

# Highlands Happenings

Have you noticed how nice the off-ramp triangles on the west side of 405 at NE 85th look? A few weeks ago, Adrian Ionescu, of Adrian's Landscaping, picked up the litter and mowed the grass and weeds. What an improvement! Who do we have to thank for this beautification (besides Adrian, of course)? The Highlands neighborhood! Here's the story.

Almost two years ago, Highlands resident Gayle Birrell emailed me to ask if there was any way we could get the 405 off-ramps at N.E. 85th cleaned up. They were overgrown, litter strewn, and unsightly, and had been that way for years. Together we contacted the DOT, who told us that citizens could not do the work, due to liability concerns. However, we could hire a licensed landscaper.

We contacted a number of local businesses and organizations to see if they would pay for the work, but given the tough economic situation, none of them were able to help.

The off-ramps are also the gateway to the Highlands neighborhood - most of us drive past them several times a day as we come and go. Could we use some of our annual grant money to pay to clean up the north side triangles? The Highlands board voted to allocate \$300 for the cleanup, and the city approved our request. The Everest neighborhood had considered contributing the additional \$300 to clean up the south triangle, but they elected to not request any grant money this year.

When I contacted Adrian to tell him that we only had funding to clean up the north triangles, he volunteered to clean the south triangle as a service to the community!

Adrian will trim and remove litter five more times this

year. If you see him out there, be sure to wave, or say hi and thank you.

Speaking of cleaning up entrances to our neighborhood, please join us on Sunday, April 19 to plant trees and shrubs on the corner of 112th Avenue N.E. and N.E. 87th Street, next to the railroad tracks. We'll need help to dig holes, haul water, and pull weeds. The work party will be from 9 a.m. to noon. Come whenever you can, for as long as you are able. Please bring shovels, picks, rakes, watering cans, and weeding tools.

On the subject of shovels and rakes, restoration efforts at Cotton Hill Park are showing real results. We had another great turnout at our March 7 event. More than 60 volunteers and an Earthcorps crew cleared over a quarter acre of invasive plants, spread many yards of wood chips, and planted 98 native tree, shrub, and grass plants.

The UW Restoration Ecology students are busily putting the finishing touches on their year long project next to the trail intersection. In addition to clearing, planting, and mulching, they have created shallows for frogs and lizards to breed, and built raised hummocks to allow tree seedlings to get a start in the wet soil. They will also be designing educational signs. The students have been delightful to work with. If we are lucky, a new group of students may adopt another part of the park next year - keep your fingers crossed!

And last but not least, a huge thank you to Steve Hager, Cindy Bienz, and Debbie Ohman, for organizing and running the Eighth Annual Highlands Spring Egg Hunt on April 11!

Our Web site at [www.KirklandHighlands.org](http://www.KirklandHighlands.org) has information about upcoming neighborhood events, photos of previous events, and numerous useful links. If you're on the email list, but haven't been receiving the emails, check our website for instructions on how to solve the problem.

*A longtime Kirkland resident, Karen Story is the Communications Chair of the Highlands Neighborhood. A technical writer by day, she spends her free time working on neighborhood projects, raising two teenage boys, and singing in a bluegrass and swing band called Back Burner.*



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