



Resident assistants from the University of Rhode Island did volunteer work at the Jamestown Community Farm last week. The students pulled weeds, tilled soil and did other farm chores as part of their curriculum that requires three hours of community service. Photo by Sam Bari

## URI brings help to community farm

By Sam Bari

A busload of University of Rhode Island student resident assistants and their supervisors arrived at the community farm on the old Eldred Avenue last Saturday morning. The students contributed three hours of their time pulling weeds, tilling soil, and doing other farm chores.

The 70 students are resident assistants at URI, and part of their curriculum requires three hours of community service to fulfill that component of the staff-training program. "They are here to learn leadership skills and experience giving back to the community by working as volunteers," said Deb Bergner, a hall director and member of the URI staff in housing and residential education.

She said that URI has 150 resident assistants, and 70 of them came to help at the farm. The others are completing their com-

munity service at other locations. "This is our fourth year coming to the Jamestown Community Farm," Bergner said. "The students look forward to it. They had such a good time last year that they asked farm founder and manager Bob Sutton to 'leave the weeding for us,'" Bergner added.

Sutton said that the help was welcome, and complimented the students for their enthusiasm and hard work.

Mark Lane, another hall director, said, "The work puts the students in touch with providing food for the needy and gives them a good lesson in land use management."

Coretta Antivi, a student from Guyana, said that she was always happy to help people in need. "Many students have never seen people who don't have enough to eat," she said. "I will do whatever I can to help the hungry."

Tolu Adenadi, a Nigerian student agreed with Antivi. "Many of us don't appreciate how fortunate we are. We never have to worry about whether or not there will be enough food, or even drinking water. Many people in this world wake up hungry and go to bed hungry. Anything we can do to help those who need food is a privilege. I am happy to do it," she said.

Another student, who introduced himself as Ken, said, "I'm majoring in business. This is the real world out here. Working on the farm gives us an opportunity to learn about where the food that we take for granted every day comes from, and how much work it takes to grow it."

Sutton said that the students and faculty get a tremendous amount done in a short time. "It's amazing how much 70 hard working young people can accomplish in just a few hours," he said.

## School

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a stop signal will be summoned to court. If they fail to appear in court, an arrest warrant will be issued, he said.

Sgt. Woodbine offered some safety advice for children as well. Students who ride the bus to school should always listen to the bus monitor, he said. "Children should not move anywhere in or around the bus until the monitor gives an instruction," according to Woodbine. It is also extremely important that children know to never play anywhere near a bus, Woodbine said. "These are big machines and children can easily get hurt."

Walkers should take some special precautions according to Woodbine. "The buddy-rule is a good rule to observe especially if children are walking home late from school when it is starting to get dark," he said. Walkers should stay on sidewalks or on the side of the road if a sidewalk is not available. Extra precautions should be taken in rainy weather, Woodbine said. "Children should wear bright yellow or other fluorescent colored rain gear to insure that motorists can see them in the rain."

Finally, students who ride their bikes to school should remember to follow all traffic rules, Woodbine said. "Bikers should stop at stop signs, use hand signals and should walk their bikes across crossways and intersections," he said.

Carole Melucci, principal of Melrose Avenue School agrees that safety is of paramount importance at this time of year. School zone speed limits are especially important, Melucci said. "The students' safety is our most important concern," Melucci said. With that in mind, she has devised a very detailed dismissal plan that will be given out to students with their welcome packet. "If everyone fol-

lows the dismissal procedures students will be able to leave school safely," she said.

Dropping students off to begin their day sometimes requires a little extra finesse, according to Melucci, especially for younger students who might experience some separation anxiety. She suggests that parents discuss the drop-off plan ahead of time and explain to the children exactly what to expect. "If parents can bring their children to the playground and say their goodbyes at the fence it will ease some of the anxiety, especially if the student already knows what to expect," Melucci said.

Both Melucci and Kathleen Almanzor, principal of Lawn Avenue School, agree that establishing good routines is important for academic success. Established times for bed, homework, and playtime will help students to perform better in school, according to both Melucci and Almanzor. "Consistency and clear expectations are key," Melucci said.

"Organization is another key component," Almanzor said. She emphasized the importance of having both an evening and a morning routine. "Having an established work place for completing homework, a place for students to keep important papers and clear expectations about what students need to do and when will help them to be successful in school," Almanzor said. Balance is also an important factor with all of the activities now available for students. "A good rule for younger students is one activity per week," Almanzor said. "Children need to learn to make good choices and also have some time for free play."

Established routines, clear expectations, careful attention to safety procedures, and a little extra patience is good advice for helping to insure that Jamestown's school children all benefit from a safe and successful school year.

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