



WE DID IT AGAIN - ANOTHER DC PARK TRANSFORMED!



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Co-Chairs, 2009 DCBIA Community Improvement Day

This year's Community Improvement Day, held on Saturday, September 12, 2009 at Ft. Mahan Park, succeeded with a record turnout of nearly 600 volunteers, including DCBIA members and the local Ward 7 community. In the words of DCBIA's Community Services Committee Chair Mark Baughman of SKB Architecture & Design: "I never think that the event can get any better – but each year it does." Implementation of this year's Community Improvement Day proved challenging on many fronts. However the talent, dedication, and resourcefulness of the project captains and the contributions by supporters and volunteers ensured its success.

Early on, fundraising in the current economic market was a concern. Fundraising Co-Chairs Steve Mutty of HITT Contracting and Kate Griffin of Jones Lang LaSalle spearheaded a campaign that exceeded expectations. Hines, a long-standing supporter of Community Improvement Day, continued for the 9th year as our Lead Corporate Sponsor, and was joined by Archstone and Somerset Partners (3rd and 2nd years as corporate sponsors, respectively.) As you can see from the listing on page 18, over 50 additional companies made generous financial and/or in-kind contributions.

Ft. Mahan Park encompasses land owned by both the National Park Service and the DC Department of Parks and Recreation; both partnered with DCBIA on the project. Meetings with NPS and DPR began in February of this year and continued up until the week before the event. Last minute permits were obtained thanks to the efforts of our design team and DCRA, DDOT, Pepco and Washington Gas who went beyond the call of duty to expedite necessary permits and approvals.

Construction began in earnest a week before the September 12th event – and so did the rain! However, the construction team persevered and had the site ready for the volunteers expected on the day of the event. The successful collaboration by public and private organizations throughout the design and construction phases proved crucial to the success of the project.

This year's scope of work covered a large area, spreading volunteers out over the equivalent of five

city blocks. Jennifer Eason of SKB Architecture & Design and Greta Soderman of Grunley Construction directed efforts on the DPR site, which centered on the poolhouse demolition, pool in-fill, site clearing, and installation of the basketball court. On the day of the event, Jennifer and Greta led a significant workforce to transform a hidden and somewhat scary outpost to an open and sun-soaked spot for a family picnic. Southern Insulation donated all of the poolhouse abatement and demolition costs. Upon completion by Grunley Construction & Brothers Concrete, the new basketball court will be a center of social interaction and activity for local youth.

At the park entrances and along the existing and new pedestrian trail, Lauren Frank of Perkins + Will and Des Burke of Structure Tone led crews installing informational and creative signage that define the spatial and social significance of the park trail. Jefferson Millwork & Design did their usual meticulous job of fabricating all of the signage. The existing park entrances and trail received a serious clean-up for better visibility and sight-lines – many years overdue. Crews from The National Park Service (NPS), Chiamonte Construction Company, HITT Contracting and K3 Construction Group directed this effort and fought through a significant amount of poison ivy to revitalize the path.

Of most significance, were the resources, manpower and teamwork exhausted to transform the three NPS blocks to extend and connect the existing hiker-biker trail to the Marvin Gaye Park trail. The DCBIA design team began with NPS and DDOT's master plan to complete the hiker-biker trail through the area's Fort Circle Parks (a series of Civil War era forts along the ridge surrounding the city.) They expanded the design to implement an environmentally and socially aesthetic plan that invites the community to appreciate and enjoy the outdoor recreation opportunities offered by the Park. The enhanced design truly brought these three blocks to life. Michael Norton of Norton Land Design and Gary Ball of Turner Construction coordinated the overall design of the three blocks. They, along with Michael O'Connor of Turner Construction, led the volunteer effort on the day of the event in transforming Block 1 into a landscaped terrain complete with rain gardens. Block 1 required the most significant site work cut and



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fill operations to allow for creation of the path due to its existing topography. Michael Day of Cunningham + Quill Architects and Ridge Kelley of James G. Davis Construction Corp. led Block 2's creative transformation. The block now features an inviting "King of the Hill" and teardrop mounds surrounding the new path. Peter Cramer of Clark Construction and Derek Mason led a significant force on Block 3 to complete the trail extension and adjacent rolling mounds. Due to the rain delays leading up to the event, Block 3 was left practically untouched until the day of the event and required the effort and determination of hard-working volunteers for completion. Block 3's crew of volunteers showed their dedication by remaining onsite past six in the evening to ensure their scope of work was accomplished. In addition to enlivening and beautifying the Park's landscape, the new terrain features of Blocks 1-3 provide new opportunities for children to explore and play and a completed path for bikers, runners, walkers, and passersby to use.

Without question, the transformation of the three blocks would not have been possible without the significant efforts and support of a few key players who deserve special mention. Goldin & Stafford donated all of the fill dirt (in the amount of 28 full dump trucks) and trucking to the site. The Heavy Equipment Training Academy, led by instructor Mr. Ballard, donated the heavy equipment, crews, and labor for all of the site work. While their students received invaluable experience working on the project, their donation allowed completion of the full scope of work and prevented cost overruns. Meg Herndon and Merrifield Garden Center once again played a huge role in supporting the event throughout the entire process by providing expertise and materials such as topsoil, sod, stone, etc. Working around rain delays and unexpected demand, they ensured deadlines were met and that the work proceeded smoothly on the day of the event. Sunbelt Rentals came through with donations of smaller equipment for the event. Ronnie Clinton of Structure Tone played a significant role in the implementation of this year's project. He lent his experience and time to work with Co-Chair Robert Stewart onsite – prior to and on the day of – to ensure the proper sequence, scheduling, equipment availability, field direction, etc. for successful execution of the site work. Not to be overlooked, Dennis Chestnut of Groundwork Anacostia River DC (and a member of the Ft. Mahan Park community) was instrumental in ensuring the coordination and assistance of government and local organizations, and, most importantly – the community.

In addition to our Design and Construction Captains, we would like to thank those who provided support to the event and its volunteers.

For fourteen years, Alisa Lange and her dedicated team of volunteers from Design Products have coordinated and served the delicious barbecue lunch our volunteers look forward to each year.

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Their hard work and attention to detail contribute to the fun and rewarding atmosphere of the event for everyone involved.

Sancha Flynn and Felipe Turriago of DBI Architects worked creatively on the event's publicity materials and Toni Aluisi handled public relations for the event.

DCBIA Community Improvement Day 2009 was truly a lesson in teamwork, coordination, hard work and personal and community rewards. We would like to thank the design, construction and support captains whose long-standing dedication throughout the entire process ensured its success, as well as our financial and in-kind donors. And to the nearly 600 volunteers who arrived on site and contributed a good day's hard labor. We are grateful for your efforts.

We invite you to stop by and take a look at what you/we accomplished. It will make you feel proud and glad that you participated. Enjoy the Ft. Mahan Part soon! ▲

