

Literary Landscape Reflections

After a semester of off-and on planning with the students and Dr. Vandiver, hours spent gathering supplies from Lowe's, Harmony Gardens, Garden Gate, and the Harrell's back yard, we were finally ready to install phase one of our project on January 20, Saturday morning, beginning at 9:30.

Phocks (Ron Foxx's dad) was primed to provide BarBQue lunch. Bill Lovett had Walden Pond ready to go by 9:00 am. Sharon Pederson had been rock hunting and was now ready to dig and plant. Jordan Williams had furnished a plethora of equipment (along with tools from the other households represented). Collyn Welsch had Janet Suggs, Erin's mom, lined up to paint artistic tables. Billy Silva showed up after an exhausting swim practice, and Julia Neal came, video camera in hand, ready to work and film after running nine miles for morning track practice!

I was on pins and needles (sorry for the cliché, kids) wondering if this would be a productive day, or if hardly anyone would show up. I should not have worried though; it seems that just the people we needed to launch this project were there, and how these people worked (and played too, "yellow brick road paint girls"!)

Jordan Williams was phenomenal with his efforts--digging, carting dirt, placing posts. He seems to be possessed with Paul Bunyon strength. Ron joined him in this "man's work" as well as led the way to the food. Billy attacked the pool installation and finishing up the Tom Sawyer fence with the effort he must put into his swimming. Julia organized, filmed, painted and generally kept order as she is so skilled at accomplishing. What would I have done without Jamie who managed to paint and then was a one-woman clean up committee (even though her cell phone interruptions drove her crazy). Kelsey, Collyn, and Erin bagged leaves, a dirty job, and then laid and painted the yellow brick road along with Julia and Jamie.

All the while, a group of dads and moms, along with Mr. Harrell, worked like a well-oiled machine, setting fences, installing the Walden Pond, planting trees and roses, moving tables and benches, and offering constant advice (They are parents, after all!) The moms—Collyn's, Kelsey's, Billy's, Erin's sanded, nailed, and painted the table tops (trying to teach their daughters to hammer straight!) so that Janet could begin working her magic with *Green Eggs and Ham* and "The Mad Tea Party." Billy's mom, Diane, made a quick trip to Lowe's for painting supplies we still needed (which she donated!) and Julia's mom, Amy, endured a long wait at Lowe's returning extra fence posts for more yellow paint-- after doing the driving for the food pick up, and Julia's dad stayed late to cut the left-over plywood for future sign making.

My head just swims when I recall the focused, fun, and hard work everyone put in. My husband, Bob, commented that evening, "You have a great bunch of parents." Yes, I do, which is one thing I relish here at PKY. These parents have a great bunch of kids too. I think some subliminal bonding occurred as we worked as well. When I was "forcing" folks to leave at 3:30, the comments were, "When is the next workday?" The answer: Let's do a fabulous job on the story project Tuesday, get the Antholio under way, let me locate more funding, and we'll let you have another go...I love you all. I had a ball! I've probably forgotten something important, but you will remind me if I have. Thank you with all my heart.

Carolyn Harrell
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