

Triangle garden to honor Will Reynolds

By Dotti Farrington

A sixth grader's enchantment with the likes of the Boston Public Garden has led to plans for Jamestown's first public garden.

Inspired by an essay last year by Sydney Keen, 12, now a seventh grader at Lawn Avenue School, a triangular garden at High Street and Conanicus and Walcott Avenues is being spearheaded by the Rotary Club.

The planting of the 50- by 95- by 100- foot site is set for Saturday by volunteers. The garden is designated a neighborhood traffic island improvement project to be named Will's Rest in memory of Will Reynolds. Will and his wife

Sandra, a local teacher, operated the Secret Garden, a florist shop on Southwest Avenue, for 13 years before he became an agricultural county agent for the University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension Service.

"I wrote the essay soon after going to Boston. I loved the public garden there, and later saw one at the Vineyard. I thought we should have one in Jamestown," Sydney Keen said. "I had a different image than the one for Will's Rest. I kind of was thinking of something like Boston's for maybe Beavertail. I don't know if it would have worked," she noted. "I like the plan for Will's Rest," she added.



Sydney Keen and Will Reynolds

Liking the Rotary's project is an inside job for Sydney— her mother, Mary Hall Keen, who does gardening as a hobby, created the site plan design for Will's Rest. Sydney said the essay about a local garden is her own work and idea, but with an obvious influence by her mother's hobby. "She did just about all the design herself, but she let me help, especially with my idea for blueberries," Sydney reported. She also volunteered that she was pleased that her parents gave a "patch of garden" for her own, where she is eagerly cultivating strawberries, and in the wake of another school project, herbs.

Rotary role

Michael Schnack, a Rotary leader and a member of the Town Council, took the lead in the evolution of Will's Rest. He was introduced to the public garden concept via the essay, which was a winner last year in the Rotary's annual poster and essay contest at local schools. He translated the concept into Will's Rest after learning as

a councilman about neighbors in the area of the traffic island protesting its being planted with trees that they feared would block their view of the nearby waterfront. "It all fell together," he remarked. It is also notable that Will Reynolds was a member of Rotary, as well as involved in several other community activities.

The town provided loam for the triangle last year, before it became a civic undertaking. The town will remove the offending trees, and rototilled the site in preparation for the plantings, Schnack reported. He gained commitments of \$1,000 from local Rotarians and a \$500 grant from Rotary National for Will's Rest. The plants cost \$2,515.

The club is looking to individual local contributions to make up the difference. Donations may be sent to the Rotary at P.O. Box 652, Jamestown, 02835. Schnack hopes enough funds will allow for a bench at the location.

He noted that the route is a fa-

vorite walk of both year-round neighbors and tourists. The new garden is a short distance from East Ferry and the town's central village district. It is at the crest of a hill, making it a natural place for a rest area, Schnack suggested.

He also cited Sandra Reynolds, writing about Will's experiences, that her husband "lived his life with hemophilia but that did not stop him from climbing Mount Washington on crutches, or earning three college degrees. Will recognized the power of the individual to encourage understanding and goodwill throughout the community and the world. He believed that no person is too small to make a big difference."

Plantings

Mary Keen was asked by Schnack to take on the mini-park design because of her reputation as a gardener. Backyard trial and error, and classes for tree stewardship and wildflower growth perfect her gardening. She chose about 200 plantings for Will's Rest that would be aesthetically pleasing year-round and not require much watering and maintaining. "I chose hardy, drought-resistant plants, not attractive to deer and other aggressive wildlife, but beneficial for birds, butterflies and other species," she said.

Her selections include summersweets, inkberry holly, Korean spice viburnum, sweetfern, sheep laurel, lowbush blueberry, creeping juniper, maiden grass and dwarf fountain grass.

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