

TRADERS POINT GATEWAY LAUNCHED

100 trees & shrubs...100 cubic yards mulch...115 volunteers...three sunny Saturday hours...DONE!

It was almost that easy to plant a new landscape around the INDOT Salt Barn at the I-65 and 71st Street interchange, thanks to Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, Inc., and a dedicated organizing team.

Planting day, November 17, dawned bright, chilly, and full of promise. KIB's project manager Phil Schaefer was first on the scene with a truckload of shovels, rakes, and wheelbarrows. The City sent a crew to block off one lane of traffic along Lafayette Road. Project organizers began laying the biodegradable erosion cloth to hold the soil on the steep slope facing the I-65 ramp. Volunteers began arriving at 9:00 a.m., grabbed shovels and gloves, and set about digging in the trees and shrubs that Amanda Green of KIB and Wendy Ford of Normandy Farms had set in place the day before. Carole Cole of Normandy Farms signed in these early birds, and coffee donated by Starbucks (56th & Lafayette Road) sustained them in their tasks.

Soon Senator Mike Delph came to inspect the planting progress—he and Representative Phil Hinkle helped get the project moving after its postponement from September 22 due to the State's liability concerns. The volunteers kept arriving—we expected 80 and got 115! They got all the trees and shrubs into the ground by 10:30 a.m., with site captains Paul Ransberger of Normandy Farms, Derek Gray of Lakeside, and Jim Tomlinson of Huntington leading the way.

Then began the arduous task of distributing 100 cubic yards of mulch donated by Tiffany Lawn & Garden. Almost miraculously, the throng of volunteers—families with children, master gardeners, Traders Point neighbors, and squadrons of students from Butler University and IUPUI—organized themselves like an army of ants to cart load after load and spread it over the planting beds.

Arriving in installments to keep up energy levels was food, arranged for by Mary Ann Bradley of Mill Pond: first, tasty submarine sandwiches from Jersey Mike's Subs (Georgetown and 56th Street); then just-out-of-the-oven chocolate chip cookies from Max and Erma's (Intech Park). Presiding over the refreshment tent were Carolyn Bryson of 88th Street and Marcia Miller of Normandy Farms.

And still the mulch brigade toiled on—the shovelers hefting the rich hardwood chips into wheelbarrows, the strong-armed pushers conveying them over hill and dale to the planting beds, the organizers on the receiving end whistling sharply to indicate where the next load was needed, the rake wielders spreading the mulch in a four-inch layer throughout the beds.

It was just before noon when the last few shovelfuls were loaded and carted to their destinations. And just about that time came a box of warm, foil-wrapped pulled pork sandwiches from Famous Dave's Barbecue (on Michigan Road just north of 86th Street). Weary workers gratefully downed the sandwiches and put away their shovels, rakes, and wheelbarrows. It was a great end to planting day at the Salt Barn.

It was a successful planting, and well worth celebrating. But this was just the beginning of a several year project to create an attractive gateway to the Traders Point neighborhoods. In the weeks and months ahead, we will straighten any blown-over trees, pick up trash, add ground-covering shrubs, watch for weeds, and keep the plants watered when Nature does not provide. We'll be enlisting additional helpers to maintain and add to this landscape so auspiciously begun.

Our thanks to all the volunteers who rolled up their sleeves to pitch in; to the vendors, neighbors, and homeowners associations that provided cash and in-kind donations; to the Pike Township firefighters of Station 112 who watered after we planted; and to Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, Inc., for providing funding and management assistance.

—Wendy Ford, Chair, Traders Point Gateway Committee

For photos of planting day, a plant list, and the latest news about the Traders Point Gateway Project, visit www.normandyfarms.info/beautification/.