



Vibrant Volunteers

Winter 2024 Edition



Stevens-Coolidge House and Gardens - Photo Credit: Diana Nicolo

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It's a wrap! WinterLights has come to a close for the holiday season and it was a huge success!

WinterLights, our holiday light extravaganza, has become a beloved tradition for many of our members and guests featuring beautifully illuminated gardens, historic homes, and landscapes with festive light displays. This year, the grounds of Naumkeag in Stockbridge, the Stevens-Coolidge House & Gardens in North Andover and the Eleanor Cabot Bradley Estate in Canton were once again transformed into a dazzling winter wonderland. All three garden properties were decked out with hundreds of thousands of shimmering lights along with festive music, creating a magical outdoor experience for all to enjoy.

As you can imagine, designing and setting up these light displays takes an incredible amount of effort. The Trustees staff and dedicated volunteers did a fantastic job getting the properties ready by hanging the holiday lights, setting up the displays and making sure the trails were safe and clear. Despite some rainy weather, we had an amazing turnout with over 67,000 visitors coming out to stroll through the illuminated gardens and enjoy the decorated houses.

A HUGE Thank You to all of the volunteers who worked over several weeks to make this spectacular event possible. We are so grateful for your commitment and dedication to our mission and look forward to the coming year!

On behalf of the Volunteer Services Team, we wish you all a Happy and Healthy 2024!

By Diana Nicolo, Volunteer Services Associate & Editor

2023 Volunteer of the Year - Kory Wood

The Trustees is thrilled to name Kory Wood as its 2023 Volunteer of the Year!!

Kory Wood



Worcester Street
Community Garden
Coordinator

Kory Wood is a force to be reckoned with,” according to Jordan Takvorian, Boston Community Gardens Stewardship Manager for The Trustees. “He stepped into a leadership role as garden coordinator two years ago, and he hasn’t slowed yet!” Founded in 1955, Worcester Street Garden is one of the oldest community gardens in Boston, and with more than 150 plots it is also one of the city’s largest

Among his many initiatives, Kory welcomes new gardeners into the space with a pamphlet he created that provides information on what supplies are available and what to know about the sun levels in different parts of the garden. He looks for opportunities to bring gardeners together, hosting weekly group projects to clean and maintain communal areas and social events so neighbors can learn from each other, share food and favorite recipes.

Kory’s ideas are boundless, and he puts them quickly into action. A few of his innovations include creating an efficient way to manage the garden’s compost and devising with a flag system to signal when someone is on vacation so neighboring gardeners can keep their plots watered while they’re away. He coordinated an effort to rebuild crumbling raised bed planters and make them more accessible. He developed a relationship with the nearby Hurley School, which has made trips to the garden part of their K-4 curriculum. And he has established a Gardeners Give Back Day, which this year provided nearly 100 pounds of fresh produce to an organization that distributes food across the city.

Kory’s infectious enthusiasm, operational skill, and limitless creativity make him an invaluable extension of the Boston Community Gardens staff and an outstanding representative of the organization in the South End community. He epitomizes what it means to be a Trustees volunteer, and his work highlights how essential and invaluable volunteers are to the success of the Trustees mission.



Thank you Kory for all your support and dedication to the Trustees’ Mission!

To watch a video interview and learn more about Kory, click below to visit the [2023 Volunteer of the Year – Kory Wood Trustees Community page.](#)

World's End - New England Ski for Light

By Diana Nicolo, Volunteer Services Associate & Editor

World's End in Hingham is a 251-acre peninsula located 15 miles south of Boston with scenic views of Boston's skyline. The property features a diverse landscape with woodlands, meadows, rocky shores and several miles of tree-lined carriage trails making it a popular destination for outdoor enthusiasts.

This past October, the World's End Rangers and Trustees staff welcomed a group of visually impaired hikers from New England Ski for Light to explore the property. This MA-based nonprofit organization was founded in 1977 with a mission to provide a supportive atmosphere where participants and sighted guides are paired to access the outdoors. Anne Smith-White, Director, South Shore Portfolio, coordinated this effort which brought 20 Visually Impaired Participants (VIPs) with their sighted guides to World's End for a day of hiking.



Cheryl Bierwirth, World's End Lead Ranger, worked with New England Ski for Light to plan the day, providing directions to the property and creating detailed maps and narrative descriptions for two routes at World's End – one for the morning and one for the afternoon. The day of the hike, the 20 VIPs and their sighted guides arrived at World's End at 9:00 AM, ready to hit the trails. Before heading out, the guides were given a 15 minute briefing on the technical aspects of guiding, such as how to approach, stand, and walk with an individual and how to navigate obstacles. They were also encouraged to narrate the hike as much as possible to enhance the VIPs' experience. This included describing the trail and the view, calling attention to birdsong and animal chatter, and providing opportunities to feel the texture of bark, stones, and leaves.

Anne was one of the sighted guides who participated in the hike and shared the experience she had with her VIP Cindy. Anne explained that when the trails were wide and smooth, she and Cindy were able to walk together easily, mostly side-by-side, chatting and laughing. But traversing the narrow and rugged trails in Rocky Neck were much more challenging and required great focus to navigate the obstacles and most of the time they had to walk single file. As the day went along, Anne was amazed at Cindy's fearlessness and trust as they navigated these challenging paths.

In Anne's words: "What I realized during our hike in October is that inclusive programs also have the potential to reshape societal attitudes towards disabilities. By actively including individuals with disabilities in outdoor activities, we break down stereotypes, challenge preconceived notions, and promote inclusivity. When people witness individuals with disabilities actively participating in outdoor programs, it promotes understanding, empathy, and respect. I saw this effect real time at World's End whenever we encountered other visitors on the trails."

As part of the Trustees mission, we are committed to making our properties accessible for all to enjoy and the South Shore team has been very instrumental in helping to support this mission by collaborating with partners from the disability community to learn how our organization can increase the accessibility of our properties and programs.



Program Spotlight - Powisset Farm Mobile Market

By Eliza Forman, Volunteer Services Manager

The Trustees' Mobile Market delivers fresh, Certified Organic produce from Trustees farms to communities facing food insecurity in and around Boston. Through a 200 plus-member Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) CSA program, as well as farmer's markets throughout Boston and Chelsea, the Mobile Market team works closely with community partners to establish distribution locations in neighborhoods with limited access to fresh, local and affordable produce.

Each week, from June through January, an efficient, reliable and positive group of volunteers pack produce to deliver to customers. In mid-December, we got the opportunity to join the team of Mobile Market packing volunteers at Powisset Farm!

A typical day at Powisset Farm's Mobile Market...

Volunteers arrive and learn what they will package that day. The Mobile Market Staff shares a list of the produce they are working with and numbers of how much should go into each bag. Organic produce varies by size, so the Staff marks a range of numbers for vegetables like carrots and potatoes so each bag can get roughly the same weight if not the same number. If there is an unfamiliar vegetable, it gets pointed out and there is some discussion about who might be familiar with it. The Staff lines up the vegetables in order, so volunteers can go down the line and pack the bags with produce one by one. After consulting the list, everyone gets to work!

Volunteers eye the vegetables to make sure they are in good shape before they are distributed. Once inspected, the volunteers start opening bags, and place the inspected vegetable in each one. As they proceed down the line, a volunteer in the truck at the end of the row of vegetables is ready and waiting to tie off the bags and place them carefully in the refrigerated vehicle.



When the truck is full, it is time to start putting bags in the fridge. In a practiced move, the volunteer team helps the Mobile Market Staff turn the entire row of vegetables around so they will still be in the order of the list, and starts working in the opposite direction to end up at the fridge instead of the truck. This is just one of the efficiencies that the team has developed over their time working together!



Program Spotlight - Powisset Farm Mobile Market

After the last vegetable is packed and all of the bags are tied off, we went upstairs to get to know the team and learn about their experience as volunteers.

When asked about their favorite thing about volunteering for the Mobile Market, volunteers shared their love of learning about new produce, being together as a group, and being a part of the program. Volunteers expressed that “the social aspect is incredibly enriching” and that it is fun to work together with a bunch of people they may not have otherwise met but have now learned they share many common values with. As they work, the group talks about how much has changed and improved about the program and volunteer experience over the past few years. The group works together with Ben Franchi, Powisset Farms’s Assistant Mobile Market Manager, to improve the packing system and make the work more efficient. They had glowing things to say about Ben and his work, expressing that he “really puts so much thought and care” into not only his work, but also their experience as volunteers. In addition to being problem-solvers, they also talk about ideas for the future such as removing plastic from the process and sharing recipes for recipients to learn how to use lesser-known vegetables.

This team of volunteers love their weekly volunteering and find it fulfilling in different ways. One example of this is Amy Dasch’s story. During the pandemic, Amy became more acutely aware of food insecurity while supporting the contact tracing efforts. She became interested in economic disparity in terms of access to food and health. Since then, she has done a lot of volunteering at Powisset Farm including planting, harvesting, and now volunteering to support the Mobile Market. Another volunteer remarked that they don’t take feeding people for granted, and that they are now “aware of how much effort goes into each carrot”. This team of volunteers are passionate about volunteering and are active in their communities in many ways. They also volunteer with organizations such as Mass Audubon, Red Cross, Historic New England, Call to Talk, Boston Harbor Now, and more!

“We need to seek joy where we can find it – In volunteering, comradery, and the bounty of vegetables”



Thanks to Ben Franchi and the dedicated Mobile Market volunteers:
Rick Handman, David and Miriam Achenbach, Su-San Lancoon, Randi and
Benjamin Levine, Amy Dasch, David and Wendy Blom

Happenings Across the Commonwealth



3 Incredible Properties

Over 67,000 Visitors

32 Display Days

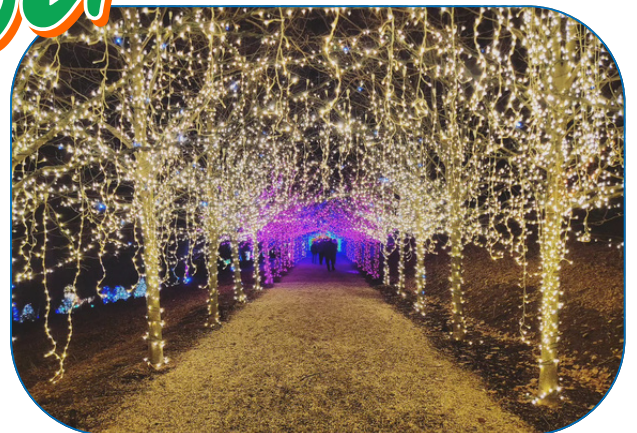
Almost 300 Volunteer Hours

A Huge THANK YOU to all the Volunteers who helped make WinterLights a Success!

Without YOU this event would not be possible.



Thank You



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

New Biodiversity Monitoring Role Berkshire County

This is a great independent volunteer role for hikers or walkers who want to help support Ecology projects while doing what they already love. By joining and contributing to this project, you are taking an active role in the protection of biodiversity and the natural heritage of Massachusetts.

Hike Volunteers - South Shore

Join us for Full Moon hikes, Muffins and Mimosas, Women's Walks and more. The South Shore Team is currently looking for enthusiastic volunteers interested in assisting with a variety of hikes at Whitney Thayer Woods, World's End or Weir River Farm.

Maple Sugaring at Appleton Farms

We are looking for dedicated volunteers to join us during the maple sugaring season at Appleton Farms! Join the Appleton Farms team as a Tour Guide, a Sugar Shack volunteer, or a Barnyard Educator this season. Training will be provided. For more information on these roles click the links below:

[Tour Guide](#)

[Sugar Shack Volunteer](#)

[Barnyard Educator](#)



Beach Grass Planting on Cape Poge Wildlife Refuge Martha's Vineyard

**** March 9th ****

Join us on Saturday, March 9th from 10am-1pm to help plant beach grass to begin our stabilization efforts on Cape Poge Wildlife Refuge.

- Light refreshments will be provided at the Mytoi Gatehouse.
- Free transportation is available from the Chappy side of the Chappy ferry.
- Work gloves, comfortable shoes, and season-appropriate clothing are recommended.

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