

The Esplanade Association volunteer program helps keep park looking great

By Joseph Domelowicz Jr.

IN ITS BRIEF SIX-YEAR HISTORY, THE Esplanade Association (TEA) has already built a strong reputation as a leading proponent for preserving, maintaining and beautifying the Charles River Esplanade.

Yet, this group is not just a bunch of activists working behind the scene to draw attention and raise funding for major projects like the Boat Haven or solar-powered trash compactors, two initiatives on which TEA has worked closely with the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

This is a group that also knows how to get its hands dirty and do the work that is required to keep The Esplanade looking beautiful year round.

"We estimate that we do

help."

Roy who just came to the position as volunteer coordinator in January, said the TEA's volunteer program has been steadily growing ever since it began in 2002, under the leadership of Trinidad Rodriguez, who is leaving TEA in August.

"Trinidad is really the one who took and built this program, but now I see that it is growing in terms of the number of corporate partners and other groups that want to volunteer with us," said Roy.

According to Roy, the type of

about 70 to 75 percent of the maintenance of the park with volunteers," said Jen Roy, volunteer and community enrichment program coordinator for TEA. "Not that the DCR doesn't do a great job with the resources they have. We have a really nice relationship with DCR that allows us to do the things we do. After all, they own the park."

Roy said that in addition to coordinating TEA's volunteer activities for the Esplanade, she works closely with DCR supervisor Angelo Tilas, who oversees maintenance of the Hatch Shell and Esplanade for the state agency.

"I check in with him to see what work is needed, where the volunteers can do the most good and sometimes I'll go to him with

volunteer work done in the park varies from season to season. In the winter for instance, a heavy focus is placed on pruning trees and shrubs. In the spring and early summer, the focus shifts to planting flowers, cutting back invasive species of plants and painting benches and fences. In the fall again, the volunteers are used to help prepare the park for the coming winter, with bulb plantings and pruning taking the largest part of the schedule.

Anyone who wishes to volunteer with TEA can do so by contacting Jen Roy 617-227-0365. ▀

an idea for a project we'd like to have the volunteers do," said Roy. "Angelo and his staff have been very supportive of what we try to do on the Esplanade and our organization is very supportive of DCR and the staff."

According to Roy, TEA's volunteer efforts attract about 2,000 volunteers each year, some working in smaller groups of individual volunteers and others working as part of larger volunteer efforts that are in part sponsored by corporate or non-profit partners.

"We get a lot of the same group coming back each year, partly because the volunteers have a lot of fun volunteering with us and partly because I think the larger groups have trouble finding organizations that need as much (TEA Pg. 9)



Two volunteers from the local non-profit Single Volunteers Boston cut back invasive vegetation along the Charles River Esplanade as part of the volunteer partnership with The Esplanade Association.