welcoming place it is without your many hours of work, enthusiasm and commitment to the community. Some of you participated on your own, some with family and friends, and some with a group from your school, community or workplace. Some of you have come many times each season. Some of you came for the first time and will, we hope, return next season. Together, you collected trash and recyclables, cleared storm drains, raked the playground, dug trenches and removed tall grasses from the front and back of the fences bordering the planting beds. You cleared weeds and grasses from between the beautiful cobblestones that line the main path. You removed fallen branches, cleaned Linwood Beach and trimmed the hedges at Linwood Circle so that visitors always have a clear view of our spectacular pond. Many of you contributed in your own ways by offering valuable advice and suggestions, collecting trash as you walk through the park, encouraging other individuals and organizations to participate, becoming members, and renewing your memberships that make it possible for us to purchase new tools and supplies. All of your contributions we appreciate greatly.

We would like to give special thanks to the groups who worked so diligently with us this season, several of whom have participated for many years. Alumni from Boston University's Global Day of Service once again opened the season by collecting fallen branches from the park and removing trash, leaves and debris from Linwood Beach—debris that had accumulated

over the winter months. This is a daunting task that they took on with enthusiasm and energy. During another Work Day, with equal enthusiasm and energy, Charles DeVirgilio and members of his Zhen Ren Chuan martial arts classes cleared large areas of cobblestones of weeds, and pruned bushes bordering the playground. One young martial arts student, when asked by a parent if he wanted to take a break from weeding, replied firmly, "Not finished!" A testament to the values instilled in these young people by their martial arts class and by their families. The same can be said for a large group of motivated Cub Scouts, Tiger Scouts and their parents who weeded between the cobblestones with unusual energy and teamwork. Carting away weeds in our wheelbarrow became a favorite activity. At one point, when thanked for giving a wheelbarrow turn to another scout, the young man being thanked replied, "I was training him." Cooperation and 'training' were clearly a valued part of their scouting experiences. We welcomed a new group this year—St. John's Young Adult Group from North Cambridge.

They came with enthusiasm and expertise for both weeding and digging trenches along the fences bordering the planting beds. This group regularly engages in community service projects. We were glad to be included this year and hope they will return next season.

Great to see youth and adults of all ages working to help their community and to preserve the environment!

We hope you continue to visit Spy Pond Park over the winter months and return to help us nurture spring plants and flowers during our monthly Work Days next year beginning in April and ending in October.



PHOTO BY RAM SUBRAMANIAN

Dick Norcross trimmed plants while other volunteers groomed the cobblestones lining the new porous path through the park

A Celebration of Nature and Children at Spy Pond Park

By Betsy Leondar-Wright, Chair, FSPP Activities

PHOTO BY MITHILESH SHARMA



Illyana and Eternity Vazyoir holding their prize binoculars rode an Arlington/Belmont Crew Team boat with their mother, Maritza, to take the tour of Elizabeth Island

Hundreds of families enjoyed nature activities at the Friends of Spy Pond Park's 17th annual Fun Day on a beautiful sunny day, Saturday September 21.

New activities this year included a water quality monitoring station, created and led by high school student Allison Rodger; and a craft table led by Pinal Maniar, turning recycled plastic bottles into planters and bird feeders, decorated with tissue paper donated by Art Beat.

FSPP was fortunate to have both Tinkergarten and Audubon Habitat of Belmont participate this year, helping kids make nature crowns and catch bugs, respectively.

Other opportunities for creativity by kids and adults included making leaf print cards. Fleets of birch-bark boats were launched in the pond by imaginative boat-builders. Enormous towers of white disks were constructed, thanks to Cecily Miller of Arlington Center for the Arts and the Boston Architectural Society.

Toddlers colored animals that live in Spy Pond, and hunted the park for big and small leaves. Big kids completed puzzles with messages about caring for Spy Pond's ecology and found many species of tree leaves in the park, winning prizes that included nature books donated by the Book Rack and poet Sarah Tuttle.

The favorite activities, based on their long lines, were face-painting by Lisa Reynolds and Scooter Wilkinson; and the Arlington Land Trust's boat rides to tours of Elizabeth Island, using the coaches' boats from the Arlington/Belmont Crew Team.



PHOTO BY MITHILESH SHARMA

The Lokensgard Blechbaser Ensemble Brass Band enthusiastically entertained Fun Day attendees busily engaged in activities all around them

Lively music entertained the festival-goers, first by the Lokensgard Blechbaser Ensemble Brass Band, and then by two amplified bands, the Harmonators and Aunt Mimi, invited by the Kickstand Café Open Mic coordinators Mark Sandman and Joe Burns. To end Fun Day Charles DeVirgilio's students demonstrated their martial arts skills for the fascinated audience.

An event with 11 activities and 4 entertainment acts doesn't happen without a vast amount of volunteer labor. Besides those mentioned above, Fun Day 2019 volunteers included high school students Edmund Ho, Jennifer Park, Meghan Mei, Scooter Wilkinson and Aadya Syal; first-time volunteers Julie Galloway, Haley Wodarczyk, Beth Van Gelder and Sarah Wilkinson; Erica Haramoto and Alexander Eden of Habitat and Megan Recupero



PHOTO BY RAM SUBRAMANIAN

Wistfully watching a bark-boat sail away

and Danielle Petersen of Tinkergarten; Ann LeRoy, Brian Reh-rig and Clarissa Rowe of the Arlington Land Trust; photographers Ram Subramanian and Mithilesh Sharma; publicists Jenny Babon, Elaine Crowder and Julie McBride; and longtime FSPP volunteers Marshall McCloskey, Sally Hempstead, Lally Stowell, Dick Nor-cross, Puneet Syal, Jill McArthur and President, Karen Grossman.

Editor's note: This article previously appeared in the Arlington Advocate, October 3, pg. A4.



Charles DeVirgilio's Zen Rhen Chuan Martial Arts students responded in unison to his commands

Town Day 2019

By Sally Hempstead, Outreach & Communications Co-Chair

While talking with friends a few days before Arlington's Town Day, they happily informed me that Arlington had the very best Town Day in the Boston area. I agree! Stretching from Pleasant street all the way up to Jason and Mill Streets are booths of every size and shape lining both sides of Mass. Ave. Food vendors are interspersed among information tents, both civic and private, that are flanked by art stalls and a variety of crafts. Friends of Spy Pond Park's booth is situated at the Mill Street end of the venue along with a few other parks in town which, like FSPP, also have a group that helps maintain their park.

We are a completely volunteer organization and a good number of them were in attendance on Town Day. Bev Williams always takes the early shift and is so helpful in fielding questions about plants and gardens. Colin Blair who knows everyone in town is a natural at outreach handing out candy and membership brochures with equal abandon. Lally Stowell, Betsy Leondar-Wright and one of our newest volunteers, Julie McBride, made up the afternoon contingent selling a number of Friends of Spy Pond Park T-shirts and collecting a great many names of townspeople interested in becoming FSPP members and volunteers. Last but not least, Marshall McCloskey and I put up and took down the tent and generally kept the entire day progressing smoothly.

While talking with the volunteers a few days after Arlington's Town Day, we all remarked that not only did there seem to be a bigger crowd than in previous years, despite some rainy weather, but many more newcomers were interested in helping out our town and park.

President's Letter

Dear Friends,

The Fall has been an exciting time in Spy Pond Park with lots of wonderful activity. Haven Construction has done a great job installing the new, pervious path, and creating an environment at the shoreline to curb erosion. Partarre has planted more plants in the planting beds so their future root systems will hold the soil there. Final aspects of the Spy Pond Edge Protection and Erosion Control Project will be completed soon: overlooks and the winding path to North Beach. Other aspects of this Conservation Commission administered project at Scannell Field and next to the Boys and Girls Club will also be finished late fall.

Our Fun Day in the Park sponsored by the Friends of Spy Pond Park (FSPP) and the Arlington Land Trust was wildly successful! We owe many thanks to Betsy Leondar-Wright for coordinating this event, her 17th of 19 such endeavors since we began hosting them in 2003. Betsy's dedication to serving the community and providing nature activities showcases the skills of our volunteer organization and brings in others to augment what we provide for all to enjoy. Special thanks to Elaine Crowder who will be stepping down as Publicity Chair after several years of service to the FSPP. And last, but not least, thanks to all the other board and committee members (see listing on the back panel of this newsletter) for their help in making decisions and helping to guide the FSPP.

We'll be sending out our end of year donation solicitation and Annual Meeting notice soon. Hope to see you there for an interesting presentation and business meeting on January 12. If you haven't become a FSPP member this calendar year and/or you wish to make an additional donation, November or December will be the time for you to do so. We always appreciate the faithful support so many of you have given either through your volunteer efforts or your financial contributions.

Have a great holiday season and a Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

Karen L. Grossman

President

Friends of Spy Pond Park

Friends of Spy Pond Park Annual Meeting

at the **Jefferson Cutter House**
Sunday, Jan. 12, 2020
5 pm potluck dinner, 6 pm meeting

Lower level parking lot entrance

Agenda Highlights:

• “Public Art for Parks”

Adria Arch, Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture
followed by Q & A

• Review 2019 accomplishments

• Elect slate of new officers

• Set FSPP goals for 2020

To join Friends of Spy Pond Park...

Send your annual dues (\$15 individual, \$25 household, \$5 low-income) to:

FSPP, P.O. Box 1051, Arlington, MA 02474-0021

For more information, call a Friends officer.

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Newsletter contributions and general comments can be sent to
fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org

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“I’m so happy about the improved East entrance to the path! As a handicap-scooter rider, I’ve always had difficulty getting over the rock and onto the sand... now I can ride directly onto the paved path - big difference!”

— Marion Carroll

PHOTO BY JENNY BABON



Haven Construction installed the porous path throughout the park, first with gravel, then crumbled tires



PHOTO BY RAM SUBRAMANIAN

Tinkergarten displayed flowers donated by Trader Joe’s for participants to decorate their nature crowns



PHOTO BY RAM SUBRAMANIAN

Ready to go to Elizabeth Island on an Arlington/Belmont Crew coaching boat for a tour sponsored by the Arlington Land Trust