



GREENWICH LAND TRUST

Earth Day - A Day of Action 2018 By Anne W. Semmes

On the sunny Saturday weekend of Earth Day celebrations, Greenwich Land Trust (GLT) opened its four-acre Mueller Preserve on Round Hill Road for a “day of action and a day of work,” according to GLT Executive Director Will Kies, “to restore native plant communities and do good deeds - to be good stewards of the land.” Some 100 volunteers answered that call to action, with a whole lot of hands-on learning.



Greenwich Country Day School (GCDS) 7th and 8th graders transplanted native wild flower seedlings grown from seed in the Land Trust greenhouse into pots to be placed in the Preserve’s various habitats, as guided by gardener Dean Fausel, GLT’s Conservation Educator. The students gingerly raised up the seedlings with their thread-like roots and placed them carefully into the pots, adding soil while learning their names of Boneset and Swamp Milkweed, “And that’s Joe Pye weed,” said Fausel. “It’s a beautiful pink flower. It likes wetlands.”

“We’ve never done this before,” confessed one student. “This is our community service volunteer program.” “It’s something fun to do with



your friends,” added Ellie Gray.

Fausel presented another student group with a tray of Sugar Maple saplings, many of them collected from a majestic Sugar Maple tree near the Preserve farmhouse. “If you toss a maple seedling into the air it spins like a helicopter – that’s how it spreads itself,” he told GCDS volunteers, Tessa Pascarella and Winnie Welch. “You get to see the roots,” said Welch. A few of those seedlings would be take homes



for the students.

The transplanted Sugar Maple tree saplings made their way to the eastern end of the Preserve for a re-forestation of that area called the Connecticut Woodland, so a whole lot of digging was going on by student members of the Boys and Girls Club of Greenwich. “We want to help the

earth on Earth Day,” said Marco Cueto. “We get to see the difference we’re making,” said Jean Zamora.

For the heavy lifting tree planting GLT called in its community partner, Emerald Tree & Shrub Co. “We sponsor *Go Wild* (GLT’s annual fundraiser) and we’ve volunteered with Greenwich Tree Conservancy to



plant the newly established Heirloom Orchard at the GLT Malkin Preserve,” said company marketer Kate Flanagan. “The education piece of the organization is great,” she said, “but this is great hands on action, with little kids learning about planting.”

More muscle was on parade with the planting of a native shrub border - three 7-foot American hollies were each to be surrounded by pink flowering Rhododendron. Five members of the ShopRite Green Team were at work.

“Every year we help out in different places in Greenwich,” said Christian Silva, assistant store management. “We want to make the earth safer for the future.” There to help dig deep holes were more GCDS students. *Continued*



GREENWICH LAND TRUST

Earth Day - A Day of Action 2018

Providing those hollies and shrubs was Sam Bridge Nursery & Greenhouse. Bill Palmer was there, the company's premier garden manager, representing the second generation of the Sam Bridge family to help the Land Trust with plant installations.

"We're installing 11 shrubs in the native shrub border," he said. "Any way we can support a local cause is what we're all about."

But for Noah Weiner, a GCDS seventh grader, it was the resident bee hive that caught his eye. "There are a



lot of bees," he said. "It's cool."

The fenced-in vegetable garden, meanwhile, was a beehive of activity. Overseeing the Preserve's compost transfer to the vegetable beds was GLT Vice President Camille Broderick.

It was pea planting time. "We create a foot-wide border along this fence," said Broderick, "and get rid of the grass, taking that to the compost bin to rot down to decompose for nutrients to go back into the garden." GCSD volunteers were placing hundreds of dried peas into the compost bed along the fence. Covering the peas



with dirt was seventh grader Larrabee Pollack, most surprised at how many peas were needed to plant for a trellis. "Earth Day means helping out as much as you can," she said, "Planting more trees, trying to reduce your carbon footprint."

Turning over the soil in the adjacent vegetable garden was GLT volunteer Glenn Shaw mother of four daughters, all present and occupied, except for 17-month old Carter, nestled like a papoose on her mother's chest. "We've come for this Earth Day event every year," she said, "We're

spreading the compost – perfect for kids."

Watching the action closely was a young couple, Karthik and Kritika Manokaran who had traveled far, first from India, and that day from their Wethersfield home to see



how mixing compost with mud was part of planting potatoes. "We learned of this event from Facebook and came to participate on Earth Day," said Kritika, who shared her





GREENWICH LAND TRUST

Earth Day - A Day of Action 2018



“The GGC will come back in July when all the native wildflowers will be in bloom,” noted Will Kies, “Kim will collaborate with Steve Conway, our conservation and outreach director.” And don’t forget, he said, “Every Tuesday from 10-12 we offer a free workshop in the Greenhouse. It’s the best education you’ll ever get in horticulture.”

By lunchtime the Earth Day volunteers were taking time out. And Conservation Director Conway was ecstatic. “We got everything planted. We’re very ahead of schedule – we had so many people this year. We had some great workers. We got a lot of significant work done to improve this Preserve.”

Perhaps as a thank you note Will Kies announced a promising weather forecast of “an explosion of color” over the next two weeks. “With our condensed spring, everything will be in bloom. Those things

keen interest in gardening. She learned the right depth and spacing for planting potatoes, observing master gardener Fausel as he instructed the GCDS volunteers to dig three inches down with their soil knives every 10 inches, then “grab a piece of a potato and press it down firmly.” Kritika was considering how transplantable what she was learning for possible roof top gardens in densely populated India.

But it was those Town garden club members who especially impressed as guardian angel gardeners of this Preserve, especially the group from the Greenwich Garden Club (GGC). “We partner with the GLT,” said GGC President Jane Dunn. Their work is best seen in the wetlands corner of the Preserve where their three-year-old Habitat Fountain flows on solar power.

Working away was GGC member, Kim Gregory, founder of the now town-impacting Pollinator Potluck project. “It was to make people aware of their environment, and what native plants attract pollinators,” she explained. “Pollinators are the most important part of our native web.”

Gregory held up a just pulled invasive garlic mustard plant. “We’ve slowly restored these wetlands to their native pollinators. We’ve worked hard to remove the garlic mustard and replace it with the native garlic. We’re also working with GLT to create a Pollinator Pathway to go around the Preserve that will be accessible to the handicapped and to children.”



usually not blooming together, forsythia, daffodils, dogwood will all bloom - everything is going to pop!”