

Hundreds of Green Thumbs in this Garden Club

Roses, fuchsias, rhodies, dahlias . . . how do our gardens grow?

With volunteers, and volunteers, and volunteers all in a row!

Although gardening may be a spring/summer activity for you – it's a year-round effort for Metro Parks that wouldn't be possible without volunteer garden clubs and local garden societies.

While most gardens are sleeping, volunteers are cleaning, pruning, prepping and getting ready for another growing cycle. These volunteers were recognized Nov. 23 at the first Garden Club Social. "It's our way of thanking all the volunteer groups," shares Steve Herbig, Metro Parks Maintenance Leader at Point Defiance Park. "They make our parks beautiful and keep our plants growing."

You can develop your green thumb in our Dahlia, Fuchsia, Herb, Iris, Rhododendron, Rose or Native Gardens, through these wonderful volunteer groups. You can dig up all the info you need about each group on the Metro Parks website.



Working Together for Wide Open Spaces

Tacoma is blessed with acres of viable, natural open space. To honor, restore and protect this precious resource, Metro Parks joined efforts with a long list of local groups as part of the Green Tacoma Partnership (GTP).

After countless volunteer hours, the GTP developed an open space plan outlining policies for acquisition, restoration and management of natural areas. The City of Tacoma adopted the policies as the Open Space Habitat and Recreation component of their Comprehensive Plan and the Cascade Land Conservancy provided a grant for a full-time GTP coordinator to put the policies into action.

The Green Tacoma Partnership is a public-private partnership between Metro Parks, the City of Tacoma, Tahoma Audubon Society, Cascade Land Conservancy, other local environmental groups, neighborhood groups, educational and service organizations, local businesses and volunteers like you that will turn the Open Space Habitat and Recreation goals into reality.

Tell Someone You Care About to Take a Hike TRAILS DAY, JUNE 6, 2009

Winter takes a toll on our parks, and perhaps hardest hit are the popular hiking trails through the naturalized areas of Point Defiance Park. But, together we can make a huge impact in just a short amount of time.

Begin your morning by enjoying the space you are helping to restore as we venture out for a 5 mile nature hike beginning at 8 a.m. Then, we'll hit the trails to do some important restoration work from 9 a.m. to noon.



For volunteer application packets, visit us online: www.metroparkstacoma.org

Click **Get Involved**.

CULTURE, HERITAGE & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Special Events

☎ Joel Chang, 253.305.1043

Teen Leadership & Service Program

☎ Sangkros Lok, 253.305.1097

Fort Nisqually Living History Museum

☎ Peggy Barchi, 253.591.5339

Community Resource Centers

☎ Michael Bradley, 253.591.5321

South Park & Community Arts Programs

☎ Dave Griffith, 253.305.1036

PARKS & HORTICULTURAL SERVICES

CHIP In!

Citizens Helping Improve Parks

☎ Cameron Swift, 253.752.2596

- W.W. Seymour Conservatory
- Greenhouse at Point Defiance
- Neighborhood Park Patrols
- Park clean ups
- Green space & wetland restoration
- Scout or troop projects
- Garden clubs
- Parks Appreciation Day

HELP US GROW OUR PARKS

Advocacy is an important part of volunteer work that supports our parks.

Recently, fifth-graders from McCarver Elementary began advocating for the *Zina Linnik Project*. Their campaign platform is to create safe and inviting play areas in central Tacoma's McCarver Park and Wright Park, in honor of their classmate who was abducted from her upper Tacoma neighborhood and murdered in 2007.

With the help of dedicated teachers and supportive parents, the kids visited city hall and the Capitol, where they shared their vision with local and state leaders and requested funding support for this important capital project, inspiring tremendous momentum for the \$3.5 million project. Learn more about their efforts at www.metro parks foundation.org/zina-linnik-project-at-wright.

If you'd like to join these young community leaders as an advocate for our parks, please contact Resource Development Manager Jennifer Wolbrecht at jenniferw@tacomaparks.com or 253.305.1071 or Drew Ebersole, Executive Director of the Greater Metro Parks Foundation, at 253.305.1066.

A Berry Special Volunteer CHIPS In!

Ten years ago Blueberry Park in East Tacoma was unsafe, unsavory, underused and ugly. Volunteer Charlotte Valbert wanted to CHIP In! to get a walkway built using grant funding that was set to expire. What started as a single project has grown into a 20 acre park with 4,047 vibrant blueberry bushes that are free for the pickin'!



Charlotte Valbert assisting volunteer at Blueberry Park

Through CHIP In! (Citizens Helping to Improve Parks), volunteers like Valbert sponsor and maintain neighborhood parks that would otherwise become overgrown

and facilities that would be locked up – like Blueberry Park.

"It's my baby," Valbert shares, and you can tell from her enthusiasm that Blueberry Park is more to her than just a project. When Valbert started ten years ago, she didn't know a thing about blueberries, but she knew she wanted a space for people to visit, play and pick delicious berries. In the last decade, she has led 2,558 volunteers, 347 volunteer days and 11,103 hours in the park.

At 80 years old, Valbert never expected she'd be leading one of the most active groups of park volunteers or that she would have completely transformed a neighborhood park into a berry special place. Valbert is always looking for volunteers and so are the many other CHIP In! volunteer groups. Call 253.752.2596 to join in the fun!

Best Wishes to CHIP In! Program Supervisor Dave Berry

After a dedicated career spanning three decades with Metro Parks, Dave Berry decided to retire at the end of 2008. Berry played an integral role in launching the CHIP In! program in 2003. And, he continued to invest his heart and soul to help build the parks volunteer program for the past five years. What's on his retirement to-do list? What else — he plans to spend some of his time volunteering in our parks.



Dave Berry at McKinley Park

PARK HAPPENINGS

MAY

- Summer Activity Guide Released
- Kayak Symposium

JUNE

- McKinley Park Reopening Celebration
- Fort Nisqually – Big Huzzah

- Stewart Heights Park Reopening Celebration
- Point Defiance Trails Day

- Wine and Roses
- Franklin & Browns Point Athletic Complex – Master Planning Processes Begin

JULY


- National Parks & Recreation Month
- Play Tacoma Events Start
- Ethnic Fest
- Garfield Park Bond Construction Begins

AUGUST

- Fall Activity Guide Released
- Summer Sounds & Cinema

Be sure to check **Metro Parks Today** for monthly news. If you would like to receive that publication, e-mail annew@tacomaparks.com.



Metro Parks Tacoma strives to create an atmosphere of accessibility to our diverse community.  If you have comments and suggestions to help us meet your expectations, please call Roxanne Miles, 253.305.1068 or write inclusion@tacomaparks.com.



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