



TIM LAMORTE/RIVERTOWNS ENTERPRISE

Volunteers and Department of Public Works staff plant bulbs and more at the corner of Ashford Avenue and Saw Mill River Road.

Ardsley Cares Day marks decade of growth

By Vivienne Heston

ARDSLEY — Actions speak louder than words, as in more than 300 plants and bulbs planted, 700 sporting goods sorted, 50 boxes of books donated, and 800 meals prepared.

The 10th annual Ardsley Cares Day drew volunteers to Ardsley High School on Oct. 20 to kick off a series of “giving back” activities held throughout the village and beyond.

More than 460 residents registered to prep meals for soup kitchens, collect books and toys, make treats for animal shelters, sort donated clothing and sporting goods, and clean up public spaces.

Activities were also held beyond the village limits, including a Midnight Run to Manhattan, a sports party at the Andrus Children’s Center in Yonkers, Halloween-themed activities at the Coachman Center for the homeless in White Plains, and a Halloween party at Blythedale Children’s Hospital in Valhalla on Oct. 21. A brunch

at Ronald McDonald House, also in Valhalla, is scheduled for this Sunday, Oct. 28.

Ardsley Cares is as an all-hands-on-deck operation with the PTA playing a leading role in securing funds and recruiting parent, teacher, student, and village volunteers.

“There is a lot of energy here — it is Ardsley’s happy day,” said Meeghan Prunty Edelstein, one of the original organizers of the annual event. Ten years ago, she and a friend wanted to inform residents about volunteer opportunities in the community.

“We were drinking coffee in my basement and came up with the idea — we were braced to do everything ourselves since we were afraid no one would come, but over 300 people showed up,” Edelstein said.

As participants began to arrive at 8:30 a.m., Ardsley firefighters served a hearty breakfast of pancakes, waffles, French toast, eggs, bacon, and sausage.

“We’re a very caring community — teachers

care, administrators care, and our families care. That’s why you see all these kids and parents here,” said Matthew Bonney, a member of the school board who was preparing meals along with his wife, Stephanie, a PTA vice president.

A staging area was set up with separate tables for sandwich-making (the “salami table,” the “ham table”), toiletries, and brown bag assembly. Children made drawings with cheerful messages that were slipped into each bag.

“We want to deliver meals with dignity and grace. When I started volunteering seven years ago, we packed about 600 meals; now we’re providing over 800,” said Jaime Chapin-Miller, the PTA vice president at Ardsley Middle School.

Local unions contributed the fixings: apple-sauce, cookies, and water from the teachers’ union, and breads and cold cuts from Ardsley Office Employees, according to Diana Evangelista, an Ardsley High School science teacher

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and vice president of the Ardsley Congress of Teachers at AHS.

"It is an opportunity for families to work together — my sons are helping with the raffle," said Heeral Mehta, co-chair of Ardsley's Multicultural, Diversity and Inclusion Committee who helped coordinate Ardsley Cares and whose sons attend Ardsley schools (Viraj, second grade, and Anshuman, sixth grade).

Raffle tickets were exchanged for donations of new unwrapped toys destined for Toys for Tots, and nonperishable food items for area food banks. Raffle prizes were provided by Club Pilates (Ardsley), United Martial Arts Centers of Ardsley, Trio Salon (Scarsdale), DeCosta's (Yonkers), Bread & Brine (Hastings), Harper's (Dobbs Ferry), and Saltaire Oyster Bar & Fish House (Port Chester).

Volunteers donned bright purple "Ardsley Cares" T-shirts provided by an anonymous donor. The T-shirt logo was updated this year by artist Kristen Stone based on the original design by Valerie and Kenneth Lalli, all from Ardsley.

The purple T-shirts were visible all over the village as volunteers removed trash from a pond at the middle school and painted rocks to decorate the entrance of Concord Road Elementary.

Mayor Nancy Kaboolian worked alongside Village Trustee Steve Edelstein (husband of Meeghan) and 50 other volunteers to upgrade Silliman Park, at the corner of Ashford Avenue and Saw Mill River Road (Route 9A). With input from landscape architect Susan Jainchill, who is a member of the Ardsley Planning Board, plantings were procured via the Village's beautification fund. Department of Public Works staff members planted some of the larger trees in advance, and also spread topsoil and mulch.

"We are planting perennials and native plants and bulbs to spruce up the gateway," said Steve Edelstein. "We had to get rid of a lot of invasive plants and vines."



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Andrea Serban, Renee Serban, Ava Medina, Noa Medina, and Patty Medina prepare sandwiches at the high school.



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Saurbhi Sood, Bayal Sharma, Ginny Kaur, and Preeti Chadha sort clothes at the high school.

He added that more improvements were being considered, including a green barrier for the back of Addyman Square and a neglected island at the entrance to Pascone Park and Ardsley Middle School.

"I love this day and am so proud to be part

of a community that makes it a point to do something like this," said Lisa McCormack, who coordinated the Halloween party at the Coachman Family Center along with Anila Thomas. "It is why we chose to move to Ardsley in the first place."