

# Friends of Spy Pond Park Newsletter

## Fall 2014

### JM Construction Donates Ramp for FSPP Shed

By Sally Hempstead

It may be of interest to some to know that Town regulations require that equipment storage sheds on Arlington's Park and Recreation property cannot have a poured foundation and/or be constructed using pressure treated woods.

Of course, a shed needs to be on a level base, hopefully above ground, so as not to be subject to flooding or standing water. Our storage shed (see accompanying pictures) was erected two years ago; it is a Rubbermaid 7' x 7' square x 8' high plastic shed resting on a foundation of 8" x 8" x 16" and 8" x 4" x 16" cinder blocks around the perimeter, with sand/pebbles/soil fill in the center. Considerable effort was required to get the shed floor level at the spot the Parks Commission and the FSPP, along with input from the Arlington/Belmont Crew staff, agreed upon for the shed's location. Fortunately, it has held up well so far and is a great convenience to have for our Work Days in the park.

Based on its particular location, however, an accoutrement that has long been lacking was a ramp to facilitate getting the wheelbarrow and our tools wagon (donated by the Department of Public Works) into the shed.

*(Continued on page 4)*

### Family Fun Day

By Erin Freeburger and Jason Fligg



PHOTO BY ERIN FREEBURGER

**Iliana and Audrey Benson create nature paintings**

FSPP's 2014 Family Fun Day was a smashing success thanks to all the families, volunteers, sponsors, and great weather.

Children participated in events such as having faces painted, making bark boats and leaf prints, going on scavenger hunts, and more. We are grateful to people who left donations to help us cover the costs of these activities. Live music by local artists and a martial arts demonstration by Charles DeVirgilio's students of Zhen Ren Chuan entertained the crowds. The [Arlington/Belmont Crew Team's](#) boats took 90 people to Elizabeth Island where the Arlington Land Trust (ALT) guided their visits.

At 2:30 p.m. the Friends of Spy Pond Park hosted an awards ceremony. Karen Grossman, FSPP President, presented two Good Citizen Awards: the first to James McSwiggins for his continued efforts in his project to clean up the path cobblestones and secondly, FSPP acknowledged the artist Kevin Duffy for creating the new swan sculpture, named "Penny." Then, Joseph A. Curro, Jr. was there to present a Proclamation from Arlington's Board of Selectmen lauding five local heroes, Aliza and Suzanna Kopans and Matt, Sean and Ryan Hart, for saving a swan caught up in fishing line and lures just one week prior to our event.

*(Continued on page 4)*

PHOTO BY MARSHALL MCCLOSKEY



**John McCloskey of JM Construction**



# Carporama 2014 – Five Years Already!

By Jerome Moisand



Maria carefully holds onto the big carp she just caught

In June 2010, a couple of friends and I took a bunch of kids fishing for carp at Spy Pond. This was a bit of a shot in the dark, as we hadn't fished the venue for several years. The result was an exhilarating day for kids, parents and mentors, catching big fish after big fish in a wonderfully scenic new environment as shaped by the FSPP in the previous years. No less than 13 young anglers caught their first carp that day and the biggest of the day was 14 pounds! Little did we know at that time that our event would become an Arlington tradition, and that 5 years later we'd still be at it with no intent to ever stop... We settled for 'Carporama' as the name of the event as suggested by an enthusiastic parent a couple of years back.

Fast forward to June 2014. Expectations were very high as our 2013 event was the most successful of all. It is not without a little anguish that we started the first day (our beginner's morning session), but young Samantha landed a nice fish very quickly, showing everybody how it's done. Go girl! The morning session unfolded, with six big fish landed in between knot tying explanations and casting practice. The afternoon started slowly and though some people got discouraged, others were much cheerful and patient and their patience was rewarded with six more big fish landed (see Maria's picture). The advanced session on Sunday morning followed a similar pattern. It is always interesting for me to see that most kids are actually incredibly patient, able to wait for a couple of hours, and when the reward comes, they have this amazing smile to make everybody's day.

As usual, many thanks to mentors and photographers, FSPP, the Arlington Recreation Department, and most impor-

tantly the main actors, namely all those youngsters who participated with such enthusiasm and patience. And... we'll do it again next year and the following year; that's a promise.

*Editor's note: This event teaches catch and release techniques.*

*Carp and other fish from Spy Pond are not safe for consumption due to hazardous materials in sediment at the bottom of the pond.*

## Give Back Time, Inc.

By Jared Blake

GiveBackTime, Inc. is a local 501(c)(3), dedicated to building an organized online forum for non-profits and volunteers to connect, collaborate and celebrate with each other. Our software is free to individuals and non-profits, giving volunteers a search engine to find local volunteer opportunities, and helping non-profits organize their volunteers and the events they attend. Our platform was launched in early September!

As a company, we believe that employee volunteer programs are extremely important, so we strive to be examples of this. On August 2nd, we rallied our employees and local friends to help us GiveBackTime to the Friends of Spy Pond Park in Arlington, MA. We spent three hours (a total of 48 combined hours among all our volunteers) helping to beautify the area adjacent to the pond. If you are strolling through the park in the next few weeks, check out the weeding and pruning along the walkway!

*Editor's note: You or any Arlington business' employees can volunteer to help the FSPP keep Spy Pond Park looking great. Go to the FSPP website or [givebacktime.org](http://givebacktime.org) to find out how to give back to the community in which you live or work.*



Jared Blake, Founder/CEO, Samantha Phillips, COO, and friends volunteered in Spy Pond Park through [www.GiveBackTime.org](http://www.GiveBackTime.org)

PHOTO BY MIKE O'CONNELL

PHOTO BY KAREN L. GROSSMAN

PHOTO BY KAREN L. GROSSMAN



Erosion washed path material into the pond



PHOTO BY KAREN L. GROSSMAN

Alder and Cairn Hutton Johnson enjoy riding the new motorcycle in the playground

## President's Letter

Hi Friends,

This summer has been a very productive one in Spy Pond Park (SPP). Carol R. Johnson, landscape architect, and I worked hard to create plans and obtain permission from the Conservation and the Park and Recreation Commissioners for the installation of more plants in bed #6. Thank you to Carol; we look forward to seeing her at our Annual Meeting to present her with a Good Citizen Award for all the pro bono work she did for us this year. And all the plans came together on our September 6 Work Day! Go down to the park and look at how the 46 plants are doing; we hope they will survive and contribute to curbing soil erosion along the shoreline. Thanks to all who made this happen. Hopefully, in the next few years the Town will pursue some additional measures necessary for achieving erosion control.

The DPW and the Parks Department have been busy in SPP. The Town financed the path repair near Pond Lane damaged by severe weather events. They purchased and replaced three delightful, bouncy animals in the tot lot that the children have been riding, and have also repaired the water fountains to the delight of all thirsty park visitors! Soon, dedicated Town workers will put in two replacement benches on the empty cement bases, too. We are grateful that Joe Connelly, Parks and Recreation Director, and Mike Rademacher, DPW Director, are helping to keep SPP in good condition.

Congratulations to James McSwiggen and Kevin Duffy who received FSPP Good Citizen Awards for their work to make SPP more beautiful. We are amazed at the results of their tireless commitment to East Arlington's biggest park. Thanks to Jason Fligg and Erin Freeburger for planning and organizing a wonderful Family Fun Day on September 6. So many enjoyed the sunshine that blessed the shores of Spy Pond, much to our relief. It was a fantastic afternoon in the park thanks to all the volunteers who contributed to this successful event! Thanks to those who made donations to help us do this again next year.

By the way, if you haven't paid membership dues or made a donation yet this year, we hope you will do so and respond to our end of the year solicitation. Please consider coming to our next meeting to share your ideas or just listen to our plans. I hope to see you at our Annual Meeting and Potluck Dinner on December 7, 5-9 p.m. Save the date and/or, come to the final FSPP Work Day on October 18.

Sincerely,  
*Karen L. Grossman*

Karen L. Grossman, President  
Friends of Spy Pond Park



## New Ramp for FSPP Shed

(Continued from page 1)



Original shed foundation

So, on the July 12, 2014, Work Day the firm of JM Construction came to supply a ramp for the shed. JM Construction did a thoroughly professional job, far exceeding expectations, building a ramp that would, no doubt, allow us to store a small tractor in the shed if we wanted! The ramp is constructed of durable plastic decking with 5 sturdy lumber stringers supporting it.

John McCloskey, a former Town resident, and his assistant, Michael Bowler, a life-long Arlington resident, donated their labor and all the materials required as a public-spirited gift to the FSPP and the Town. The FSPP is very thankful for John and Michael's kind generosity in undertaking and completing this project.

*Editor's note: JM Construction (617-212-3420) specializes in both small and large building projects, from full house construction to additions, porches, decks, roof framing, siding and roofing, and has many satisfied customers in Arlington and surrounding communities.*



New shed ramp built by JM Construction

## Family Fun Day

(Continued from page 1)

Special thanks to all the volunteers who made this event possible, including: Sonia Alameda, Gail McCormack, Betsy Leondar-Wright, Kathy Modigliani, Rafe Ezekiel, Ed Filisko, Melissa Stevens, Holly Collins, and Pinal Maniar from the FSPP, Ann LeRoy, Peter Belknap and other ALT members. We appreciate the contributions of Mark Sandman, Chris Nauman, Aunt Mimi, and Tommy Phillips who provided the musical entertainment.



(l-r) Ryan and Sean Hart, Suzanna and Aliza Kopans and Joseph A. Curro, Jr., Selectman, admire the swan sculpture as Kevin Duffy, sculptor, stands in the background

The event culminated with 10 prizes from Arlington sponsors. Thanks to: Chilly Cow, Henry Bear's Park, Bailich's 5 & 10, Tweet Tweet Toy Shop, Wild Child, The Book Rack, Black Crow Yoga, Play Time, Quebrada Bakery, Maxima, ArtBeat, and the Capitol Theater.



Ann LeRoy and a youngster prepare to greet the boat full of eager passengers going to Elizabeth Island to take the next tour



PHOTO BY ERIN FREEBURGER



Elizabeth Karpati, FSPP Beautification Committee member, applauds as Kevin Duffy, sculptor, receives his Good Citizen Award from Karen L. Grossman, FSPP President

## Citation

*For the many dedicated hours applying for grant funding,  
selecting the appropriate stone, tirelessly  
shaping, carving, dusting, drilling, and polishing,  
transporting the unfinished sculpture to your studio,  
meeting with the FSPP, Town Commissions and legal staff,  
deciding on placement and installing the first  
piece of public art in Spy Pond Park,  
the beautiful granite swan at Linwood Beach,*

*the Friends of Spy Pond Park*

*is proud to present this*

*Good Citizen Award*

*to*

*Kevin Duffy*

*September 6, 2014*

## Citation

*For the many dedicated, laborious hours on  
your own time and on FSPP Work Days  
digging, scraping, raking, and sweeping  
the hundreds of covered and weedy cobblestones  
lining the paths throughout Spy Pond Park,  
following your vision to maintain the walkway borders  
with your trusty dog, Daniel, monitoring your progress,  
waiting to continue his daily exercise,*

*the Friends of Spy Pond Park*

*is proud to present this*

*Good Citizen Award*

*to*

*James McSwiggen*

*September 6, 2014*

PHOTO BY ERIN FREEBURGER



Karen L. Grossman, FSPP President, reads James McSwiggen's Good Citizen Citation as Elizabeth Karpati, Kevin Duffy and Franca Duffy listen

# The Great Swan Rescue

By Lauren Kopans, Aliza and Suzanna's mom

PHOTO BY AMANDA KENNEDY



Suzanna and Aliza, Sean, Ryan and Matt Hart are happy they have rescued the swan, soon to be on its way to Mill Brook Animal Clinic for treatment

On Wednesday 8/27, 11-year-old Aliza looked out our living room window at Spy Pond, and told me that she was worried about the swan that seemed to be moving in a strange manner. A little while later when Aliza, Suzanna (age 8), and I went outside, Suzanna noticed the swan curled up in the pond, right next to our shoreline. It didn't move as we moved closer, not even when our dog was nearby. I left a message with Arlington Animal Control, and then called the emergency number on the outgoing message, which was for the Arlington Police. The officer who answered said he'd try to get in touch with Animal Control. Less than 10 minutes later, wonderful Amanda arrived and went right to work. She was incredible! She saw that the bird was tangled in a fishing line. She first attempted to wrap it (him? her?) in an old sheet, but to the surprise of all of us, the swan was able to swim away. It was clearly impeded by the line, however, which was connected from its leg to its beak.

At this point I got into one of our kayaks to try to steer the swan toward Amanda, but we soon realized that this would be impossible with only one kayak. I called my friend and neighbor, Darla Hart, who sent her sons Matt (age 15), Sean (age 11) and Ryan (age 5) over to help. With Matt and me in the kayaks, the younger kids throwing bread into the water to lure the swan (which for better and worse lured many geese, possibly helping the swan feel less threatened by us), and Amanda in the pond in her pants and shoes, ready to gently grab hold of it and get it medical care, I thought this would be quick and easy. I was wrong; it was much harder than I expected. After more than an hour and many near misses, I was becoming sad and discouraged, worried that if we weren't able to capture the swan it might die – so awful for the swan, and I knew devastating for these kids. Amazingly, however, as I was giving up hope, we did it! We had the swan cornered with the kayaks, and Amanda deftly and gently grabbed

its neck. She wrapped it in the sheet, put it in a large crate, and whisked it off to the Mill Brook Animal Clinic. An hour later, Amanda called with great news! The bird had been anesthetized, a lead weight was removed from its belly, and it seemed to be doing well. In no time, Amanda was back at our house and we all rejoiced as the swan (whom my kids have since named Pep) was returned to its Spy Pond home. What an exciting and ultimately happy day it was, with wonderful team effort!

*Editor's note: As was stated in the Summer 2008 issue of the FSPP newsletter posted on our website after a similar rescue, more people than ever seem to be enjoying fishing at Spy Pond. Fishing line and hooks are sometimes left behind when they get caught on vegetation. Discarded line and hooks pose a risk to the ducks, geese, swans, pets and kids who frequent the shallows of the pond. Not only is there is risk of entanglement, but waterfowl can also swallow line that is caught up in the long strands of aquatic plants they eat. So please, if your fishing line gets snagged on something, do your utmost to retrieve it!*

## Town Day, September 13, 2014

By Sally Hempstead, Outreach Chair

It's a beautiful day in the neighborhood! I love getting up early on a crisp autumn morning and walking up Mass Ave. to the registration booth on Town Day. The streets are quiet with a few figures clutching coffee cups, traffic is light and the sun is just beginning to rise over the treetops. Jason Fligg and I set up our tent surrounded by other town park booths, exchanging pleasantries and helping one another with stubborn canopies and bulky display items. At ten my trusty volunteers, Bev and Wally Williams, appear so that I can run and grab a bagel and a cup of coffee. People start wandering up and down the street around nine but ten is the official starting time. Everybody loves Spy Pond Park (SPP), so our booth is always popular and the new SPP "Become a Spy" stickers are a hit, garnering much needed donations for our park. At noon Lally Stowell and Betty Athanasoulas take charge of the table. Both are on our Beautification Committee, are extremely knowledgeable on all matters pertaining to Spy Pond Park plants and gardens, and are able to answer a myriad of inquiries from local residents.

Speaking of questions and remarks about SPP, three different individuals wanted to know what kind of fish were in the pond and we told them we would investigate it and post it in our newsletter. Also, many passers-by loved the park's new granite swan sculpted by Kevin Duffy and wanted to know her name. Yes, we told them it was Penny (a female swan is a pen). Visitors to our booth said the biggest hit in SPP this year were the Recreation Department's kayak and canoe rentals on summer weekends. Between two and three, Petre Rontea and Marshall McCloskey appear and after many small hands and some big ones have emptied our candy bowl, purchased some FSPP T-shirts and "SPY" stickers, we pack up our tent and ride off into the sunset.



# Zhen Ren Chuan Martial Arts Center

By Charles DeVirgilio

PHOTO BY KAREN L. GROSSMAN



**Charles DeVirgilio and students from the Zhen Ren Chuan Martial Arts Center**

Zhen Ren Chuan is a martial and healing arts center that offers a complete education in the study of the human mind and body. It encompasses correct and well-balanced exercises, form and movement that date back for centuries. The core of Zhen Ren Chuan's movement and philosophy comes from the arts of Baguazhang, Chinese Shaolin/White Crane Gong Fu (Kung Fu), Taiji (Tai Chi) and Qi Gong (Chi Kung). Also included in the full curriculum are Chinese Chin Na, Judo/Jujitsu and traditional Chinese and Japanese weaponry.

For additional information, contact Charles DeVirgilio at 781-646-8660, or visit the Center's website: [www.zhenrenchuan.com](http://www.zhenrenchuan.com).

PHOTO BY ERIN FREEBURGER



**Students of Zhen Ren Chuan demonstrate their skills, entertaining park visitors on Fun Day**

# Caring for SPP Planting Beds

By Beverly Williams, Beautification Committee

Volunteers have been busy each Work Day trying to keep ahead of the weeds and the invasive plants that thrive at the water's edge. False indigo has to come first on the list; it seems to propagate as one cuts. But, we also tackle brambles, mugwort, horseweed, burdock, ragweed, purple looserstrife, bittersweet, knotweed, and Japanese honeysuckle. As you walk through Spy Pond Park, please notice that the grasses and weeds in front of the black fences have been cleared. Using forks, many patient volunteers have removed the grass between the cobblestones lining the paths. The [Arlington/Belmont Crew Team](#) came to help us again and pruned the overgrown plants amongst the prickly rose bushes at Linwood Circle. What a joy it is to walk through our well cared for park!

Planting bed #6 (just past the playground near the path coming down from the Minuteman Trail) has been pretty bare, but is looking better since September 6<sup>th</sup>. Thanks to People Making a Difference® volunteers, Michael Nonni, Conservation Commission member, and Sally Naish, landscape architect, who came that day to dig holes in hard soil and strategically place forty-six plants. We are also grateful to the DPW for supplying wood chips that will help hold the moisture needed for the plants' survival and keep unwanted invasive plants from crowding them. Hats off to Emily Snyder, the Garden Club member who has faithfully maintained the rain garden near the Pond Lane entrance of the park all year. Yes, it does take a village to maintain Spy Pond Park!

We hope that park visitors will respect the signs we've erected asking them to especially stay out of planting bed #6 so the plants can thrive. The FSPP will water the swamp roses, Solomon's seal, and Christmas ferns three times a week until frost. We look forward to seeing them all come up again in the spring!



PHOTO BY PEOPLE MAKING A DIFFERENCE (WWW.PMD.ORG)

**People Making a Difference® volunteers Will, Ellen, and Jane are happy they've successfully completed planting 40 ferns with 6 Swamp rose bushes in planting bed #6**



# Friends of Spy Pond Park next meetings

**at Karen Grossman's**  
**Sunday, Oct. 5, 2014, 7:00pm**  
**32 Hamilton Road #402**

Park on Linwood Street off Mass. Ave. or on  
Lakehill off Lake St. at the far end of the complex.

**& Annual Meeting**  
**at the Jefferson Cutter House**  
**Sunday, Dec. 7, 2014**

**5 pm potluck dinner, 6 pm meeting**

with speaker TBD; details to be emailed and announced  
on the FSPP website.

RSVP (optional) to 781-646-5990  
email [fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org](mailto:fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org)

## 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.

President: Karen L. Grossman (781) 646-5990

General Vice-President: Open

Treasurer: Marshall McCloskey (617) 548-9877

Recording Secretary: Beverly Williams (781) 316-1917

VPs for Communication & Outreach:

Sally Hempstead (860) 944-1370

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Lally Stowell (781) 777-2759

Beverly Williams (781) 316-1917

Elizabeth Karpati (781) 643-4172

Webmaster: Fred Moses [fred@fmoses.com](mailto:fred@fmoses.com)

Co-Chairs for Outreach/Park Events:

Erin Freeburger & Jason Fligg (781) 724-7638

Fundraising Chair: Jason Fligg (781) 724-7638

Newsletter contributions and general comments can be sent to  
[fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org](mailto:fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org)

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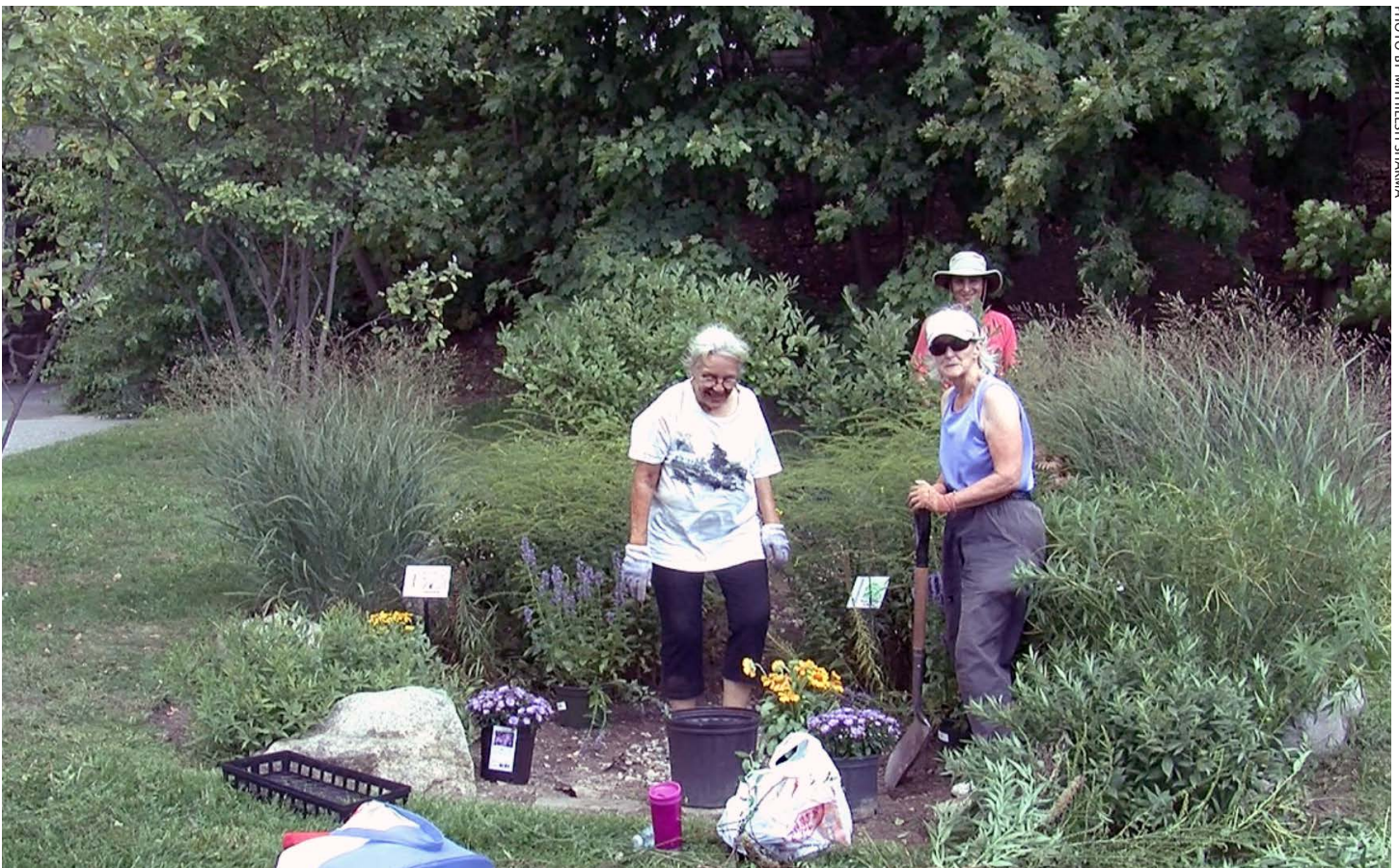


PHOTO BY MITHILESH SHARMA

(l-r) Emily Snyder and Sally Naish, Garden Club members, joined by Petre Rontea, FSPP member, plant new flowers in the rain garden. Labels drawn by Hardy students now identify the older plants in the garden